

Above-average rainfall in bimodal areas and gradual expansion of the season in the Sahel

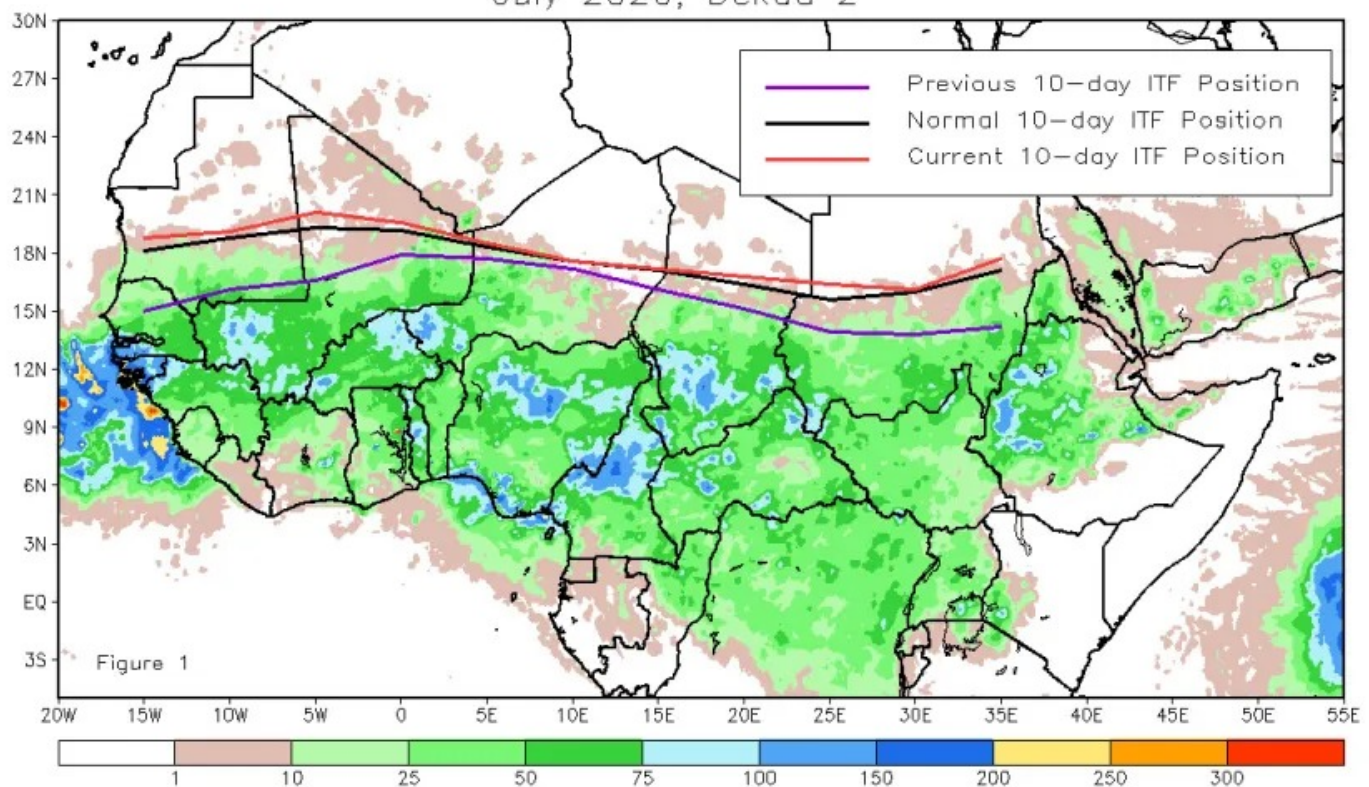
Key Messages

- The ITF (Intertropical Front) continued its northward ascent and is now north of its climatological position across the entire region.
- Isolated above-average cumulative rainfall across coastal West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin) triggered severe localized flooding.
- Below-average precipitation has been observed in many Sahelian areas, including Mali, Niger, and Chad, which has led to crop water deficits and deteriorated vegetation conditions.
- Climate model forecasts indicate high chances of above-normal temperatures and mixed rainfall conditions across West Africa from August through October 2026.

Figure 1

ITF position and RFE accumulated precipitation (mm), July 2026, Dekad 2

Current vs. Normal Dekadal ITF Position
and RFE Accumulated Precipitation (mm)
July 2026, Dekad 2



Source: NOAA CPC



FEWS NET is a United States Government-funded activity. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Government.

FEWS NET West Africa

westafrica@fews.net

fews.net/west-africa

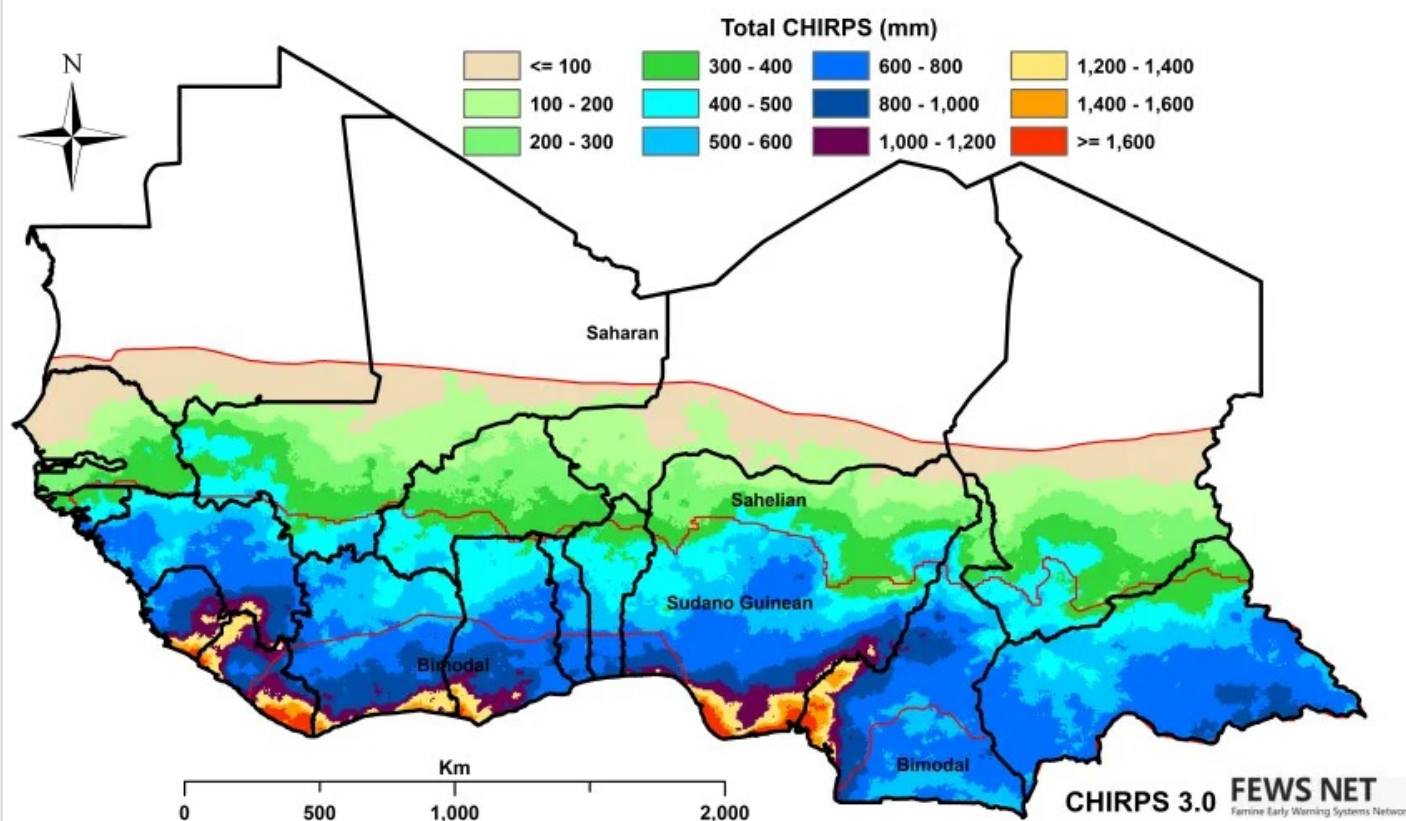
Update on Seasonal Progress

The Intertropical Front (ITF) has been progressing northward. From July 10 to 20, the ITF advanced northward across its entire length compared with the previous dekad. As of the second dekad of July, it is located north of its climatological position over the entire region (Figure 1).

In the Gulf of Guinea countries, northern areas have generally received up to 600 mm of rainfall, while the bimodal zones (farther south) have accumulated between 600 mm and 1,600 mm. The major season in the bimodal zones is ending in July, and a good harvest is expected. However, rainfall totals remain below 200 mm in the northern Sahel, where the season is not yet fully established (Figure 2).

Figure 2

March dekad 1– July dekad 2, 2026 CHIRPS total (mm)



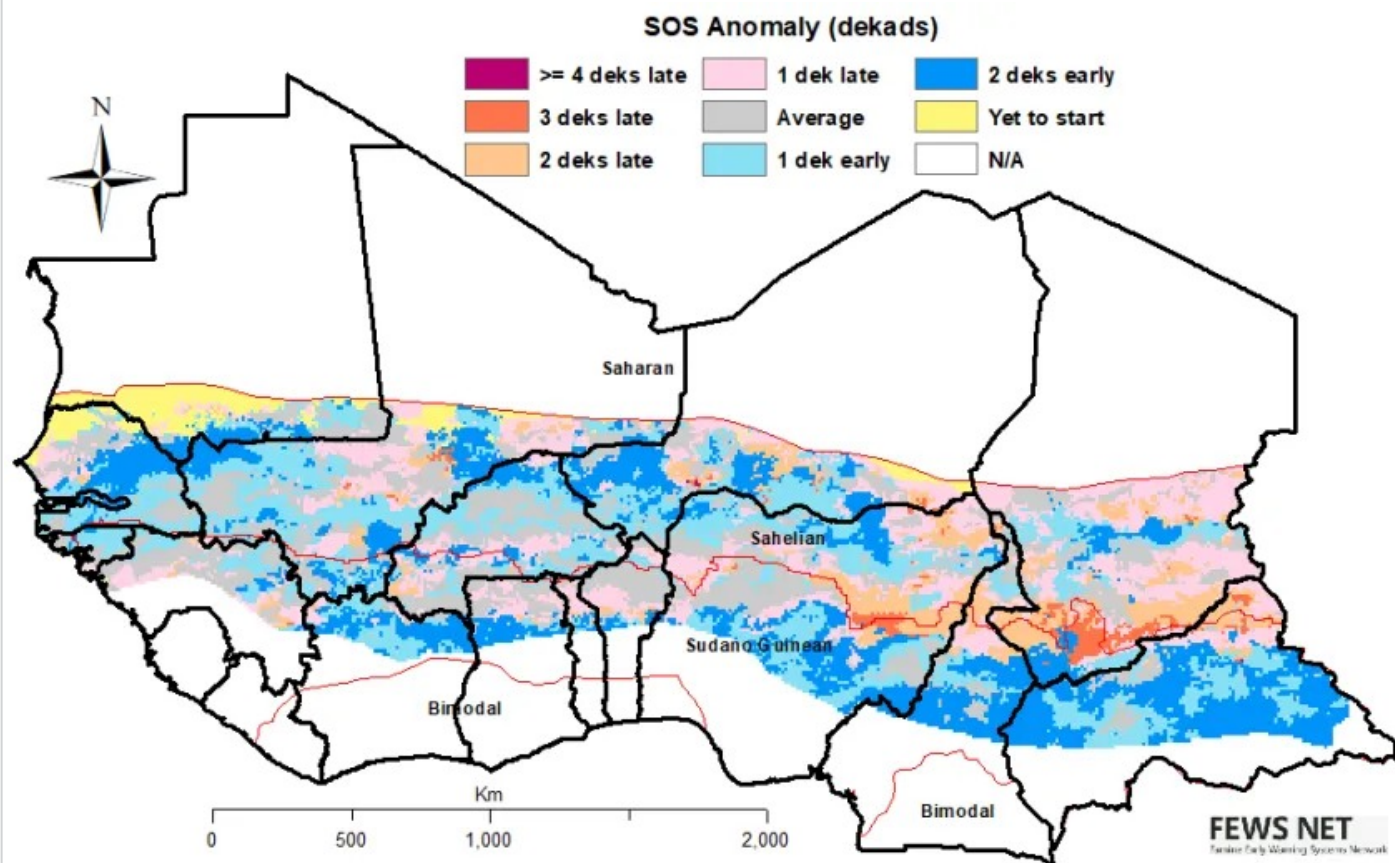
Isolated above-average precipitation was observed along the Gulf of Guinea in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, leading to **destructive and deadly flooding in some coastal cities in these countries**. Since the beginning of the intense rainfall in the middle of May, approximately 59 people have died in Côte d'Ivoire, 13 in Ghana and 5 in Togo.

Further north across the Sahelian band, a mixed start of the rainy season is observed. Rainfall was approximately two dekads early across eastern Senegal, southwestern Niger, localized areas of northern Nigeria, and central Chad. Rains were one to two dekads late across southwestern and localized areas in central Mali, and central and eastern Chad, and are yet to start in northwestern Senegal and localized areas of central Mauritania and southeastern Niger (Figure 3). Rainfall was largely below average across the Sahel, with moderate to severe deficits across central Senegal, central Mali, central-southern Niger, northwestern and northeastern Nigeria, and eastern Chad, where April 1 to July 25 rainfall is less than 30 to 90 percent of the average (Figure 4). This has led to **crop water deficits** and **below-average**

vegetation conditions in those areas. Across the Sudano-Guinean region where seasonal rains began in April and May, deficits were observed in western Guinea, western Sierra Leone, central Liberia, central Côte d'Ivoire, northern and western Ghana, central Togo, central and northern Benin, southwestern Nigeria, and southern Cameroon.

Figure 3

SOS anomaly at the end of the second dekad of July 2026



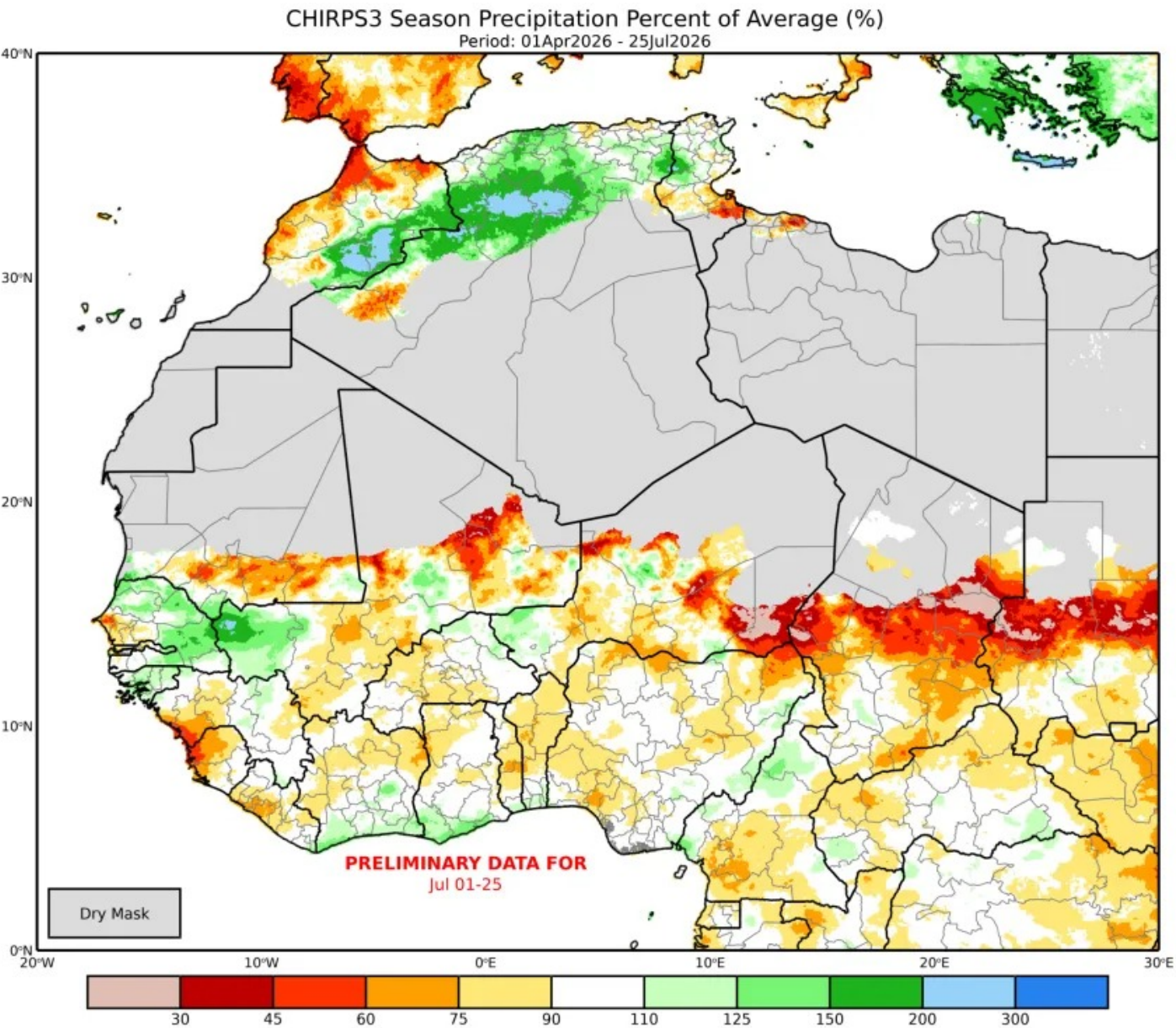
Source: USGS/FEWS NET

Forecasts

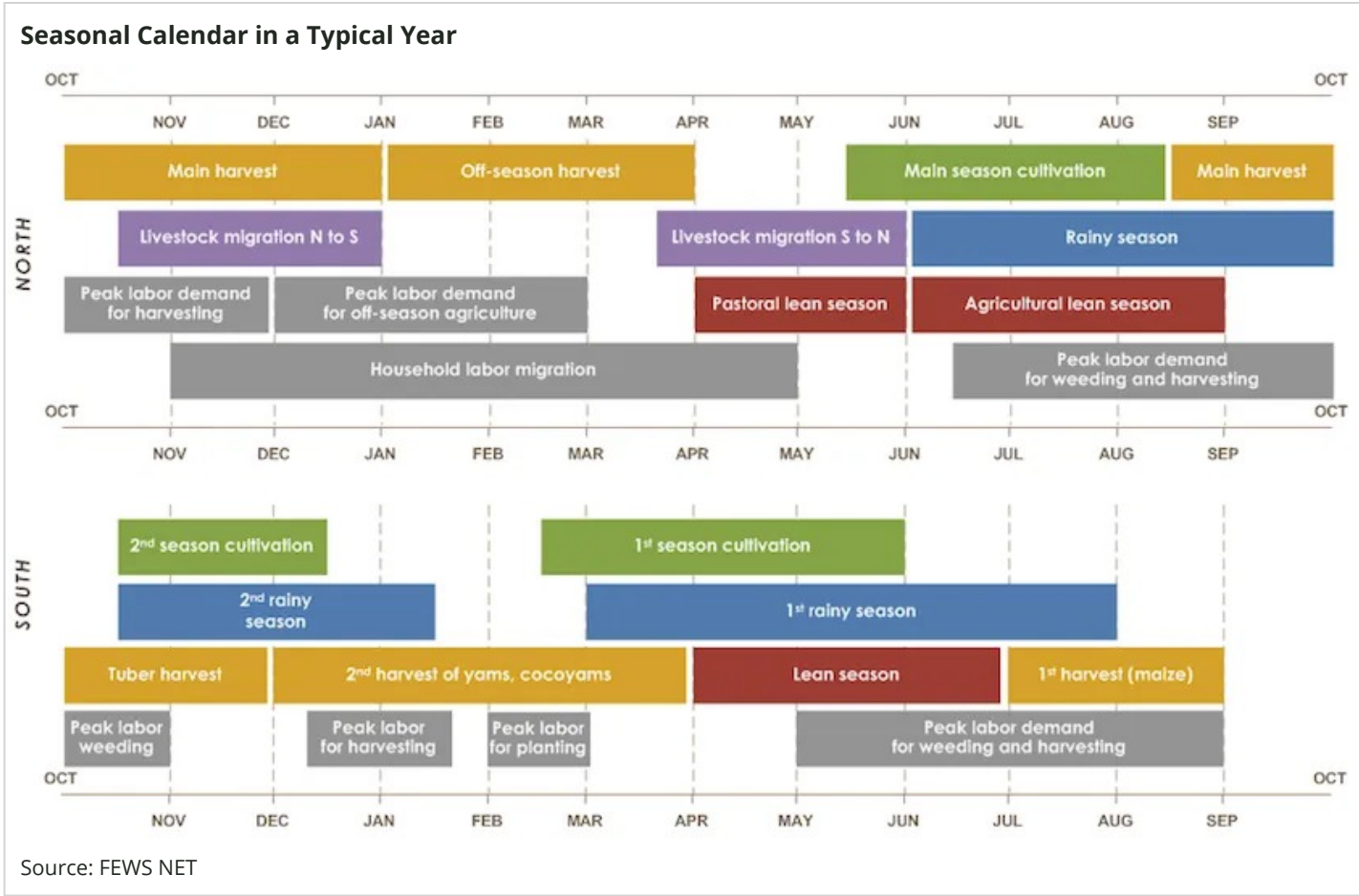
The **ongoing El Niño** event is very likely to persist through early boreal Spring 2027. It has a greater than 95% chance of being **strong or very strong** in late 2026, according to the NOAA CPC ENSO probabilistic forecasts issued in July 2026. Historically, **El Niño events** are associated with elevated chances of below-normal June through September (JJAS) rainfall across the Sahel. Based on the **ECMWF weekly forecasts** and the **CHIRPS-GEFS 15-day forecasts** from July 30th areas across the Sahel could potentially receive below-normal rains during late July to mid-August. The CHIRPS-GEFS forecast also indicates below-normal rains across Sierra Leone, Liberia, and northern parts of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Slightly increased chances of below-normal rains across the western and central Sahel are also indicated by the **WMO** and **NMME** multimodel ensemble forecasts from August through October (ASO) 2026. The NMME also forecasts above-normal rains in southwestern Niger and northwestern Nigeria. Across the region, climate models (**NMME**, **WMO**, **C3S**) confidently project above-normal ASO temperatures in 2026. Continued monitoring of conditions will be essential, as August typically marks the peak of the rainy season and provides critical moisture for crops in vegetative and reproductive stages across West Africa.

Figure 4

01 April - 25 July, 2026 CHIRPS total anomaly (% of average)



Source: UCSB/FEWS NET



Recommended citation: FEWS NET. West Africa Seasonal Monitor July 30, 2026: Above-average rainfall in bimodal areas and gradual expansion of the season in the Sahel, 2026.

Seasonal Monitor

FEWS NET's Seasonal Monitor reports are produced for Central America and the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa, Central Asia, and Somalia every 10-to-30 days during the region's respective rainy season(s). Seasonal Monitors report updates on weather events (e.g., rainfall patterns) and associated impacts on ground conditions (e.g., cropping conditions, pasture and water availability), as well as the short-term rainfall forecast. Find more remote sensing information [here](#).