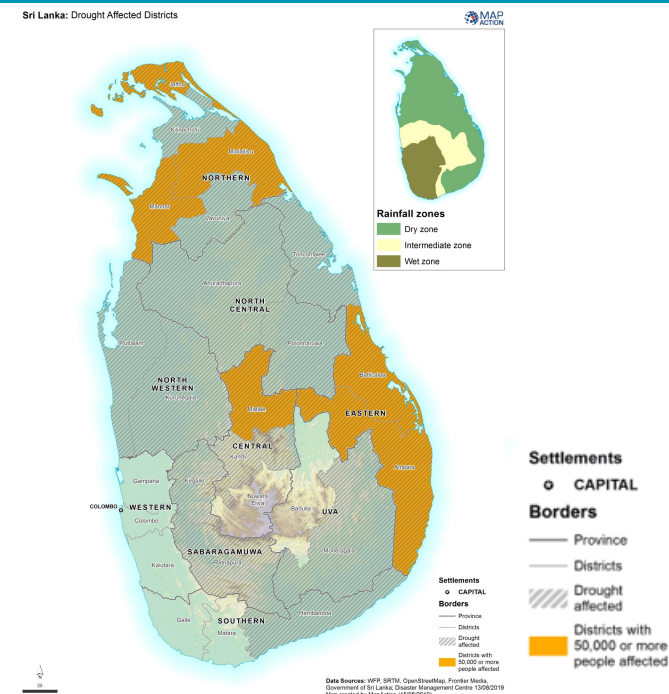


SRI LANKA

Drought

A rainfall deficit in the first half of the year has resulted in drought in most parts of Sri Lanka. As of 12 August, around 660,000 people have been affected across 18 districts. The worst affected districts are Batticaloa, Jaffna, Ampara, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Moneragala, with Mannar and Mullaitivu, both in Northern province, registering the highest percentages of affected people in their respective districts (Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019). Food and livelihood needs as well as WASH needs are reported. Farmer families in Northern province are particularly vulnerable.



NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE



IMPACT



Anticipated scope and scale

The drought has affected 18 out of 25 districts across Sri Lanka's **dry and intermediate zone**. Below normal rainfall is forecast to continue until **mid-October**. Continued dry conditions are likely to further impact the water supply and threaten the agricultural sector.

Key priorities



660,000
People affected



Water supply
is limited



Food availability and
Livelihoods
are affected

Humanitarian constraints



No significant humanitarian constraints have been reported. Power cuts as a result of a cut in hydro power generation may occur. Flooding and landslides triggered by the monsoon rains may hamper humanitarian operations.

Limitations. Inadequate contextual information on the drought, lack of food security data, and a lack of needs assessments make it difficult to obtain a full picture of the impact of the drought. There is no information on the impact of the drought on IDP communities.

Crisis impact

A dry spell beginning in December 2018 has continued into 2019 with below-average rainfall reported in March, April, May and June, resulting in drought in most parts of Sri Lanka (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019). As of 12 August, prevailing dry conditions have affected nearly 660,000 people in 18 out of 25 districts, mainly in the Eastern, Uva, North Central, Northern, North Western and Sabaragamuwa provinces, which are predominantly located in Sri Lanka's dry and intermediate zone (Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019). The affected numbers are registered by the Disaster Management Centre (DMC). However, there is a lack of detail on how people are affected. According to the DMC, the worst affected districts, with over 50,000 people affected, are Batticaloa, Jaffna, Ampara, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Moneragala. While Batticaloa district in Eastern province has the highest number of people affected, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts in the northern province record the highest proportions of people affected (66% and 63% respectively) among their respective district populations. The divisional secretariats (DS) Maritimpattu, Vilgamuwa and Lahugala are worst impacted with over 30,000 people affected (Department of Census and Statistics 2012; Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019).

Districts with highest number of people affected (+50,000)

Province	District	# people affected	% of distr. pop. affected
Eastern	Batticaloa	79,984	15.19 %
Northern	Jaffna	70,628	12.10 %
Eastern	Ampara	69,957	10.77 %
Northern	Mannar	63,115	63.39 %
Northern	Mullaitivu	61,154	66.30 %
Uva	Moneragala	57,576	12.76 %
Central	Matale	53,161	10.97 %

(Department of Census and Statistics 2012; Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019)

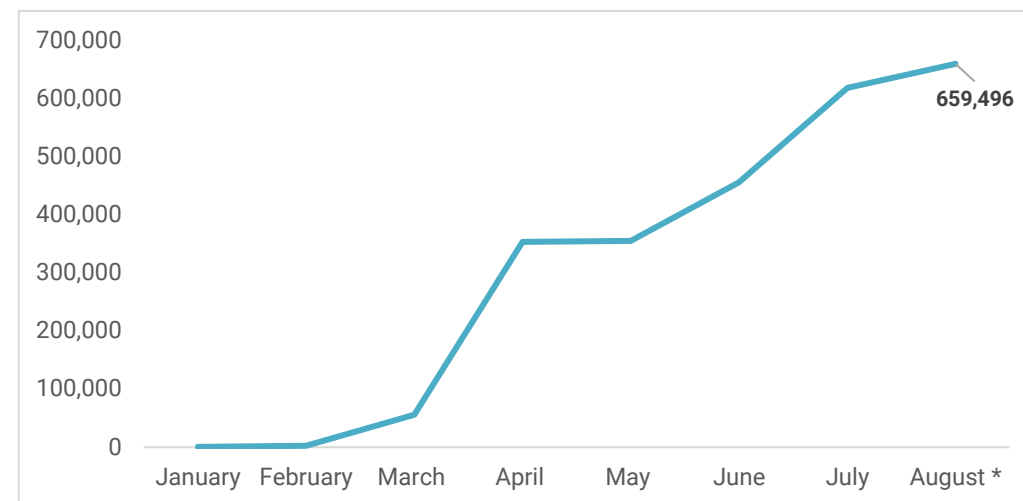
Divisional Secretariats with highest number of people affected (+30,000)

Province	District	DS division	# people affected
Northern	Mullaitivu	Maritimpattu	33,797
Central	Matale	Vilgamuwa	32,583
Eastern	Ampara	Lahugala	30,528

(Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019)

Below average rains during the first inter-monsoon season (March-April) triggered the first significant increase in the number of drought-affected people in 2019. Half of the affected population has been impacted by dry conditions since this period. The delayed start of the Southwest-monsoon season (normally May-September) and below average rainfall since (News First 07/06/2019) caused the second increase. Sri Lanka's dry zone, where above normal temperatures were recorded in this period, has been particularly impacted (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019; Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019).

Number of Drought affected people in Sri Lanka in 2019



*As of 12 August 2019

(Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019; 31/07/2019; 30/06/2019; 31/05/2019; 30/04/2019; 31/03/2019; 28/02/2019; 31/01/2019)

Below normal rainfall is forecast until September and may, according to the government's Department of Meteorology, continue until next inter-monsoon in mid-October. If dry conditions continue to prevail, Sri Lanka's agricultural sector is likely to be heavily impacted (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019; NewsFirst 07/06/2019).

Food Security and Livelihoods: Since June, the water capacity of the country's main water reservoirs has been reported at 30% (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019). Planting seasons require at least 50% water availability for irrigation. The commencement of cultivation in the Maha planting season (September-March) is reportedly at risk due to inadequate water supply (News First 15/08/2019).

Failure of crops has already been reported. According to the government's Department of Agriculture, 4,362 hectares of paddy in the Yala planting season (May-August) have been destroyed as a result of the drought (News First 15/08/2019). The maize cultivation has also been impacted (News First 07/06/2019; Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019). Crop losses

and lack of seeds are expected to impact the rural population's purchasing power, which is likely to impact on access to food items and livelihoods.

WASH: Since June, water in the country's main water reservoirs has been reported at 30% of capacity (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019). The reduction of tank water levels as well as the limited availability of ground water have severely impacted household drinking water. Since March, access to drinking water has been a challenge, especially in the intermediate rainfall zone [see map] (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019). Lack of access to drinking water was a major concern in previous droughts in Sri Lanka, particularly for rural and poorer populations in the hardest hit areas (IFRC 04/04/2013).

Water used for bathing and washing is limited in certain areas, affecting sanitation measures (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019). Only 30% of households in Batticaloa, the district with the highest number of people affected, have piped water connections. Many of the affected people cannot afford water connections through the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) and the few available main water lines are not connected to the areas where low-income families are living, which increases the needs of vulnerable communities in the district (Sunday Times 24/07/2019).

Vulnerable groups affected

Poor farmer communities in the northern rural dry zone are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of the drought (Climate Adaptation UNDP 26/03/ 2018; Global Press Journal 31/07/2019; Government of Sri Lanka 10/08/2019). Mullaitivu and Mannar, the districts in Northern province counting the highest percentages of people affected, are former conflict districts and rank among the poorest districts in the country. The poverty rate in Mullaitivu is 28.8% and in Mannar, 20.1% (World Bank 2017). Farmer families living in this region are less resilient to the loss of crops and livelihoods and are likely to see their needs compounded as a result of the drought.

Tamils make up more than 93% of the population in Northern province, and many do not speak the majority language Sinhalese, while most officials in the province do not speak Tamil. This can present challenges to accessing humanitarian assistance (IRIN 23/07/2012; Government 2012; Guardian 04/04/2010). Around 39,000 people remain internally displaced in Northern province following the end of conflict in 2009.

IDPs: Many IDPs depend on aid to meet their basic needs and live with relatives (around 34,000) or in temporary shelters (around 3,000) that do not offer adequate protection against the elements and where IDPs do not receive government assistance (UCA News 03/01/2019, UNHCR 25/07/2018, DFAT 23/05/2018). There is very little information available regarding life conditions and specific sectoral needs of IDPs.

Women: Due to Sri Lanka's Land Development Ordinance and other customary laws, women are practically unable to own land. In addition, they have limited resources and

control over agricultural resources and restricted access to markets and farmer organisations. According to government regulation, government provided water can only be accessed by landowners. Therefore, women have no formal access to government provided water, leaving women whose livelihoods rely on crop cultivation in a more vulnerable position (FAO 2018).

Humanitarian and operational constraints

No significant operational constraints are reported. However, in March, it was reported that the hydro-power generation was cut to 15 percent of Sri Lanka's total electricity production as the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) wanted to save water for household and irrigation requirements. This resulted in daily power cuts at the time. It is unknown if the power cuts a result of the drought are still ongoing (REUTERS 25/03/2019).

Due to the drought conditions, the ground is less able to absorb rainwater, raising risk of flooding and landslides during the current monsoon season. It is unknown if recent rains and landslides have hampered operations in the drought-affected region.

Aggravating factors

Monsoon season

Sri Lanka has four monsoon seasons in a year. The current Southwest-monsoon season lasts from May to September. Drought creates conditions favourable to flash flooding after heavy rains, as water is less easily absorbed into the ground when the soil has been dry and compacted for a prolonged period of time (The Telegraph 11/04/2012). The monsoon rains may trigger flooding and landslides, possibly aggravating the pre-existing vulnerabilities caused by the drought. Heavy rains and winds affected several districts including the drought-affected Ratnapura, Vavuniya, Kegalle, Puttalam, Hambantota, Kurunegala, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Anuradhapura districts in the second week of August (Government of Sri Lanka 10/08/2019). At least 1,141 houses were damaged impacting nearly 5,000 people. Heavy rains are forecast in Northern, North-Central, Eastern and Uva provinces for the next 36 hours as of 15 August. (Department of Meteorology 15/08/2019). Some 12,000 people across the country have been affected by heavy wind and rain, landslides or flooding in August so far (Disaster Management Centre 14/08/2019). Media sources report on the displacement of thousands as a result of the extreme weather conditions (Asia News 19/07/2019). However, this number has not been confirmed by government sources. The impact of the monsoon is likely to worsen the humanitarian needs of the affected population. Additional crop loss would lead to increased food insecurity as well as a loss of income.

Fall Armyworm

A fall armyworm outbreak since the start of 2019 has damaged crops in Eastern, Uva, North and Central provinces. As of May, 43,576 hectares of maize was damaged by the fall armyworm, equivalent to 25% of Sri Lanka's maize cultivation (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP January-March 2019)

Fall armyworms breed in water bodies. Flash flooding in the monsoon season would result in a heightened risk of breeding. Given that fall armyworms can affect almost all types of crops, especially maize, loss of agricultural production is a high risk, increasing the vulnerability of the (previous) drought-affected population (FAO 24/01/2019).

Previous Droughts

The increased frequency of natural disasters, including drought, compounds food and nutrition insecurity.

2016-2017: Widespread crop failures due to drought, particularly for rice paddy but also pulses, chillies and onion, severely impacted about 900,000 people, mainly in Eastern and Northern provinces, who experienced food insecurity and were struggling to earn an income. Heavy rainfall during the west southwest-monsoon season worsened the situation with flooding and landslides causing deaths, displacement and damage to infrastructure (WFP 22/06/2017).

2014: The northeast monsoon, which supplies water for agriculture across the key rice-producing areas of Sri Lanka, brought below average rainfall between September 2013 and March 2014. This culminated in a drought that extended throughout most of 2014, finally easing in December. Over 1.8 million people were affected mainly in Northern, North Central and Southern Provinces and severe agricultural loss was reported (WFP 30/04/2014; OCHA 18/08/2014).

Economic impact of the civil war

Sri Lanka's civil war from 1983 to 2009 was concentrated largely in the northern and eastern portions of the country. During the war, farming and fishing, the two of the main livelihood sources in the region, were affected by many factors, including embargoes, transport difficulties, insecurity and breakdown of market systems. The rural economy collapsed in many areas in Northeast province (Peace and Conflict Monitor 27/02/2012). The effects of the war are still felt on the local economy. These provinces present a significantly lower level of economic development in comparison with the rest of the country. In the north, the median monthly household per capita income stands at about USD 37 and in the east USD 36, while the national figure is around USD 53 (CNBC 27/04/2016).

Key characteristics

Demographics:

- Total population: 22,577,000
- Rural population: est. 18,287,000 (18%)

Health statistics:

- Child Mortality Rate: 8/1,000 live births
- Maternal Mortality Rate: 33/100,000 live births

Nutrition statistics:

- Chronic malnutrition (children under 5 years): 17%
- Acute malnutrition (children under 5 years): 15%
- Underweight (children under 5 years): 21%

WASH statistics:

- Access to water facilities in rural areas: 77.9%
- Access to sanitation facilities in rural areas (household level): 90.7%

Development statistics:

- Human Development Index (HDI) (2017): 0.770
- Extreme poverty (<USD 1.90/day): 2.2%; 89% of the extremely poor live in rural areas
- Electricity supply and coverage in rural areas (household level): 88.8%

Sources: FAO 2018 cited after Department of Census and Statistics 2017; FAO 2017; Family Health Bureau 2018; Medical Research Institute 2017; CIA Factbook, accessed on 15/08/2019

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

Preparedness and response infrastructure have been upgraded since the 2004 tsunami exposed major weaknesses. Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre (DMC) oversees disaster preparedness, early warning, and relief work (IRIN 24/12/2014). Information on natural disasters from DMC's offices, which span each of the country's 25 districts, is compiled into daily situation reports outlining the nature of and number of people affected by disasters across the country (Government 18/11/2015). DMC has access to a mobile communications network of over eight million subscribers, which allows it to rapidly spread warning and response messages.

National response is coordinated by the Disaster Management Centre.

In June, the government distributed water in 81 DS divisions in 15 districts. While a number of response plans, including the support of farmers, the renovation of agro-wells, cash for work and other climate resilience building activities have been announced, it is unclear to what extent they are being implemented (Government of Sri Lanka/WFP June 2019).

International response capacity

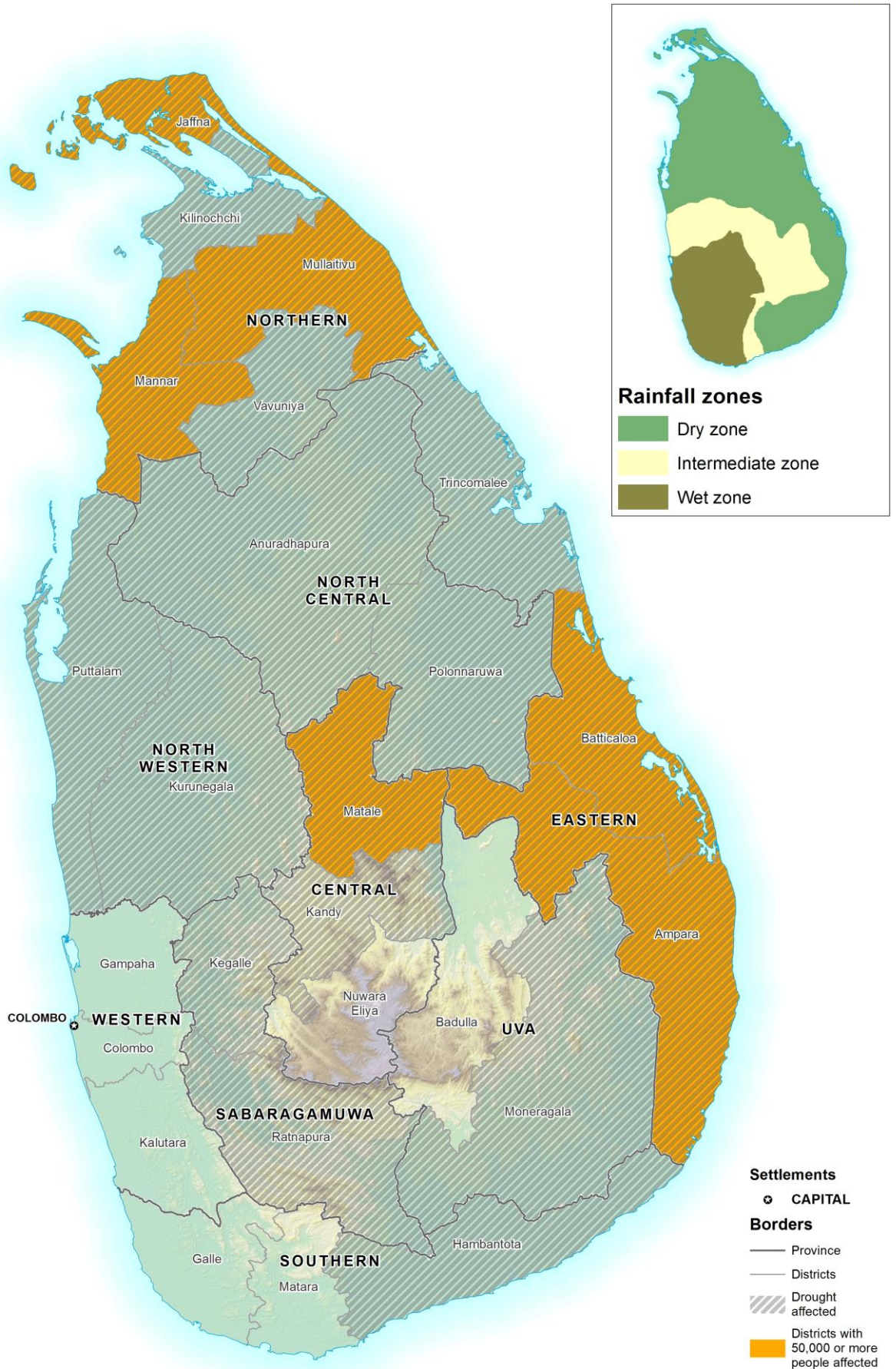
The World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other international organisations, provide aid programmes and are also directly involved in providing drought-related assistance, particularly in food and nutrition sectors.

Information gaps and needs

- The number of affected people is registered and published daily by the Disaster Management Centre. In their publication, the Disaster Management Centre does not specify how people are affected.
- There are no food security figures on Sri Lanka. It is unknown how many people are experiencing what level of food insecurity and how this number has been impacted by the drought.
- There is little contextual information on the conditions of the drought.
- Information on humanitarian needs, including the number of people in need as a result of the drought is lacking. There is particularly little information regarding the health impact.
- There is a lack of updated information regarding the response. It is unclear who is already responding to the crisis and the extent of available resources.
- There is no information regarding the possible consequences of the drought on the IDP camps in the Northern Province.

Map

Sri Lanka: Drought Affected Districts



Data Sources: WFP, SRTM, OpenStreetMap, Frontier Media, Government of Sri Lanka; Disaster Management Centre 13/08/2019
Map created by MapAction (15/08/2019)