International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa

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MIGRATORY PEST SITUATION DURING APRIL 2026 AND FORECAST FOR MAY TO JULY 2026

1. OVERVIEW

1a. Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville)

(i) Current Situation

The Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfaciata,* Serville) situation within the International Red Locust for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA) region remained relatively calm during the month of April. Low population densities of immature adult (Fledglings) were reported as indicated below:

- **Malawi**: Lake Chiuta plains, Lake Chirwa plains, Mpatsanjoka Dambo
- **Tanzania:** Ikuu-Katavi plains, Malagarasi Basin, Rukwa Valley, Bahi Valley, Wembere
- **Mozambique**: Buzi - Gorongosa plains, Dimba plains
- **Zambia**: Western Province, Simalaha plains, Kafue Flats, Lukanga Swamps

These countries hosts breeding/outbreak hotspots for the red locust.

(ii) Forecast

Immature adult red locusts are expected to continue coalescing and may form dense concentrations eventually resulting to swarms.

(iii) Critical Note

Without timely surveillance and control, swarms may escape from breeding areas and threaten food security across the region.

1b. African Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria migratoriodes* R & F.)

(i) Current Situation

Low densities of African Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria migratoriodes*) persisted in Zambia: Simalaha Plains (Southern Province) and some areas in Western Province.

(ii) Forecast

The low densities may continue to coalesce during this period of no rains following good rains that concluded, and presence of favourable feedlots for the locusts. There is therefore risk of these locusts forming serious swarms if control measures are delayed.

1c. African Armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta* Walker)

(i) Current Situation

There were no African Armyworm (AAW) outbreak reports from Member States.

(ii) Forecast

Monitoring should continue to help detect any upsurge in the course of the monitoring period. The AAW pest risk remains low.

1d. Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda* J.E. Smith)

(i) Current Situation

Malawi: Fall Armyworm (FAW) infestations affecting maize were reported in all 8 Agriculture development Divisions. An estimated total area of 11,982 ha was reported to be infested by the pest in April 2026. Control was carried out on 70 % of the affected area using synthetic pesticides and botanical extracts.

Mozambique: Fall Armyworm infestations were reported in Dondo, Caia, and Nhamatanda and Buzi districts. Control was carried out by the affected farmers with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe: No infestations were reported

(ii) Forecast:

Monitoring vigilance required, especially in maize-growing regions.

1e. Quelea Birds (*Quelea quelea* L.)

(i) Current Situation

Tanzania: Quelea bird outbreaks were reported in the Dodoma region, attacking rice, sorghum and sunflower. The country deployed spray aircraft in partnership with DLCO to control the Quelea burds.

Zimbabwe: Reported attacking cereals in Mashonaland Central and West Provinces. A total of 94,000 birds were controlled in Mashonaland West and 8000 in Mashonaland Central.

(ii) Forecasts

Localized outbreaks may persist in Tanzania and Zimbabwe; aerial and ground control should remain active.

1f. Strategic Recommendations

(i) **Resource Mobilization:**
Immediate support to IRLCO-CSA and national ministries to undertake limited control measures to avoid imminent swarming.

(ii) **Cross-Border Coordination:**
Strengthen regional collaboration to prevent swarms escaping outbreak areas.

(iii) **Farmer Support:**
Expand technical assistance for Fall Armyworm control in all Member States.

(iv) **Monitoring:**
Maintain surveillance for Armyworms and Quelea bird outbreaks.

2. WEATHER

Red Locust outbreak areas received below normal rainfall during April 2026, creating favourable conditions for locust development and coalescing (Table 1). In Kenya, heavy rainfall was recorded in the highlands west of the Rift Valley and on the Coast. Vegetation is green in most of the breeding areas.

Table 1. Rainfall (mm) Recorded during April 2026 at locations near Red Locust Outbreak Areas

LOCATION	COUNTRY	April 2026
Mafambisse (Buzi plain)	Mozambique	19.0
Gorongosa (Gorongosa plain)	Mozambique	20.0
Caia (Dimba plains)	Mozambique	17.0
Buzi	Mozambique	21.0
Dimba	Mozambique	15.0
Masenge (Wembere Plain)	Tanzania	290.3
Kaliua (Malgarasi Plain)	Tanzania	322.9
Muze (Rukwa Valley)	Tanzania	172.4
Mpanda	Tanzania	N/A
Lifuwu (MpatsaNjoka Dambo)	Malawi	22.3
Ngokwe (Lake Chiuta plains)	Malawi	7.1
Khanda (Lake Chilwa plains)	Malawi	37.7
Namwala (Kafue Flats)	Zambia	10.0

N/A Not Available

3. RED LOCUST (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville)

Malawi, Mozambique Tanzania and Zambia
Red Locust immature adult, concentrations of various densities were likely to be present in Lake Chiuta plains, Lake Chirwa plains, Mpatsanjoka Dambo in Malawi; Buzi Gorongosa, Dimba plains in Mozambique, Ikuu-Katavi plains, Malagarasi Basin, Rukwa Valley, Wembere plains in Tanzania; Kafue Flats, Simalaha plains, Western Province, Lukanga swamps in Zambia. As flood water in some of the outbreak areas continue receding and creates favourable weather conditions, immature adult Red

Locust groups/concentrations are likely to coalesce more and form swarms, which may escape from breeding areas and cause substantial damage to crops. It is critical to monitor all these outbreak areas to enable timely control and prevent crop damage.

4. AFRICAN MIGRATORY LOCUST (*Locusta migratoria migratoriodes*)

Zambia
The African Migratory Locust (AML) situation in Western and Southern provinces was relatively calm during the month of April 2026. Low infestation of AML reported in Mumbwa district in March was controlled and put down to an insignificant AML population. The Ministry of Agriculture, Zambia, is vigilantly monitoring the situation.

Zimbabwe
In April 2026, no African Migratory locust infestations were reported in Zimbabwe.

6. TREE LOCUST (*Anacridium* spp.)

Tanzania and Kenya
The Tree Locust situation remained calm in Kenya and Tanzania during the month under review.

7. FALL ARMYWORM (*Spodoptera frugiperda* J. E. Smith)

Malawi
Low Fall Armyworm infestations on maize continued to be reported across all eight (8) Agriculture Development Divisions of Malawi (Lilongwe, Kasungu, Machinga, Mzuzu, Blantyre, Shire Valley Salima and Karonga ADDs). An estimated total area of 11,982 hectares was reported to be infested by the pest during the month of April 2026. Control was carried out on 9,463 hectares, which is 70% of the affected area, using chemical pesticides and botanical extracts (Sisal, Neem, and Pepper).

Mozambique
Low infestation levels attacking maize were reported in Caia, Buzi, Dondo and Nhamatanda districts. Affected farmers carried out control with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture were carrying out control at the time of writing this report.

Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe
There were no reports on fall armyworm infestations in Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, the pest may have infested crops and pastures.

8. AFRICAN ARMYWORM (*Spodoptera exempta,* Walker)

There were no reports of African Armyworm outbreaks in the Member States.

9. QUELEA BIRDS (*Quelea quelea* L)

Tanzania
In April 2026, Quelea birds were reported to be attacking rice, sorghum, and sunflowers in the Mpwapwa, Bahi, Chamwino, and Kondoa districts of the Dodoma region. An estimated 20 million birds in 6 colonies covering an estimated total area of 320 ha were controlled with 725 L of Avicide in Chamwino district, an estimated 14.6 million birds on 6 colonies covering a total area of 231 ha were controlled with 550 L of Avicide in Bahi district, an estimated 12.6 million birds on 3 colonies covering 336 ha were controlled with 426 L of avicide in Mpwapwa district and an estimated 4.5 million birds on 1 colony covering an estimated area of 150 were controlled with 150 L of Avicide in Kondoa district. Controls were carried out using a DLCO spray aircraft.

Zimbabwe
Quelea birds were reported attacking cereals in Mashonaland West and Central provinces. An estimated 94,000 birds were controlled in Mashonaland West and 8,000 in Mashonaland Central Provinces using chemicals and nets. There was a report of an outbreak of Quelea birds in Manicaland. The Migratory Pest Control Department was vigilantly following up on the report.

Kenya
There were no reports of Quelea bird outbreaks in Kenya.

10. FORECAST FOR THE PERIOD MAY TO JULY 2026

Red Locust

- Immature adult red locust groups are expected to continue coalescing and form swarms in some of the outbreak areas.
- IRLCO-CSA and Ministries of Agriculture need to carry out ground and aerial surveys and control operations where necessary.
- Ground teams should be fully alert in regions bordering outbreak areas

African Migratory Locust

- African migratory locusts are likely to persist in Western and Southern Provinces in Zambia during the outlook period.

- Vigilant monitoring and control measures will be critical to avoid crop devastation

Preparedness:
Ensure aerial and ground spraying capacity is ready for rapid deployment.
Appeal:

Member States urged to provide financial support for timely surveys and control

Fall Armyworm & African Armyworm

- Outbreaks are expected to continue declining across Member States
- Early warning systems must remain fully operational for rapid detection and response.

Quelea Birds

- Populations likely to increase.
- Threat to maturing small grains in Tanzania and Zimbabwe.
- Vigilant monitoring and prompt control interventions are required.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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