

International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa

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MIGRATORY PEST SITUATION DURING JUNE 2026 AND FORECAST FOR JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2026

1. OVERVIEW

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

(i) Current Situation

Low population densities (1–2 locusts/m²) were reported in Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. However, the Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata*, Serville) situation within the International Red Locust for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA) region remained relatively calm during the month of June, as indicated below:

- **Malawi:** low densities of isolated locusts continued to be present in Lake Chiuta plains, Lake Chilwa plains, Mpatsha Njoka Dambo
- **Tanzania:** Isolated Red Locust (1-2 locusts/m²) were reported in the Malagarasi Basin. There were no outbreak reports in Ikuu-Katavi plains, Rukwa Valley, Bahi Valley, Wembere plain.
- **Mozambique:** low-density isolated locusts continued to be observed in Buzi - Gorongosa plains, Dimba plains
- **Zambia:** Low population densities of Red Locust persisted in Simalaha Plains, Kafue Flats, and Lukanga Swamps. There were no Red Locust reports in the Western Province.

These countries host breeding/outbreak hotspots for the Red Locust.

(ii) Forecast

With vegetation drying in progress and the commencement of grass burning, immature adults Red Locust are likely to concentrate further and form swarms during the next few months.

Member States: Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

(iii) Critical Note

Strengthening surveillance, observations, and monitoring will enhance regional capacity to timely respond to swarms and avert food security challenges across the region.

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

(i) Current Situation

Low population densities of African Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria migratorioides*) are likely to be present in Simalaha Plains and some areas in Western Province, Zambia.

(ii) Forecast

With dry conditions prevailing, AML may continue coalescing, forming concentrations and eventually swarms. Vigilant surveys are critical to monitor the population increase for timely control measures.

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

(i) Current Situation

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

(ii) Forecast

African Armyworm (AAW) outbreaks are likely to continue declining. However, 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 across all Agriculture Development Divisions. An estimated total area of 65,975 ha was reported to be infested by the pest in June 2026. Control was carried out on 66 % of the affected area using synthetic pesticides and botanical extracts.

Mozambique: Fall Armyworm infestations continued to be reported in Dondo, Caia, and Nhamatanda and Buzi districts. Control was carried out on an estimated 30 ha 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 Morogoro region, attacking rice. The country deployed spray aircraft in partnership with DLCO to control the Quelea birds.

Zimbabwe: Quelea birds were reported attacking winter cereals in Matebeleland North, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central and Masvingo Provinces. The Migratory Pest Control Department in collaboration with the local government, carried out surveys and controls in affected areas using nets and avicides.

Mozambique: There were no reported quelea birds. However, doves and guinea fowl continued to be reported in some areas, feeding on rice and maize crops that are currently being harvested in Sofala Province.

(ii) Forecasts

Member States should continue to be vigilant in monitoring the birds to note the threshold for control. This is especially in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, where they should also be alert.

1f. Strategic Recommendations

(i) Resource Mobilisation:

Support to IRLCO-CSA and national ministries to undertake limited surveillance and control measures between July and September 2026 to prevent swarms escaping from breeding areas.

(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

Most of the Red Locust outbreak areas located did not receive rainfall except for low rainfall in Caia, Dimba (Dimba plains), Mafambisse and Buzi (Buzi - Gorongosa plains) as indicated in Table 1 below. With the start of dry season and vegetation drying taking place. Locusts will continue coalescing.

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

LOCATION	COUNTRY	June 2026
Mafambisse (Buzi plain)	Mozambique	10.0
Gorongosa (Gorongosa plain)	Mozambique	12.0
Caia (Dimba plains)	Mozambique	15.0
Buzi	Mozambique	13.0
Dimba	Mozambique	13.0
Masenge (Wembere Plain)	Tanzania	00.0
Kaliua (Malgarasi Plain)	Tanzania	00.0
Muze (Rukwa Valley)	Tanzania	00.0
Mpanda	Tanzania	N/A
Lifuwu (MpatsaNjoka Dambo)	Malawi	00.0
Ngokwe (Lake Chiuta plains)	Malawi	00.0
Khanda (Lake Chilwa plains)	Malawi	00.0
Namwala (Kafue Flats)	Zambia	00.0

N/A Not Available

3. RED LOCUST (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville)

Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia

Various population densities of immature adult Red Locust were likely to be present in Lake Chiuta plains, Lake Chilwa 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 during June 2026. With vegetation drying and the commencement of grass burning, immature adult Red Locusts are likely to coalesce more and form groups/concentrations and eventually swarms, which may escape from breeding areas and cause substantial damage to crops if not timely controlled. 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 continued to remain relatively calm during June 2026. Isolated AML populations were observed during the month under review. The Ministry of Agriculture, Zambia, is vigilantly monitoring the situation.

Zimbabwe

There were no reports of African Migratory locust outbreaks in Zimbabwe. However, the elegant grasshopper (*Zonocerus elegans*) was reported in Borrowdale, Harare. Successful control was carried out to prevent further spread and potential damage.

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

Malawi has continued reporting low Fall Armyworm infestations across all eight (8) Agriculture Development Divisions of Malawi (Lilongwe, Kasungu, Machinga, Mzuzu, Blantyre, Shire Valley Salima and Karonga ADDs). The pest was reported attacking maize in an estimated total area of 65,975 hectares during the month of June 2026. Control was carried out on 43,602 hectares, which is equal to 66% of the affected area, using synthetic pesticides and botanical extracts (Sisal, Neem, and Pepper).

Mozambique

Low infestation levels of Fall Armyworm were continued to be reported attacking maize in Caia, Buzi, Dondo and Nhamatanda districts. Affected farmers carried out control with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture.

Kenya

Fall Armyworm infestations on maize continued to be reported attacking long rain season maize in most parts of the country. Affected farmers carried out control with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture through extension officers.

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

Quelea birds were reported attacking rice in Kilosa and Mvomero districts, Morogoro region. The Plant Health and Pesticide Authority carried out a survey and control operations using DLCO aircraft. An estimated 10.6 million birds (1 roost and 4 colonies) covering a total estimated area of 149 ha were sprayed with 495 litres of avicide in Kilosa and 17.7 million birds (7 colonies and 3 roosts) covering a total estimated area of 255 ha were sprayed with 755 litres of avicide in Mvomero.

Zimbabwe

Quelea birds were reported attacking winter cereals in Matebeleland North, Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central and Masvingo Provinces. The Migratory Pest Control Department carried out surveys in affected areas. An estimated 7,000 birds were controlled in Mashonaland Central Province, 14,500 birds in Mashonaland West Province and 17,414 birds in Masvingo Province. Controls were carried out using synthetic pesticides and nets. Control operation of the pest was underway in the Matebeleland Province at the time of writing this report.

Mozambique

There were no reported quelea birds. However, doves and guinea fowl continued to be reported in some areas, feeding on rice and maize crops that are currently being harvested in Sofala Province

Kenya

There were no reports of Quelea bird outbreaks in Kenya.

10. FORECAST FOR THE PERIOD JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2026

(i) 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.

(ii) African Migratory Locust

- African migratory locusts are likely to persist in the Western and Southern Provinces in Zambia during the outlook period.
- Vigilant monitoring and control measures will be critical to prevent crop devastation.

(iii) 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.

(iv) Quelea Birds

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

(v) Preparedness:

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

(vi) Appeal:

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

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The report has been compiled from information gathered by staff of IRLCO-CSA, and contributions by staff of Plant Protection Units of the Ministries in Member States.

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