

International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa

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MIGRATORY PEST SITUATION DURING MAY 2026 AND FORECAST FOR JUNE TO AUGUST 2026

1. OVERVIEW

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

(i) Current Situation

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 May as indicated below:

- **Malawi:** low densities of isolated locusts reported in Lake Chiuta plains, Lake Chilwa plains, Mpatsa Njoka Dambo
- **Tanzania:** calmness reported in breeding areas Ikuu-Katavi plains, Malagarasi Basin, Rukwa Valley, Bahi Valley, Wembere
- **Mozambique:** low density isolated locusts reported in Buzi - Gorongosa plains, Dimba plains
- **Zambia:** no locusts were observed in the areas which have seen huge invasions in the previous years - Western Province, Simalaha plains, Kafue Flats, Lukanga Swamps

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

(ii) Forecast

As the region face drier conditions resulting reduced flooding in June onwards, immature adult Red Locust may arise in the breeding sites and start to coalesce, forming dense concentrations that may eventually result to swarms.

(iii) Critical Note

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

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

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

(i) Current Situation

In the month of May 2026, there was no sighting of African Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria migratorioides*) in the breeding and invasion areas in Zambia: Simalaha Plains (Southern Province) and some areas in Western Province. However, this only implies isolated locusts will be in the breeding areas only.

(ii) Forecast

Since rains have stopped, it is expected that low AML densities may start coalescing during this period as there is presence of favourable feedlots for the locusts. Vigilance need to be kept in order to guarantee sighting if they increase.

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 across all Agriculture Development Divisions. An estimated total area of 39,059 hectares ha was reported to be infested by the pest in May 2026. Control was carried out on 85 % of the affected area using synthetic pesticides and botanical extracts.

Mozambique: Fall Armyworm infestations were continued to be reported in 25 ha across 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 Tabora, Singida, Arusha and Manyara regions, 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 26,800 birds were controlled in Mashonaland West and 36,700 in Mashonaland Central. Mashonaland East Province was under surveillance.

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

(ii) Forecasts

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

1f. Strategic Recommendations

(i) Resource Mobilization:

Support to IRLCO-CSA and national ministries to undertake limited surveillance and control measures between June and August 2026 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

Most of 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. The low amounts of rains received signified tailing-off of the rainfall season in Red Locust outbreak areas. With the rain season ending and vegetation drying taking place. Locusts will start coalescing.

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

LOCATION	COUNTRY	May 2026
Mafambisse (Buzi plain)	Mozambique	4.0
Gorongosa (Gorongosa plain)	Mozambique	4.0
Caia (Dimba plains)	Mozambique	5.0
Buzi	Mozambique	7.0
Dimba	Mozambique	9.0
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

Red Locust immature adult, concentrations of low 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. With the rain season ending and vegetation drying, 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 continued to remain relatively calm during the month of May 2026. No outbreak reports were received during the month under review. The Ministry of Agriculture, Zambia, is vigilantly monitoring the situation.

Zimbabwe

There were no African Migratory locust outbreak reports 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 continued to be reported across all eight (8) Agriculture Development Divisions of Malawi (Lilongwe, Kasungu, Machinga, Mzuzu, Blantyre, Shire Valley Salima and Karonga ADDs) attacking maize. An estimated total area of 39,059 hectares was reported to be infested by the pest during the month of May 2026. Control was carried out on 33,010 hectares, which is 85% of the affected area, using chemical pesticides and botanical extracts (Sisal, Neem, and Pepper).

Mozambique

Low infestation levels of Fall Armyworm continued to attacking maize 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

Fall Armyworm infestations on maize were reported in most part of the country where maize was planted in long rain season. 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 in Tabora, Arusha, Singida and Manyara regions attacking rice, sunflower and sorghum. Plant Health and Pesticide Authority carried out survey and control operations using DLCO aircraft (Table 2).

TABLE 2. QUELEA INFESTATION IN TANZANIA – May 2026

PLACE REPORTED		INFESTATION					AMOUNT OF CHEMICAL USED (Litre)	CONTROL METHOD	REMARKS
REGION	DISTRICT	ROOST	COLONY	CROP INFESTED	TOTAL AREA SPRAYED	NUMBER OF BIRDS CONTROLLED (Million)			
Tabora	Igunga	4	-	Rice and Sorghum	52	4.4	125	Aerial	Successful
Singida	Manyoni	-	1	Sorghum and Sunflower	28	3.8	125	Aerial	Successful
Arusha	Meru	2	-	Sorghum and Sunflower	68	1.6	175	Aerial	Successful
Manyara	Babati	3	-	Rice and Sorghum	98	4.0	250	Aerial	Successful

Zimbabwe

Quelea birds were reported attacking cereals in Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East and Central provinces. The Migratory Pest Control Department carried out surveys in affected areas. An estimated 26,800 birds were controlled in Mashonaland West and 36,700 in Mashonaland Central Provinces using chemicals and nets. Survey of the pest was carried out in the Mashonaland East Province and control preparation was underway at the time of writing this report.

Kenya

There were no reports of Quelea bird outbreaks in Kenya.

10. FORECAST FOR THE PERIOD JUNE TO AUGUST 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 Western and Southern Provinces in Zambia during the outlook period.
- Vigilant monitoring and control measures will be critical to avoid 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

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