International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa

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MIGRATORY PEST SITUATION DURING JULY 2026 AND FORECAST FOR AUGUST TO OCTOBER 2026

1. OVERVIEW

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

(i) Current Situation

The Locusts situation in the International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA) region continued to be relatively calm during the month of July. Immature Adult Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville) populations of various densities were expected to be present in all outbreak areas as indicated below:

- **Malawi**: low densities of isolated locusts continued to be present in Lake Chiuta plains, Lake Chilwa plains, Mpatsa Njoka Dambo
- **Tanzania:** Isolated Red Locust were expected in the Malagarasi Basin, Ikuu-Katavi plains, Rukwa Valley, Bahi Valley and Wembere plain during the month under review.
- **Mozambique**: low-density isolated locusts persisted 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 in July 2026.

(ii) Forecast

With vegetation drying and grass burning in progress, immature adults Red Locust are likely to concentrate further and form swarms during months of August and September 2026.

(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 migratoriodes* R & F.)

(i) Current Situation

Low population densities of African Migratory Locust (*Locusta migratoria migratoriodes*) 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 continued to be reported across all Agriculture Development Divisions in July 2026. An estimated total area of 57,207 ha was reported to be infested by the pest. Control was carried out on 73% of the affected area using synthetic pesticides and botanical extracts.

Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, 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, Manyara and Kilimanjaro regions, attacking rice. The country deployed spray aircraft in partnership with DLCO to control the Quelea birds.

Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe: There were no reported quelea bird outbreaks in these Member States.

(ii) Forecasts

Member States should continue to be vigilant in monitoring the birds to note the threshold for control. This is especially in Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

1f. Strategic Recommendations

(i) Resource Mobilisation:
Support IRLCO-CSA and national ministries to undertake limited surveillance and control measures between August and October 2026 to prevent swarms escaping from breeding areas and before the start of rain season.

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

Encourage non-member countries where Locusts breed and quelea birds roost to become members of the Organisation.

(iii) Farmer Support:
Expand technical assistance to farmers 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 Buzi (Buzi - Gorongosa plains) and Mafambisse, as indicated in Table 1 below. With vegetation drying, land clearing and burning are taking place. Locusts will continue coalescing.

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

LOCATION	COUNTRY	July 2026
Mafambisse (Buzi plain)	Mozambique	4.0
Gorongosa (Gorongosa plain)	Mozambique	00.0
Caia (Dimba plains)	Mozambique	00.0
Buzi	Mozambique	8.0
Dimba	Mozambique	00.0
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 of various populations were expected to be present in most outbreak areas. With vegetation drying, land clearing and burning, locusts are expected to coalesce and form swarms in Lake Chilwa/ Lake Chiuta plains in Malawi; Iku-Katavi plains, Lake Rukwa Valley and Malagarasi Basin in Tanzania; Kafue Flats in Zambia; Buzi Gorongosa, Dimba plains in Mozambique. Swarms, if not controlled on time, are likely to escape from these outbreak areas and invade crop farms. Member States are being requested to avail more resources to IRLCO – CSA and line Ministries of Agriculture to enable them to undertake surveys in all outbreak areas and, where necessary, control operations to avert 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 July 2026. Isolated AML populations

persisted in Simalaha plains 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.

6. TREE LOCUST (*Anacridium* spp.)

Tanzania and Kenya
The Tree Locust situation continued to remain 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 57,207 hectares during the month of July 2026. Control was carried out on 41,904 hectares, which is equivalent to 73% of the affected area, using synthetic pesticides and botanical extracts (Sisal, Neem, and Pepper).

Kenya
Fall Armyworm infestations on maize persisted in most parts of the Kenya, attacking long-rain-season maize. Affected farmers carried out control with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture through extension officers.

Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe
There were no reports on Fall Armyworm infestations in Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia or Zimbabwe. However, the pest may have infested crops and pastures.

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

In July, 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 Mvomero district, Morogoro region, Babati district, Manyara region and Hai district, Kilimanjaro region. The Plant Health and Pesticide Authority (TPHPA) carried out ground surveys and aerial control operations using DLCO aircraft. An estimated 1.2 million birds in 1 roost covering an estimated area of 24 ha were sprayed with 75 litres of avicide in Mvomero district,

9.3 million in 5 roosts covering a total estimated area of 133 ha were sprayed with 325litres of avicide in Babati district and an estimated 8 million birds in 3 roosts covering 88 ha were sprayed with 275 litres of avicide in Hai district.

Kenya, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.
There were no reports of Quelea bird outbreaks in these Member States.

10. FORECAST FOR THE PERIOD AUGUST TO OCTOBER 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

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