

## **Despite improvements, up to 1.3 million people in Somalia face acute food security Crisis or worse outcomes** *More than 960 000 children likely to be acutely malnourished*

**February 3, 2020, Mogadishu/Washington** – Despite above-average national cereal crop production and improved livestock production following a largely favorable *Deyr* (October–December) rainy season, up to 1.3 million people across Somalia are expected to face food consumption gaps or depletion of assets indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3)<sup>1</sup> or worse outcomes through mid-2020. In addition, nearly 963 000 children under the age of five are likely to be acutely malnourished through December 2020. Sustained and large-scale humanitarian assistance is currently preventing more severe outcomes in many areas. However, deterioration is expected in the food security situation between April and June 2020 in some areas where food and income sources are not expected to be sufficient to meet minimum kilocalorie requirements. Thus far, Desert Locust damages to pasture is limited and localized to central regions, as average to above average rainfall regenerated pasture and browse in most areas. Similarly, Desert Locust damages to the 2019 *Deyr* harvest are localized and limited to late-planted crops (milking stage). The risk of Desert Locust damages to both pasture and crops remains high and critical throughout 2020 given the ever-expanding areas affected, continued hatching and formation of hoppers and swarms. These findings reflect the outcome of the 2019 post-*Deyr* seasonal food security and nutrition assessment conducted across Somalia during November and December 2019. The assessment and the subsequent analyses was jointly led by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU, a project managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET, a project funded by USAID) with the active participation of Government institutions, UN and NGO partners.

Prior to the start of the *Deyr* 2019 season, many poor households in northern and central Somalia were still recovering from the loss of food and income source during the severe 2016/2017 drought and the 2018/2019 drought. In addition, at least 2.6 million people in Somalia have been displaced due to conflict, drought, floods, or similar factors. Food insecurity remained elevated in late 2019 due to floods that occurred during the *Deyr* season, which disrupted livelihood activities, caused large-scale population displacement, and resulted in significant crop losses in riverine livelihood zones.

The 2019 *Deyr* rains began earlier than normal between mid-September and early October, expanding to cover most parts of the country between mid-October and early December. Overall rainfall performance in terms of amount and distribution ranged from average to 400 percent above average in southern Somalia and most of central and northern Somalia. However, excessive rainfall in October and November resulted in extreme river floods as well as flash floods, which affected 570,000 people and caused crop damage in riverine livelihood zones along the Shabelle and Juba rivers. However, favorable rainfall in rain-fed agropastoral areas has contributed to a significant increase in crop production and livestock productivity in these areas.

2019 *Deyr* season cereal production in southern Somalia is estimated at 113 800 tons, including 9 100 tons of off-season harvests expected in late March/early April. The total cereal harvest in southern Somalia is the largest *Deyr* harvest since 2016 and 16 percent higher than the long-term average for 1995–2018. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the 2019 *Deyr* cereal production comes from sorghum in agropastoral livelihood zones, while the rest (27%) consists of maize, which is mainly cultivated in riverine livelihood zones. River floods and lack of farm inputs have contributed to lower maize production in riverine livelihood zones during the 2019 *Deyr* season. In the northwest, where favorable *Karan* rains in August and September improved production prospects, the 2019 *Gu/Karan* cereal production is estimated at 33 800 tons, which is still 19 percent below the 2010–2018 average.

Pasture, browse and water availability have improved greatly across the country. Current resources are expected to support and sustain livestock needs until the start of the *Gu* rains in April. In northern and central pastoral areas, where significant livestock loss occurred during the 2016/2017 drought, the availability of saleable animals has continued to gradually improve. However, many poor households are still unable to meet their minimum food needs without selling their animals to the point of endangering the sustainability of their herds and their livelihoods. Milk availability and access to milk have improved food access for a majority of pastoral households. Livestock-to-cereal terms of trade remain generally favorable, providing pastoralists with more than one bag (50kg) of cereals for the sale of one goat. Further improvements in the terms of trade are expected as market supply from the current *Deyr* harvest increases and places downward pressure on local cereal prices, and as livestock prices improve due to the anticipated, seasonal increase in demand in the lead up to and during the Ramadan and Hajj festivities between May and August.

Provision of emergency food assistance has continued between July and December 2019, reaching an average of 1.7 to 2 million every month according to data obtained from the Somalia Food Security Cluster. Sustained large-scale food assistance is likely preventing more severe food security outcomes in many areas. In the presence of assistance through March 2020, most of rural Somalia is classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2). However, Addun Pastoral of central Somalia is in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) given poor households' persistently low livestock holdings and little access to humanitarian assistance to mitigate food gaps.

Currently, an estimated 2.6 million people across Somalia remain internally displaced and highly impoverished. *Deyr* assessment

<sup>1</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity of food insecurity using a widely accepted five-phase scale: IPC Phase 1=Minimal; Phase 2=Stressed; Phase 3=Crisis; Phase 4=Emergency; and Phase 5=Famine at the area level (Phase 5=Catastrophe at the household group level).

results indicate that the 11 major Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) settlements are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the presence of humanitarian assistance. In most urban areas, food security outcomes are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Minimal (IPC Phase 1). However, households in urban areas in Burao (Toghdeer) and Kismayo (Lower Juba) regions are facing food consumption gaps and are classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3), driven by high cost of living and limited income-earning opportunities.

In the presence of humanitarian assistance, approximately 1.1 million people are currently facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) outcomes through March 2020. An additional 2.9 million people are Stressed (IPC Phase 2), bringing the total number of people experiencing acute food insecurity to 4 million.

The consensus climate forecast released in late January by the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF54) indicates a greater likelihood of normal to above-normal rainfall performance across most of Somalia during the March to May 2019 *Gu* rainfall season. The rains are expected to improve pasture and water availability, crop cultivation, livestock production and reproduction, and access to agricultural employment. However, heavy rainfall could cause flooding and disruption to agricultural activities and trade flows in riverine and low-lying areas. In the far northwestern part of the country, where below average rainfall is expected, *Gu* season crop cultivation and livestock production and reproduction could be negatively affected.

Between April and June, food security is expected to deteriorate in some parts of northern and central Somalia, with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes expected in Guban Pastoral, East Golis Pastoral livelihood zones of Sanaag region, and Addun and Hawd Pastoral of central Somalia, as poor households with limited livestock are expected to be unable to fully meet their minimum food requirements on their own. This does not factor the potential impact of food assistance as information on planned and funded food and cash assistance through June 2020 was not available at the time of the analysis. Food security is also expected to worsen among IDPs with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes expected across most of the main IDP settlements as significant proportions of IDP households are unable to meet their minimum food needs without external assistance.

In summary, 1.3 million people across Somalia are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) outcomes between April and June without sustained humanitarian assistance. An additional 2.8 million people are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), bringing the total number of people facing acute food insecurity to 4.1 million. Humanitarian assistance must be sustained through June 2020 to prevent Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes for 1.3 million people. Livelihoods support is also required for people that are Stressed or worse (IPC Phase 2 or higher).

| Regions      | Population (2014 Estimates) | Number of Acutely Food Insecure People (Rural, IDP and Urban Combined) |                |                   |                               |                  |                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
|              |                             | Current (January-March 2020)   |                |                   | Projected (April – June 2020) |                  |                   |
|              |                             | Stressed (IPC 2)   | Crisis (IPC 3) | Emergency (IPC 4) | Stressed (IPC 2)              | Crisis (IPC 3)   | Emergency (IPC 4) |
| Awdal        | 724,573                     | 172,000  | 48,000         | 12,000            | 180,000                       | 56,000           | 12,000            |
| W. Galbeed   | 1,321,524                   | 322,000  | 135,000        | 6,000             | 329,000                       | 145,000          | 8,000             |
| Togdheer     | 755,793                     | 180,000  | 110,000        | 14,000            | 181,000                       | 91,000           | 13,000            |
| Sool         | 360,432                     | 76,000   | 23,000         | 4,000             | 77,000                        | 30,000           | 6,000             |
| Sanaag       | 562,067                     | 116,000  | 32,000         | 11,000            | 116,000                       | 38,000           | 11,000            |
| Bari         | 712,934                     | 174,000  | 61,000         | 13,000            | 181,000                       | 71,000           | 17,000            |
| Nugaal       | 337,588                     | 69,000   | 33,000         | 4,000             | 70,000                        | 35,000           | 6,000             |
| Mudug        | 627,723                     | 190,000  | 65,000         | 15,000            | 198,000                       | 74,000           | 20,000            |
| Galgaduud    | 427,809                     | 132,000  | 61,000         | 12,000            | 138,000                       | 66,000           | 13,000            |
| Hiraan       | 422,993                     | 86,000   | 19,000         | 4,000             | 89,000                        | 26,000           | 6,000             |
| M. Shabelle  | 436,759                     | 72,000   | 8,000          | 3,000             | 69,000                        | 19,000           | 3,000             |
| L. Shabelle  | 911,502                     | 192,000  | 25,000         | 9,000             | 180,000                       | 25,000           | 9,000             |
| Bay          | 846,600                     | 177,000  | 74,000         | 14,000            | 158,000                       | 92,000           | 27,000            |
| Bakool       | 284,353                     | 32,000   | 10,000         | 2,000             | 32,000                        | 10,000           | 2,000             |
| Gedo         | 430,943                     | 181,000  | 45,000         | 15,000            | 137,000                       | 48,000           | 18,000            |
| M. Juba      | 286,538                     | 70,000   | 32,000         | 1,000             | 67,000                        | 26,000           | 1,000             |
| L. Juba      | 648,936                     | 150,000  | 86,000         | 14,000            | 151,000                       | 90,000           | 16,000            |
| Banadir      | 2,228,463                   | 465,000  | 93,000         | 37,000            | 489,000                       | 118,000          | 50,000            |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>12,327,530</b>           | <b>2,856,000</b>   | <b>960,000</b> | <b>190,000</b>    | <b>2,842,000</b>              | <b>1,060,000</b> | <b>238,000</b>    |

High levels of acute malnutrition persist across many parts of Somalia, according to results from 48 separate nutrition surveys conducted by FSNAU and partners in November and December 2019. Contributing factors include high morbidity, low immunization and vitamin-A supplementation, and poor care practices and food insecurity. At the national level, the median prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) in the 2019 Deyr was found to be 13.1 percent indicating a sustained Serious phase compared to 2019 Deyr (12.6%). Morbidity remains high and vitamin A supplementation and measles vaccination remain well below the recommended SPHERE standard in most of the population groups that have high levels of acute malnutrition. Urgent treatment and nutrition support are required for approximately 963 000 children under the age of five years (total acute malnutrition burden), who will likely face acute malnutrition through December 2020, including 162 000 who are likely to be severely malnourished. Integrated interventions should be provided to support recovery and prevent deterioration in the nutrition situation.

Thus far, Desert Locust damages to pasture has been limited and localized (central regions) due to the positive impact of average to above average rainfall in improving pasture and browse across most parts of the country. Similarly, Desert Locust damages to the 2019 crop harvest has also been localized and limited to late-planted crops (milking stage) as most of the crops were planted on time or early, with farmers taking advantage of timely and favorable rainfall conditions. The latest report from FAO indicates that locusts will increase further as a new generation of breeding starts. In northeast Somalia, hopper bands are present, and swarms are laying

eggs where hatching and further hopper band formation are imminent. Other swarms have been reported in southern Somalia, near the border with Kenya. Therefore, the risk of Desert Locust damage to both pasture and crops remains high and critical throughout 2020 and requires continued close monitoring and urgent scaling up of control measures given the ever-expanding areas affected, continued hatching and formation of hoppers and swarms.

The foregoing analyses did not consider significant damage of Desert Locust to pasture and crops, significant flooding, or poor rainfall performance during the 2020 *Gu* season as a most likely scenario. However, under scenarios in which the forthcoming April to June *Gu* rains perform poorly, river and flash floods cause significant damage to crop cultivation, or the ongoing Desert Locust outbreak causes significant damage to pasture and crop cultivation, the food security situation across Somalia could become worse than indicated above.

#### **Areas and Populations of Concern**

Population groups classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse require interventions aimed at reducing food consumption gaps, eradicating acute malnutrition, saving lives, and protecting and saving livelihoods.

The following are considered areas of concern and are in need of urgent nutrition and health support interventions. They currently have or are projected to have a Critical GAM prevalence, indicated by a weight-for-height z-score of 15-29.9% or by a Mid-Upper Arm Circumference below 125 mm of  $\geq 10\%$ : Hiraan Riverine Pump Irrigation, Hiraan Southern Agropastoral, Hiraan Southern Inland Pastoral, Riverine Gravity Irrigation of Middle and Lower Shabelle, Bay Sorghum High Potential Agropastoral, Bay Low Potential Agropastoral, Southern Inland Pastoral of Elberde district in Bakool, Juba Riverine (Pump & Gravity) Irrigation, Bosasso IDPs, Garowe IDPs, Galkacyo IDPs, Beletweyne IDPs and Urban, Baidoa IDPs, and Mogadishu IDPs.

FSNAU and FEWS NET will continue to monitor conditions and outcomes and report on the situation. All information will be made available through [www.fsnau.org](http://www.fsnau.org) and [www.fews.net](http://www.fews.net). For more information, please contact: Alberto TrilloBarca, Communications Officer, FAO Somalia, Tel: + 252 619 154 103/+254 768 055 361, Email: [Alberto.TrilloBarca@fao.org](mailto:Alberto.TrilloBarca@fao.org) or Mike Bennett, Communications Director, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), Email: [fews.media@fews.net](mailto:fews.media@fews.net).

# Somalia Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview

Current (January-March 2020)

Projection (April-June 2020)

