FEWS NET
Famine Early Warning Systems Network

FSNAU
Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit - Somalia

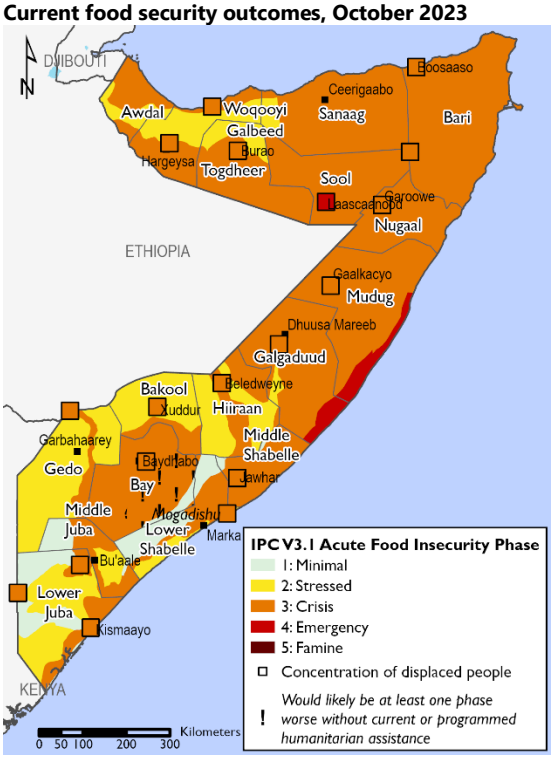
SOMALIA Food Security Outlook October 2023 to May 2024

Deyr flooding drives elevated needs, though rain will aid drought recovery

Key Messages

- Humanitarian assistance needs remain high in Somalia, as many households continue to suffer from the impacts of the historic five-season (2020–2023) drought, particularly in central pastoral areas and settlements for internally displaced people. Additionally, in October, flooding associated with significantly above-average *deyr* rainfall is increasing needs in riverine and flood-affected agropastoral areas of the south. In October, most of the country is facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are assessed in central *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* areas and among the severely conflict-affected displaced populations in Laascaanood.
- The October to December *deyr* rainy season started on time or slightly early in most of the country. The intensity of rainfall quickly increased in October, with heavy rainfall and rapidly rising river water levels causing severe flooding in southern riverine and even agropastoral livelihood zones. The flooding has caused population displacement and damage to standing crops, in addition to disrupting agricultural activities for the *deyr* season.
- In riverine and other flood-prone areas, needs are expected to remain elevated during the October to December *deyr* rainy season due to anticipated negative impacts of heavy rainfall and flooding. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are likely in riverine areas during this period, and an increase in the population facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes is expected in urban areas and IDP settlements in riverine areas alongside an influx of IDPs from rural areas. However, despite severe disruptions to the main *deyr* agricultural season in flooded areas, recessional cultivation opportunities once the floods subside will provide income-earning opportunities from agricultural labor and food and income from the recessional harvest around March/April. This will improve outcomes to Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Current food security outcomes, October 2023



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Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

- In the rest of the country, the *deyr* seasonal rains are expected to generally support crop and livestock production. As such, though main-season *deyr* crop production is now expected to be below-average at the national level given losses due to waterlogging and flooding in affected areas, most rural households will experience improved access to seasonal food and income during the October to December *deyr* season and the beginning of the 2024 *gu* season in April and May, leading to widespread improvement in acute food insecurity outcomes in the February to May 2024 period. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will likely persist in northern areas worst affected by prior seasons of poor crop production, central areas worst affected by the 2020 to 2023 drought, and riverine areas affected by flooding during the *deyr* season. Meanwhile, in IDP settlements, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes will be likely given low levels of assistance and a continued influx of IDPs due to flooding and conflict.

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National Overview

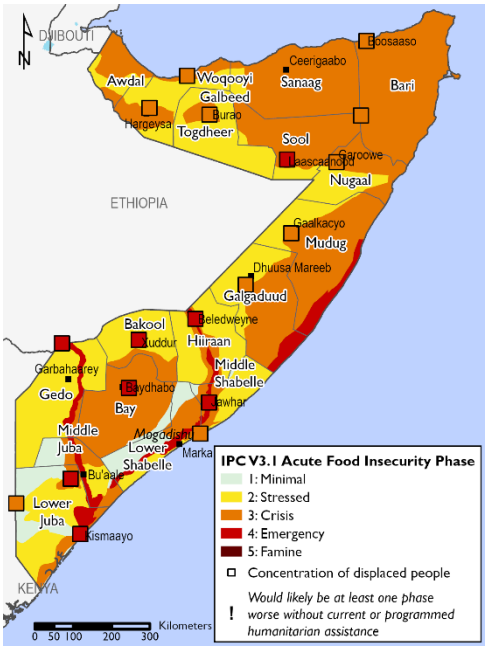
Current Situation

July to September *hagaa* and *karan* seasons: The *hagaa* season in the south and the *karan* season in the northwest have both recently concluded in September with below-average cumulative rainfall (Figure 1), contrary to earlier forecasts of average to above-average rainfall. In the southern *hagaa*-receiving coastal and adjacent inland regions, rainfall was poor throughout the season, negatively impacting rangeland conditions and off-season crop harvests in riverine areas of the Hiiraan, Shabelle, Gedo, and Juba regions. In the northwestern regions, *karan* rainfall—vital for long-cycle sorghum production in *Northwestern Agropastoral* areas of Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed—performed poorly in terms of its onset and spatial and temporal distribution throughout the season, negatively impacting *karan* sorghum production.

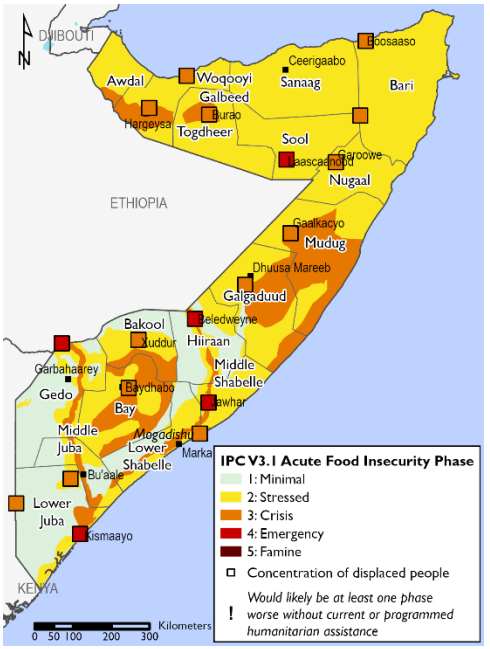
Progress of October to December *deyr* rainy season: The country's secondary October to December *deyr* rainy season, which is expected to be much wetter than typical due to strong El Niño and positive Indian Ocean Dipole conditions, began in early October throughout the country, representing a timely to slightly early onset. According to CHIRPS remote sensing data, rainfall during the first ten days of October was close to the long-term (1981–2010) average across most of the country, but 10 to 50 percent lower than average in most of the south and 25 to 100 percent below average in pastoral and agropastoral areas of Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed of the northwest. By the end of October, heavy rainfall reduced the initial negative anomalies and led to cumulatively above-average rainfall across most of the country. However, below-average conditions persisted in some localized areas of the south (Figure 2). Of particular concern are northeastern parts of the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral and Fishing* livelihood zone and the *Northern Inland Pastoral* livelihood zone.

River water levels and flooding: High concern exists for river flooding during the October to December *deyr* season, given the forecast of significantly above-average rainfall, resulting in the need for close monitoring of river water levels. According to field reports and data from FAO's Somalia Water and Land Information Management Project (SWALIM), river water levels in upstream riverine areas of Hiiraan, Shabelle, Gedo, and Juba regions have been rising rapidly since mid-September due to rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands. As of mid-October, SWALIM data indicated that water levels along the Shabelle and Juba rivers were above the long-term average but still below the *moderate* flood risk levels. While the situation remains manageable for now, river water levels are expected to rise further in the coming weeks, given the forecast for heavy *deyr* rainfall in Somalia and in the Ethiopian highlands, with high concern for flooding. According to SWALIM reporting, there are about 170 open river breakages in the Shabelle region and nearly 30 in the Juba region, placing off-season cereal and late planted cash crops in Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Middle Juba at risk of damage due to flooding.

Projected acute food security outcomes, October 2023 to January 2024



Projected acute food security outcomes, February to May 2024



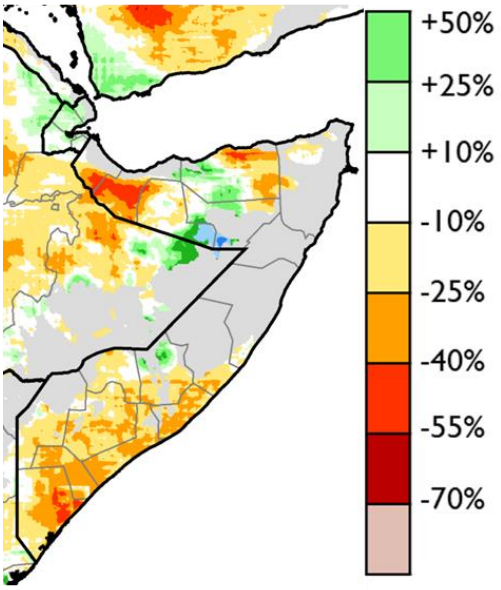
Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

More recently, as of late October/early November, heavy rains had caused substantial flooding across the central and southern regions, with Bay, Bakool, Gedo, and Hiiraan the worst hit. In agropastoral areas of these regions, an estimated 25 to 45 percent of farms were inundated, while more than 80 percent of farmland was inundated in riverine areas due to flooding in both the Shabelle and Juba rivers, resulting in damage to standing off-season crops and *deyr*-season planted crops. The flooding has also displaced people and cut off trade.

Off-season *gu* crop production: In southern riverine areas (along the Shabelle and Juba rivers in the Middle and Lower Shabelle, Lower and Middle Juba, Gedo, and Hiiraan regions), off-season *gu* crop production is expected to be largely below average due to dry spells and moisture stress associated with below-average July to September *hagaa* rainfall, as well as due to the impacts of pest infestations and continued river flooding in some areas (particularly in Jowhar and Mahaddaay districts of Middle Shabelle and Jamaame district of Lower Juba). Pest infestations—including of crickets and corn earworm—damaged the off-season maize crops in most riverine areas and neighboring recessional cultivating agropastoral areas. Meanwhile, flooding sustained waterlogged conditions in tens of thousands of hectares of farmland, suspending recessional cultivation. Currently, large areas of farmland in Middle Shabelle remain inundated, which is also hindering cultivation for the main *deyr* season. To date, in riverine areas, somewhat more than half of the projected 10,100 MT of off-season maize, as well as other cash crops, were harvested in late September or are being harvested in October. Meanwhile, around one fifth of standing off-season crops are in land that remains flooded, and another fifth are at the vegetative stage and are at risk of further river floods. Meanwhile, in the recessional-cultivating rainfed agropastoral areas of Juba and Shabelle, poor July to September *hagaa* rainfall caused most of the expected 1,400 MT of off-season sorghum crops to wilt. However, high river levels enabled farmers to irrigate and plant cash crops, such as citrus fruits.

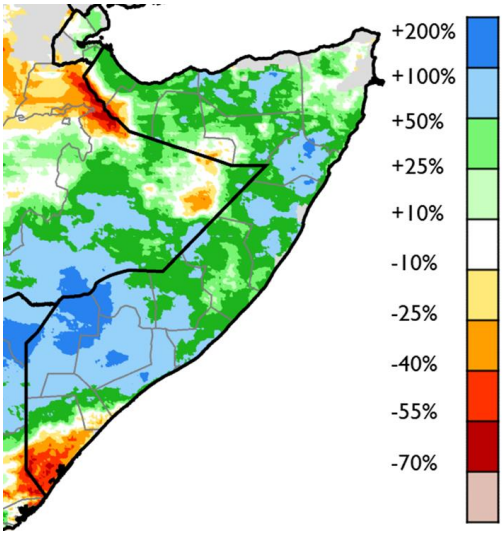
In the northwestern agropastoral areas, the *karan* sorghum harvest is expected to be much worse than previously projected. Planted area was low because of too much rainfall in March and April. This was followed by a long dry spell until July. Overall, the *karan* rainfall from July to September was 55 to 85 percent below the long-term average (1981–2010) and poorly distributed over space and time. This reduced crop yields and caused late-planted crops to wilt. Most of the wilted sorghum crops were used for livestock feed. In the *Northwestern Agropastoral* livelihood zone, the sorghum and maize harvest will likely be much lower than the previous projection of 14,400 MT, which was already 60 percent below the 2010 to 2022 average, though updated production estimates are not yet available. On the other hand, light to moderate rainfall in late September and early October helped some ratoon sorghum plants to regrow and grass to regenerate in the *Togdheer Agropastoral* livelihood zone. These are mainly for livestock fodder, as the cold season starts from October to December.

Figure 1 **Cumulative rainfall from July 1 to September 30, 2023, shown as a percent of average, according to CHIRPS data**



Source: UCSB

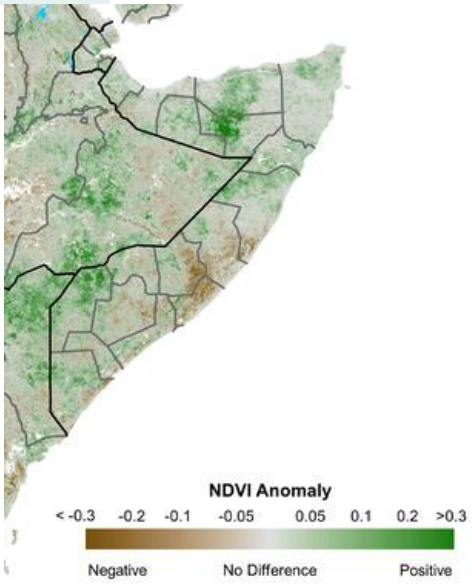
Figure 2 **Cumulative rainfall from October 1-31, 2023, shown as a percent of 1981-2010 average, according to CHIRPS data**



Source: UCSB

***Deyr* seasonal agricultural activities:** Farmers in agropastoral and riverine areas of the southern and central regions are currently preparing and planting their lands. Maize and sorghum are the main cereal crops planted in most southern agropastoral and riverine areas, while farmers in the *Central Cowpea Agropastoral* livelihood zone plant cowpeas. In riverine areas, off-season crop harvesting, which started in late September, is currently ongoing in October, while maize and other cash crops have also been planted in portions of land that had no September/October off-season crops. In agropastoral areas, most farmers have finished planting, and good seed germination of early-planted seeds has already been reported in large parts of Bay and Bakool, Shabelle, and central regions due to light-to-moderate rainfall beginning in late September. Early planted crops in these areas are now at the first weeding stage, providing poor households with labor opportunities.

Figure 3 **Anomaly in vegetation greenness during the October 21-31, 2023, period compared to the 2012–2021 average, based on the eVIIRS Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI)**



Source: USGS

Rangeland conditions and livestock migration: Although seasonal rainfall since the April to June *gu* 2023 season has overall supported regeneration of pasture and water resources, vegetation deficits are still observable in parts of the southern and central regions and localized areas in the northern regions (Figure 3) due to limited recovery driven by extreme temperatures and the poor performance of the July to September *hagaa* and *karan* rainfall. Despite the negative anomalies, dry pasture is available in many southern and northern regions. However, ground information suggests that large vegetation deficits persist in the drought-affected *Hawd Pastoral* and agropastoral areas of Hiiraan and *Addun Pastoral* and *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* areas of the central regions. Below-average vegetation conditions also exist in localized northern areas, especially in *Hawd Pastoral* areas of Togdheer; parts of *Northern Inland Pastoral* and *West Golis Pastoral* of Sanaag; *Addun Pastoral* of Nugaal and South Mudug; and *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* areas of Bari, Nugaal, and Southern Mudug. Typical internal livestock movement in search of better pasture and water was reported across most north-central areas of the country in September and October, driven by localized light to moderate rainfall in late September/early October.

Water availability and prices: Water availability and access vary across the country. During September and October, most northwestern regions reported average availability and access to water, with some localized deficits. In the northeast, water remains in short supply, and localized water trucking efforts are ongoing to address critical shortages in parts of the *Addun Pastoral* livelihood zone in Nugaal and Southern Mudug. However, the situation is gradually improving with the better performance of *deyr* rainfall observed in late September and October. In the central regions, extreme dryness resulting from below-average *gu* rainfall followed by a harsh *hagaa* season has led to ongoing water trucking in most pastoral areas from July to early October. Still, access to water has improved due to the increasing number of boreholes and plastic storage tanks, which has in turn helped to stabilize water prices. Nevertheless, some distant rural areas face acute water shortages and high prices. In southern regions, water availability and access are generally near average in most areas. However, shortages persist in regions where 2023 *gu* rainfall was poor and the *hagaa* season did not perform well, such as in *Southern Inland Pastoral* and *Hawd Pastoral* areas of Hiiraan, coastal areas of the Shabelles, and localized *Southern Inland Pastoral* and *Juba Cattle Pastoral* areas of Middle Juba.

According to market monitoring data from FSNAU/FEWS NET, water prices also vary across these areas. In rural parts of the northwest, the price of a 20-liter jerrycan ranged from 500 to 950 SLS in September 2023, marking a 36 to 49 percent increase compared to the five-year average. In the northeast, prices range between 4,125 and 10,000 SOS, with increases of 17 percent in Sool and 73 percent in Nugaal compared to the five-year average. In the central regions, particularly Mudug, the price of a 20 L jerrycan was 7,000 SOS in September, only 10 percent higher than the five-year average. In the southern regions, prices range from 1,000 to 5,000 SOS, with the lowest prices in Lower Juba and the highest in Middle Juba, where the impact of the failed *hagaa* season has been more significant. Across most of the southern regions, given better performance of recent rainy seasons and better access to shallow wells, prices are generally similar to or lower than the five-year average. However, in rural areas of Hiiraan, the price of a 20 L jerrycan in September—at 3,000 SOS—was more than double the five-year average.

Livestock assets: In north-central pastoral livelihood zones, poor households' livestock holdings remain moderately to significantly below baseline assessment levels following the prolonged 2020 to 2023 drought. Meanwhile, across southern pastoral areas where the drought was less severe, livestock herd sizes range from moderately below baseline levels to above baseline levels.

As of September/early October, livestock body conditions varied across the country. In the north, livestock body conditions were reported to be average across most pastoral areas of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, and Bari regions; however, due to poor rangelands, below-average livestock body conditions were reported in localized pastoral areas of Sool and Sanaag regions, *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* and *Addun Pastoral* livelihood zones, and in the northeast (Puntland). In the central regions of *Coastal*

Deeh Pastoral, *Addun Pastoral*, and *Cowpea Belt Agropastoral* livelihood zones, where the drought was significant over many seasons, livestock body conditions were still below average levels, though livestock body conditions in *Hawd Pastoral* livelihood zone were near normal. On the other hand, livestock body conditions in most southern pastoral livelihood zones ranged from near average to above average, with the exception of the *Southern Agropastoral* and *Hawd Pastoral* areas of the Hiiraan region, where below-average livestock body conditions were reported.

Livestock conceptions, births, and milk production: Currently in October, livestock conception rates remain relatively low across most of the country, as is typical at the beginning of the rainy season. However, *medium* levels of goat and sheep kidding and lambing are starting to be reported in many pastoral and agropastoral livelihood zones of the country, with peak birth rates expected in November due to *medium-high* conception rates in the recent 2023 *gu* season. Meanwhile, due to low livestock conception rates in previous drought seasons, along with abortions caused by diseases, little to no calving of large ruminants (whose gestation period is longer) is reported in most areas, with the lowest rates reported in parts of Shabelle, Juba, and Gedo regions. Milk production remains atypically low across the livelihood zones due to the limited births of large ruminants, which provide the bulk of milk for consumption and sale among pastoral and agropastoral households.

Livestock trade and prices: Livestock trade, a crucial economic activity for pastoral and agropastoral communities, continues normally in most parts of the country. However, there has been a noticeable decline in livestock trade in the northwest. In particular, a significant reduction in trade and supply of livestock was observed in Burao, which is the largest livestock market in the northwest. This reduction in trade is attributed to the conflict over control of Laascaanood town and the Sool region. The decline in livestock trade has also impacted the northwestern Berbera port, where livestock exports to the Arabian Gulf have significantly declined. This is because traders in Sool, Sanaag, and Zone Five of Ethiopia have shifted their trade to Bosaso port in the northeast of Somalia.

In most of the northern and southern regions of the country, increased supply of livestock in markets is resulting in declining prices, according to market monitoring data from FSNAU/FEWS NET. However, prices of local-quality goats increased by 9 percent from August to September in key markets of the more severely drought-affected central region due to reduced market supply given low availability of saleable livestock at the household level. In the southern Juba and sorghum belt regions, livestock prices are notably higher than at the same time last year, by 27 and 36 percent, respectively, as well as 31 to 32 percent higher than the five-year average. Meanwhile, in the central and Shabelle regions, prices are 6 and 4 percent higher than a year ago, while in the northeast and northwest regions prices are 16 percent and 4 percent lower than a year ago, respectively. When compared to the five-year averages, prices ranged from average to 9 percent above average in the central, northeast, northwest and Shabelle regions.

National economy: Economic activity in Somalia suffered from the impacts of severe drought conditions for five consecutive seasons. Real GDP growth dropped to 1.7 percent in 2022, down from 2.9 percent in 2021, due to a combination of drought, insecurity, and food and fuel inflation. However, GDP growth is forecasted to rebound slightly to 2.8 percent overall in 2023, according to the African Development Bank (ADB). Additionally, according to the Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, the annual inflation rate declined slightly from 5.98 percent in July to 5.82 percent in August 2023. This marks the lowest rate recorded since March, mainly driven by declining prices of food and beverages.

According to the ADB and the World Bank, Somalia continues to make progress toward reaching the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This will enable Somalia to qualify for full and irrevocable debt relief, which could reduce the country's debt-to-GDP ratio from 41 percent in 2022 to a more sustainable 6 percent.

Staple food prices: Between August and September, staple cereal prices generally remained stable or slightly declined in key southern production areas, with September prices similar to or higher than the five-year average according to FSNAU/FEWS NET data. In Baidoa, the reference market for sorghum-producing areas of the southern regions, prices of red sorghum grain averaged 9,300 SOS/kg in September after increasing by 7 percent from August levels. Prices in September were 47 percent lower than last year and similar to the five-year average. Meanwhile, in the Qoryoley reference market for maize-producing areas, prices of white maize grain averaged 8,000 SOS/kg in September after declining 5 percent since the previous month and 24 percent since the same time last year. However, September prices remained 19 percent higher than the five-year average. Above-average maize prices are likely being driven largely by below-average off-season crop production following severe moisture stress caused by poor *hagaa* rains.

Meanwhile, in the central and northeastern regions of the country, maize and sorghum prices were generally stable from August to September. However, prices in these areas are around 10 to 20 percent higher than last year and the five-year average due to limited supplies from the south. Similarly, in the northwest, where poor *karan* crop prospects are looming, white sorghum prices were stable in September but at levels significantly higher than the five-year average. In the Hargeisa reference market, for instance, the price of sorghum in September was 7,000 SLS/kg, the same as in the previous month but 23 percent higher than the five-year average, likely associated with low stocks following multiple seasons of below-average *karan* crop production.

Purchasing power: Driven mainly by above-average rice prices, purchasing power as measured by the terms of trade (a simple ratio) between prices of local-quality goats and staple rice prices remains below average in most pastoral areas of the central and northern parts of the country. In Galgaduud of the central region, a household could purchase an average of 47 kg of rice with the sale of one local-quality goat at prevailing prices in September 2023. This is 4 percent more than last year but 10 percent below the five-year average. In Togdheer of the northwestern region, a household could similarly purchase an average of 48 kg of rice with the sale of one local-quality goat in September, representing a 24 percent and 45 percent decrease, respectively, from the same time last year and the five-year average. However, it should be noted that most poor pastoralist households in northern and central areas face highly limited ability to sell livestock either because of reduced livestock holdings and below-normal livestock body conditions due to the previous drought or because they have already moved to IDP camps in main towns.

Meanwhile, in the south, poor households dependent on agricultural labor are mostly earning above-average wage rates. Generally, the labor-to-cereals terms of trade were stable or slightly improved from August to September, primarily due to seasonal increases in wage rates alongside increased demand for agricultural labor (except in Lower Shabelle and Middle Juba, where wage rates were stable or slightly declined, respectively) and generally stable or slightly declining local cereal prices. Overall in September, the terms of trade were well above last year's levels and near or above the five-year average in most of the south. In the Bay region, for instance, a day of casual labor in September 2023 could buy 10 kg of red sorghum on average, the same as in the previous month but double last year and close to the five-year average. In Middle Shabelle, one day of labor could fetch 14 kg of white maize, which is 75 percent higher than last year and 17 percent higher than the five-year average. Similar trends have been observed in the Middle and Lower Juba, Lower Shabelle, and Gedo regions.

Conflict, insecurity, and displacement: Conflict continues to contribute to acute food insecurity in Somalia, especially in southern and central regions. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project and other sources, levels of civil unrest and political violence increased after August 2023 when the federal government announced the start of the second phase of the counterinsurgency campaign in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states. After launching the offensive, security forces and government-backed clan militias, aided by US airstrikes, were able to regain control of several strategic towns from al-Shabaab militants in these regions. ACLED estimates that political violence has increased by over 70 percent in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states. This type of conflict tends to drive recurrent and protracted household displacement, disrupt livelihood activities, and damage households' productive assets. Additionally, the tactics employed by insurgents in areas under al-Shabaab control undermine market and trade activities, impose additional costs on households and traders via illicit taxation, and restrict humanitarian access to food-insecure populations. However, the liberation of several villages was significant for government forces to secure control over the main supply routes that connect Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle to Banadir and disrupt al-Shabaab-manned checkpoints, with improvements in population movement and reduced illicit taxation expected to ease pressure on food prices and livelihoods and improve humanitarian access.

Conflict and insecurity have been the most significant drivers of new and recurrent population displacement in 2023 to date, according to data on population movements and displacement collected by the UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network. Of an estimated 1,550,000 total people displaced between January and September 2023, 39 percent were displaced by conflict and insecurity, with the greatest number displaced in Sool, Galgaduud, Nugaal, and Banadir regions. Drought-induced displacement has also continued steadily throughout the year, accounting for nearly 30 percent of total displacement in 2023, with the greatest number displaced in Bay, Lower Shabelle, and Gedo regions. In total, UNHCR reports that 2.9 million people were internally displaced across Somalia as of September.

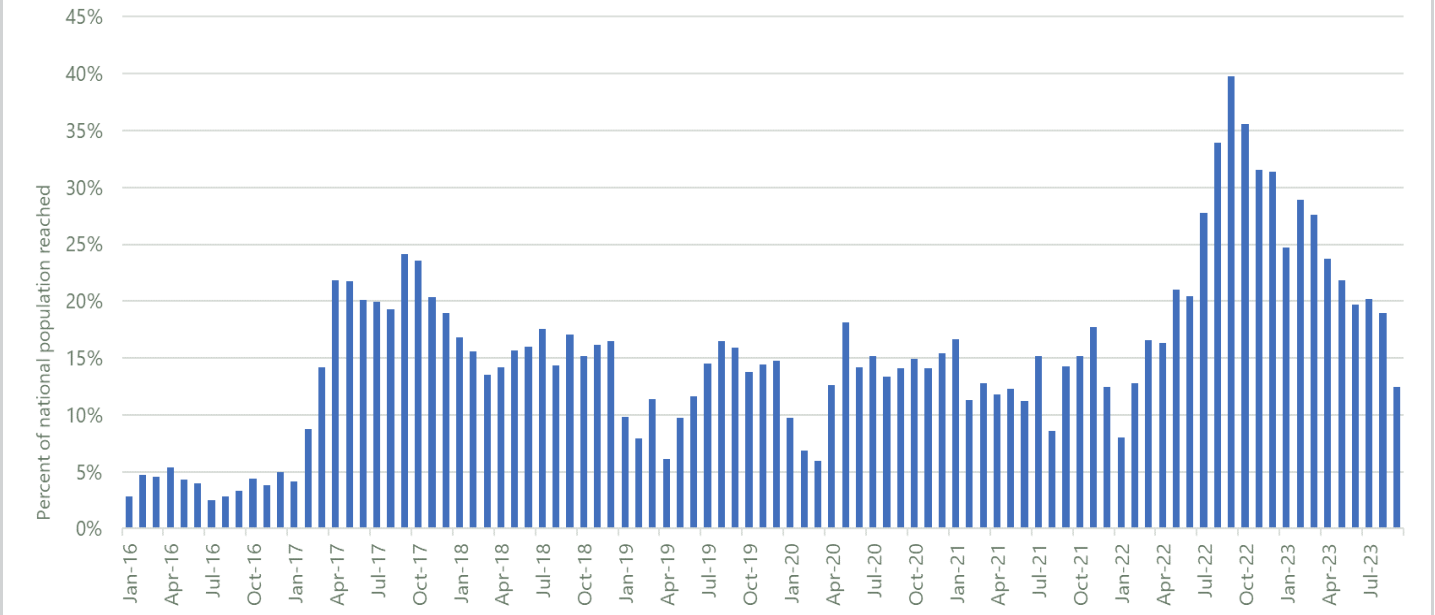
The impacts of conflict and displacement on food insecurity are protracted and widespread in Somalia, but several recent events are of particular concern. In the Bakool, Middle Juba, and Hiiraan regions, insurgents and allied militias have significantly intensified physical and economic road blockades to restrict trade and humanitarian assistance flows between the main towns

and nearby rural settlements. In Sanaag regions, about 13,000 people were displaced due to armed conflict and clan fighting between August and September. In Galmudug State (comprising south Mudug and Galgaduud regions), over 2,000 people were forced to flee their homes, mainly in Ceel Buur district, following clashes between government security forces and non-state armed groups in August. Access to some affected areas remains a challenge due to insecurity in and around *Hawd Pastoral* and *Addun Pastoral* livelihood zones. According to UN OCHA reporting, most of the displaced people have settled with host communities, while some have joined existing displacement sites. As of September, it is assessed that disruption to food access, WASH services, and livelihood and nutrition assistance in conflict-affected areas is significant. Given the forced nature of this displacement, the sudden loss of livelihoods will reduce access to food and water for displaced people, though some community and humanitarian support is anticipated.

Meanwhile, in the northwest, the Somaliland administration has been facing tensions and increasing violence after the November 2022 elections were postponed until 2024, causing disagreement between the administration and opposition parties. Some opposition parties took to the streets to demand presidential elections, clashing with security forces. Several people were reportedly killed and injured, and a dozen were arrested when security forces intervened. Tensions remain high in Somaliland and Puntland due to election-related disagreements. This could potentially lead to armed political and clan confrontations, resulting in new waves of displacement in both rural and urban areas and restricting pastoral households' seasonal migration options in search of water and pasture.

Humanitarian food assistance: Despite an ongoing scale-down in humanitarian assistance (Figure 4), the continued provision of assistance to millions of people is preventing worse acute food security outcomes among many rural and displaced beneficiaries. According to the Somalia Food Security Cluster (FSC), an average of nearly 3.0 million beneficiaries received cash or voucher assistance monthly in July and August. In September, assistance was further scaled down, with around 2.0 million people reached. This compares to around 5 to 6 million people who were being reached monthly in mid-to-late 2022. More recently, field information suggests that FSC plans to further scale down humanitarian food assistance in October—including to some of the worst-affected IDP settlements in the country. In addition to the scale-down, access constraints persist in many rural areas of the south-central regions due to conflict and insecurity, restricting the provision of assistance to some areas of highest concern, including the central Harardhere, Eldhere, and Elbur districts, largely in the *Coastal Deeh* and *Cowpea Belt* livelihood zones.

Figure 4 **Percent of national population reached with emergency humanitarian food assistance by WFP and partners, monthly, January 2016 to September 2023**



Source: FEWS NET, using data from the Somalia FSC

Current Food Security Outcomes

Settlements for internally displaced persons (IDPs): Most IDP households struggle to meet their needs, given their high dependency on low-paying casual labor opportunities and the prevailing higher-than-average cost of living. IDPs also continue to have less access to community support compared to poor urban households. In October, IDPs in Baidoa, Xudur, and Qardho are likely to have received significant humanitarian assistance targeting more than 25 percent of the population with food rations covering 25 percent of recipients' caloric needs. However, IDPs elsewhere likely faced a significant scale-down of humanitarian food assistance due to increasing insecurity and a general scale-down at the national level, with assistance targeting an estimated less than 20 percent of the population in most areas. As a result of constrained access to food and income, almost all IDP settlements are currently classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), with the population facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes likely to have increased relative to previous months amid the assistance scale-down. However, IDP settlements in the Laascaanood district of the Sool region are likely to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) given the severe impacts of recent conflict in the region on people's access to food and income, though the population facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes has likely decreased slightly, given anecdotal information indicating increasing access to humanitarian food assistance for Laascaanood IDPs.

Pastoral livelihood zones: Despite a favorable 2023 *gu* rainfall season in most pastoral livelihood zones, rangelands and livestock conditions have been negatively impacted by the extreme *hagaa* temperatures in August and September, further negatively impacting the already-limited income sources of poor households in the drought-affected north-central pastoral livelihood zones. In these areas, poor households' livestock herd sizes remain 30 to 40 percent below baseline levels, while the number of saleable animals and level of milk production remain limited. The onset of localized light to moderate rainfall in most areas has had little immediate impact on rangelands and livestock production. As a result, most pastoral households continue facing seasonally limited and low livestock milk production during October. Given the high importance of livestock production for pastoral households' total access to food and income in pastoral areas, many households are likely facing sustained food consumption gaps. At the area level, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes remain widespread across most pastoral areas. However, FEWS NET assesses that Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes persist in the worst drought-affected central areas of the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* livelihood zone due to highly limited livestock asset recovery and production. Meanwhile, in *West Golis Pastoral* in the northeast and *Juba Cattle Pastoral* and *Southern Inland Pastoral* in the south, the situation is relatively better. Due to favorable rainfall in the past two seasons that has supported livestock conceptions and births, livestock holdings are near or above baseline levels. As a result, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes are likely in these areas.

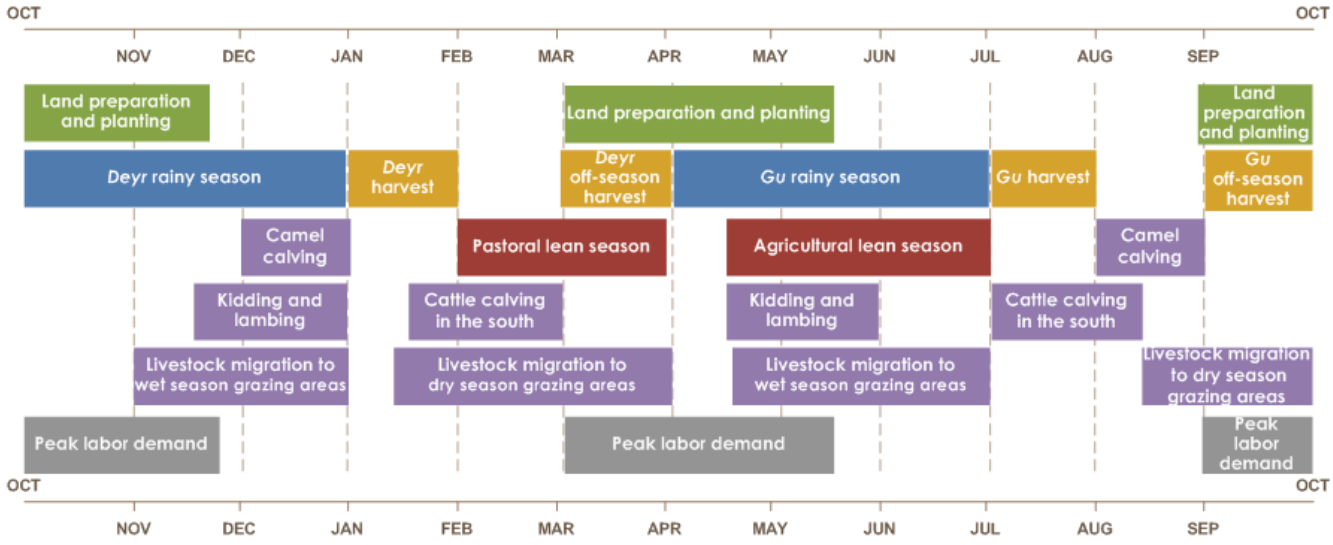
Riverine livelihood zones: In riverine livelihood zones of southern Somalia, households are still recovering from devastating floods in April/May 2023 and below-average off-season *gu* production in September and October. On top of this, they face further disruptions to agricultural activities and associated income-earning due to recent floods that have newly waterlogged farmlands, jeopardizing standing crops and food stocks. As a result, a significant proportion of households in riverine livelihoods are currently facing food consumption gaps, with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes likely at the area level. Worst-affected very poor riverine households are expected to be facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes.

Agropastoral livelihood zones: In agropastoral livelihood zones, many poor households currently have no carryover stocks due to below-average 2023 *gu* crop production and the need to repay debts form the agricultural season. As such, reliance on market purchases for food is atypically high. At the same time, local cereal prices are likely beginning to increase in October as market supply reduces due to the impact of rainfall on transportation and commodity movements, undermining purchasing power. Although poor households are now engaged in some agricultural labor activities, earning some income, they are entering the lean season during which their food intake is reduced. Area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected in most southern agropastoral areas, the central *Cowpea Belt Agropastoral* livelihood zone, and the *Northwestern Agropastoral* and *Togdheer Agropastoral* livelihood zones of the northwest, with humanitarian assistance likely preventing worse outcomes in Burkahaba.

Urban livelihoods: In most urban areas, both the availability of labor opportunities and market prices of staple foods have remained generally stable compared to August. Food prices are significantly lower than last year but remain higher than the five-year average. As of September 2023, the regional-level cost of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB), indicative of the urban cost of living, was stable in most areas and either near or below the five-year average (but slightly higher, by 2 to 6 percent, in the north). Compared to September last year, the cost of the MEB remains higher in most areas, by 14 to 49 percent. At the same

time, the urban poor continue facing competition from IDPs in their localities for labor opportunities and social support, impacting their ability to earn income. Given competition for income-earning opportunities amid high prices, most urban areas are currently classified as being Stressed (IPC Phase 2) at the area level, with the worst-affected poor households likely in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

Seasonal Calendar for a Typical Year



Source : FEWS NET

Assumptions

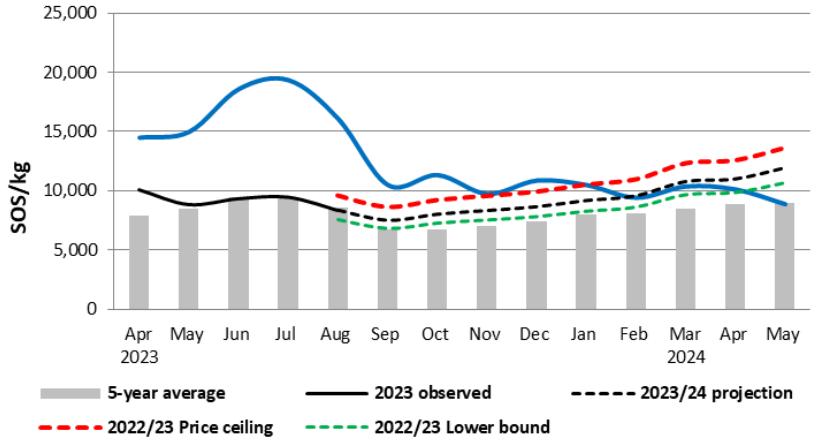
The most likely scenario from October 2023 to May 2024 is based on the following national-level assumptions:

- According to regional and international forecasts, it is highly probable that most of Somalia will experience an exceptionally wet October to December *deyr* season characterized by significantly above-average cumulative rainfall, linked to the presence of El Niño and strong, positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions.
- The anticipated significantly above-average *deyr* rainfall will likely result in severe river and flash flooding during the October to December period. Flood risk is mainly concentrated in the riverine areas of the Juba and Shabelle regions (associated with rainfall in the Shabelle and Juba River catchments in southern Somalia and in the Ethiopia highlands), as well as in lowland agropastoral and pastoral zones.
- Significantly above-average rainfall and flooding are likely to disrupt agricultural activities in the riverine areas along the Juba and Shabelle Rivers and in lowland agropastoral areas in the southern and central regions. In affected areas, excessive soil wetness is expected to delay weeding activities by one to two months, while worst-affected areas (especially riverine areas) will likely experience more severe disruptions to main-season *deyr* agricultural activities. Furthermore, standing crops are at risk of damage, and underground cereal stocks in affected areas within riverine and agropastoral livelihood zones across the country will likely be destroyed.
- The significantly above-average October to December *deyr* rainfall is anticipated to support abundant availability of water and pasture/browse for livestock. This is in turn expected to support overall livestock body conditions and seasonal increases in animal milk production. Widespread favorable rangeland resources will also support typical opportunistic livestock migration patterns across the country.
- The excess rainfall and flooding are likely to cause hypothermia and an unusually high mortality rate among livestock,

particularly in the southern and central regions (with greatest concern for the Juba and Gedo regions) and several areas in the north, given seasonally colder temperatures.

- Given the forecast for significantly above-average *deyr* rainfall, demand for agricultural labor in agropastoral areas of southern and central regions will likely increase and remain above average during the December 2023 to February 2024 period as many farmers will be encouraged to expand cropping land for off-season crops. On the other hand, in riverine areas, it is likely that severe flooding during the *deyr* season will disrupt main-season cultivation; however, recessional off-season cropping will instead provide agricultural labor opportunities beginning in December 2023. In northwestern agropastoral areas, demand for agricultural labor will remain insignificant, as is typical during the cold season and given greater use of tractors and oxen for tillage throughout the year.

Figure 5 **Maize grain (white) prices in Qoryoley reference market, April to July 2023 observed prices and projections for August 2023 to May 2024**



Source: FSNAU (observed) and FEWS NET (projected)

- In Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed regions, given the poor performance of the July to September *karan* rains in the *Northwestern Agropastoral* livelihood zone in northwestern Somalia, crop production is expected to be largely below the long-term (2010–2022) average, with the harvest expected in November 2023.
- In southern and central agropastoral areas, the main *deyr* cereal harvest is expected in January/February. Crop production is expected to be below average due to crop losses from excessive soil moisture, flash floods, and crop pests in agropastoral lowlands. Some farmers may switch to planting cash crops (such as sesame and cowpea) instead, with an above-average cash crop harvest anticipated as a result.
- Given expectations for flooding, the main-season *deyr* cereal harvest in riverine areas is expected to be well below average. However, the off-season harvest expected around March/April will likely be above average because of the increased area for recessional cultivation.
- Following the *medium to high* conception rates reported in the *gu* 2023 season, *medium to high* births of sheep and goats are anticipated during the *deyr* season across most of the country, peaking in November. Most of the northern and central regions will likely see *low* camel calving rates during this time due to *low* conception levels in the prior 2022 *deyr* season, while the southern Juba and Lower Shabelle regions will likely see *medium to low* camel births. Meanwhile, in the northwest and southern regions, where cattle are common, cattle births will likely also be *medium to low*.
- Livestock body conditions and conception levels will likely generally improve across the country throughout the scenario period because of above-average rangeland conditions.
- Milk availability will likely improve significantly, but households' access to milk will still be below average in northern and central regions and Bay/Bakool, Gedo, and Hiiraan regions of the south. This is because households' herd sizes are still lower than baseline levels in much of the country (except the Juba and Shabelle regions) due to the effects of past droughts.
- According to forecasts made by the African Development Bank, GDP growth is projected to be 2.8 percent in 2023 and 3.5 percent in 2024, driven by private consumption and external demand. Inflation is projected to be 4.2 percent in 2023 and 4.0 percent in 2024 as supply chains stabilize. These economic improvements are expected to result in a slight improvement in opportunities for income-earning, particularly among urban households and pastoralist households who will benefit from an increase in demand for labor and livestock, respectively.

- Household and market cereal stocks are expected to be below average following multiple consecutive seasons of below-average cereal harvests. According to FEWS NET price projections, prices of locally produced cereals are expected to follow typical seasonal trends, increasing throughout the projection period, and generally remain below prices recorded last year but above five-year average levels. Prices of imported rice are expected to increase, in line with global price trends.
- Heavy rainfall and flooding are expected to render feeder roads in rural areas temporarily impassible during the October to December *deyr* period, disrupting trade and population movement. Resulting disruptions to market supply are expected to drive atypical food price increases (Figure 5) in affected consumer markets due to higher transportation costs. Prices will likely return to normal during the beginning of the *jilaal* dry season in the January when *deyr* harvests arrive in markets.
- Livestock prices are anticipated to follow seasonal trends and remain generally stable between October and February at near-average to above-average levels, driven by improved livestock body conditions and a gradual increase in livestock supply and demand. Prices will rise in response to seasonal demand during the Hajj season from March to May.
- Given expectations for staple cereal prices and livestock prices, purchasing power for pastoralists as measured by the terms of trade will likely remain below average to near average through most of the outlook period.
- In the most likely scenario in which additional funding is not secured, the provision of emergency humanitarian food assistance will likely decrease further throughout the scenario period. According to FSC plans, around 2.1 million people will be targeted monthly from October to December 2023. Given expectations for seasonal improvements and recent trends of a gradual scale-down, a further decrease in assistance is anticipated from January to May 2024. However, priority is expected to be given to areas where concern for acute food insecurity remains highest, with some areas likely to see sustained levels of assistance.
- In 2024, armed conflict in Somalia is expected to persist throughout the scenario period, primarily affecting south-central regions and the Sool/Sanaag regions of northern Somalia. Given the government's planned offensive against insurgents (al-Shabaab), armed clashes, targeted assassinations, pump explosions, civilian deaths, and asset losses will likely occur at levels similar to or slightly higher than in 2023. The Islamic State will also continue occasional attacks in Puntland, though with reduced capacity due to clashes with al-Shabaab and counterinsurgency efforts by Puntland's security forces.
- Given expectations for conflict, seasonal rainfall, and flooding, levels of both conflict-driven displacement and flooding-driven displacement are expected to be higher than in 2022, while levels of drought-driven displacement are expected to be lower. Meanwhile, some currently and newly displaced people who have assets in rural areas will likely return home as the situation (mainly flooding and/or insecurity) improves and given declining levels of humanitarian assistance in locations of displacement. Overall, the total cumulative number of internally displaced people is likely to slightly increase from the current OCHA estimate of 3.7 million.

Most Likely Acute Food Security Outcomes

Pastoral areas: In pastoral areas of Somalia, above-average rainfall during the October to December 2023 *deyr* season is expected to improve availability of pasture and water resources, supporting livestock body conditions and seasonal livestock births. During this time, households will benefit from seasonal increases in milk production for own-consumption and sales; however, livestock herd sizes and access to milk are likely to remain below normal in many areas of the north and central regions due to below-average herd sizes. As such, given reduced access to food and income from livestock, area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist in many northern and central pastoral areas despite seasonal improvements. Central pastoral areas of *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* livelihood zone will likely remain in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Following above-average rainfall during the *deyr* season, a relatively a mild *jilaal* dry season is expected from January to March. By April/May 2024, further improvements in access to food and income from livestock production during the beginning of the *gu* season will likely support improvement to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes at the area level in most pastoral livelihood zones. However, outcomes are likely to remain more severe in central areas of the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* and *Addun Pastoral* livelihood zones, which were among the areas worst-affected by the historic drought and where rainfall in early October has been poor. Given reduced herd sizes alongside expectations for escalating conflict in central Somalia (expected to continue to disrupt livelihoods and drive population displacement) and reduced access to food assistance, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist throughout the projection period in these areas.

Agropastoral areas: In most southern and central agropastoral areas, poor households will benefit from seasonal increases in income from agricultural labor during the October to December *deyr* season, as well as seasonal increases in food and income from livestock milk production. However, in areas affected by heavy rainfall, opportunities for labor are expected to be well below normal in November and early December due to excessive soil moisture that will disrupt seasonal weeding activities and damage standing crops. Given lack of cereal stocks from the below-average 2023 *gu* harvest and seasonally increasing and above-average cereal prices, many poor households are expected to lack sufficient food and income sources, with Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes expected to persist during this period. In January, the *deyr* harvest will boost many households' access to food and income from crop production and sales. Most agropastoral areas are expected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) during the February to May 2023 period, though the poorest households are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in areas where *deyr* crop production is notably below average due to the impacts of heavy rainfall and flooding. Due to the impacts of floods, area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist in *Low Potential Agropastoral* areas of Bay and Bakool throughout the scenario period.

In northwestern agropastoral areas, the *gu*/*karan* harvest is expected to improve availability of food and income in November. However, crop production is expected to be significantly below normal due to poor *karan* rainfall and insect infestations. As a result, poor households will likely quickly exhaust stocks due to below-average harvests and the need to repay debts. Although a slight seasonal increase in milk production will also support improved access to food and income during the October to December *deyr* season, this will be insufficient to allow households to meet all their needs, with Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes expected to be sustained throughout the scenario period. However, improvement will be more limited in the *Northwest Agropastoral* and *Togdheer Agropastoral* livelihood zones where crop production was particularly poor. In these areas, poor households will be unable to compensate for gaps in typical food and income, and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will be sustained at the area level prior to seasonal increases in livestock production (of cattle and small ruminants) in April and May 2024.

Riverine areas: Driven by significantly above-average *deyr* rainfall, anticipated river and flash flooding in the *Riverine Gravity Irrigation* and *Riverine Pump Irrigation* livelihood zones (in the southern Gedo, Hiiraan, Lower and Middle Shabelle, and Lower and Middle Juba regions) will likely have notable negative impacts on agriculture and livelihoods during the main *deyr* production season. In flooded riverine areas, most farms are likely to be inundated, expected to result in almost no opportunities for agricultural labor. While flooding is expected to drive significant population displacement, it will also cause road blockages and access constraints, preventing people from fleeing and cutting off trade and humanitarian access. As such, many poor and lower-middle income households who remain behind in affected areas will likely deteriorate from Crisis (IPC Phase 3) to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in the absence of access to typical food and income sources, including from markets. Additionally, access constraints due to insecurity in areas such as Hiiraan, Middle and Lower Juba, and southern parts of Lower Shabelle will likely prevent households in flooded areas from receiving sufficient assistance.

On the other hand, between January and May 2024, recessional cultivation opportunities across riverine areas will increase, leading to improvements in access to food and income from agricultural labor and the off-season crop harvests expected around March/April. As is typical with recessional cultivation opportunities, farmers will also likely grow more high-value crops such as sesame and cowpea, improving their income-earning. However, poor households will also need to pay back debts from previous seasons of poor crop production. Overall, only slight improvement to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes is expected in the March to May period given the severity of prior flood impacts.

IDP settlements*:* Households living in displacement settlements will continue to face some of the greatest challenges in accessing food and income. With limited ability to expand income-earning, anticipated scale-down of humanitarian food assistance in most settlements is expected to drive deterioration in acute food insecurity. Furthermore, in areas affected by conflict and/or flooding, an additional influx of IDPs will increase competition for already limited income-earning opportunities and resources. As a result, additional households are expected to deteriorate to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between October 2023 and May 2024, with area-level Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes anticipated to emerge in several settlements. However, from February to May 2024, improved access to income from labor opportunities along with seasonal declines in local cereal prices will likely lead to some improvements in food consumption. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are anticipated in most settlements, though with populations in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) given anticipated low levels of humanitarian food assistance. However, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes will likely persist in the IDP settlements in areas worst-affected by conflict and/or flooding.

Acute malnutrition: According to analysis conducted by FSNAU and partners in June and July 2023, an estimated 1,451,000 children under the age of five years are likely to be acutely malnourished through July 2024. This includes 331,100 children who are likely to be severely malnourished. In areas of concern—including Juba and Shabelle riverine areas of the south, *Southern Inland Pastoral* areas of Bakool, *Sorghum High Potential Agropastoral* areas of Middle Shabelle, *West Golis Pastoral* livelihood zone in the northwest, and all livelihood zones in Hiiraan—the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) as measured by weight-for-height z-score (WHZ) is expected to increase through the end of 2023 and remain in the 'Critical' range (14.9-29.9 percent), driven by high incidence of disease and lower-than-normal food access. In addition, agropastoral livelihood zones will likely experience deterioration from 'Alert' (5-9.9 percent) to 'Serious' (10-14.9 percent) levels of acute malnutrition, driven by lack of own food stocks, high cereal prices, reduced income opportunities, and reduced access to credit and cash for food purchases.

Events that Might Change the Outlook

Table 1 **Possible events over the next eight months that could change the most-likely scenario**

Area	Event	Impact on food security outcomes
Riverine and agropastoral livelihood zones	Heavier-than-anticipated October to December 2023 *deyr* rainfall, leading to extreme flooding (beyond what is currently anticipated and in line with the severe flooding experienced in 1997, 2006, and 2019)	In agropastoral areas, this would be expected to lead to more widespread negative impacts on the *deyr* agricultural season. These impacts include delayed planting and damage to germinating crops, reduced opportunities for income-earning during the season, delayed access to the harvest, and reduced overall crop production prospects. More areas would be likely to experience elevated incidence of livestock hypothermia and higher rates of livestock mortality. Additional poor households in affected agropastoral areas (especially those close to riverine areas) would likely face food consumption gaps and Crisis (IPC Phase 3), Emergency (IPC Phase 4), or worse outcomes. In riverine areas, extreme flooding would likely drive notable population displacement, beyond what is currently anticipated. Flood waters would likely not recede in time to allow for any recessional cultivation activities, and households would therefore not experience the currently anticipated seasonal increases in income-earning from agricultural labor opportunities beginning in December. More significant and widespread disruptions to livelihoods and typical income-earning activities would likely cause additional poor households to face moderate to wide consumption gaps in line with Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes.
Riverine and agropastoral livelihood zones	Significant assistance is provided to flood-affected households	If flood-affected households are supported with greater-than-anticipated assistance from local communities, government, and/or international and UN agencies, fewer households would face food consumption gaps and severe acute food insecurity outcomes. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes would be expected in riverine areas in the October 2023 to January 2024 period.

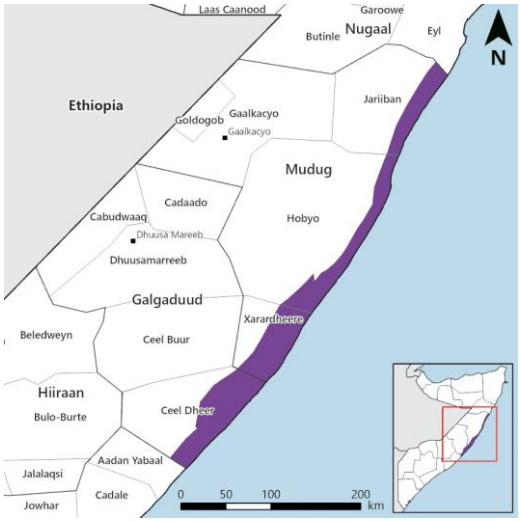
Areas of Concern

Coastal Deeh Pastoral and Fishing livelihood zone of Mudug and Galgaduud regions (Figure 6)

Current Situation

The *Coastal Deeh Pastoral and Fishing* livelihood zone is a very arid livelihood zone that typically receives only around 20 to 60 mm of rainfall during the *deyr* season. Due to five consecutive seasons of below-average rainfall, followed by a drier- and hotter-than-normal July to September *hagaa* dry season, many central regions continue to experience drought conditions. The central portion of the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral and Fishing* livelihood zone (Figure 6) is the focus of this analysis.

Figure 6 **Reference map for *Coastal Deeh Pastoral and Fishing* (SO08) livelihood zone of the central region of Somalia**



Source: FEWS NET

As of mid-October, *deyr* 2023 rainfall has started in parts of this zone but has been poorly distributed over time and space. According to remote-sensing data for October 1 to 10, most areas received rainfall well below the long-term mean, by 50 to 85 percent, with other areas remaining dry. So far, the received rainfall has had only a limited impact on rangeland resources. According to eVIIRS NDVI remote-sensing data, significant deficits in rangeland conditions persist in the central portion of *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* livelihood zone. Access to pasture and water is lacking and is assessed to be worse than during the 2010/2011 drought.

Livestock body conditions further deteriorated during the July to September *hagaa* dry season, reaching levels graded at a Pictorial Evaluation Tool score (PET) of 2, signifying below-average conditions. Only minimal livestock births and conceptions took place during the 2023 *gu* season due to livestock hunger- and drought-related diseases. Key informants interviewed by FEWS NET during the post-*hagaa* period in October reported a further reduction in sheep and goat holdings due to deaths and distress sales to pay for households' food needs and livestock feed. Poor households' herds are currently estimated to have further decreased to around 18 to 22 sheep and goats, down from the 22 to 26 sheep and goats reported in July 2023. This is resulting in low-to-no milk production for households' own consumption and income as well as severely reduced income from livestock sales.

Although demand for sheep and goats remains constant, livestock trade is below normal given significantly reduced market supply due to the limited availability of saleable livestock as well as insecurity-related trade disruptions associated with an ongoing military offensive against al-Shabaab. Consequently, sheep and goat prices in the central regions are above average. In Galkayo, the main market for this zone, the price of a local-quality goat averaged 3,000,000 SOS in September 2023 according to market monitoring data from FSNAU/FEWS NET, which is 13 percent higher than last year and 23 percent higher than the five-year average.

Prices of all locally produced and imported foods are currently significantly above average. In September, prices of sorghum and imported rice were 40 to 50 percent higher than the five-year average. In Galkayo, the price of imported rice was at an all-time high of 35,000 SOS/kg in September, which is 38 percent higher than the five-year average. Similar trends were observed for other imported commodities across all markets.

Despite higher-than-normal sheep and goat prices, high cereal prices are undermining pastoral households' purchasing power. In September, a local-quality goat in the Galkayo market could fetch only 86 kg of staple rice, 12 percent less than the five-year average of 98 kg. Similarly, in Harardhere market, one goat could fetch 42 kg of rice in September, 16 percent lower than the five-year average of 50 kg. On top of this, most poor households remain unable to sell animals due to extremely low livestock herd sizes and poor livestock body conditions associated with lack of pasture (in contrast to better-off households who can save some of their animals by hand feeding and marketing them).

Conflict remains one of the key drivers of food insecurity in the central regions of Somalia, characterized by inter-clan conflicts and clashes with insurgents. From July to September, an increase in conflict has caused significant population displacement; loss

of lives and assets; disruptions to trade; and has prevented households from accessing grazing areas and humanitarian assistance. In particular, population displacement is occurring due to the ongoing military offensive of the Somalia National Army (SNA) supported by the local militia and ATMIS and international forces against insurgency-controlled areas in eastern parts of Galgaduud and Mudug (parts of Cadaado, Ceel Dheer, Ceel Buur, Hobyo, and Harardhere districts) where the drought is severe, and people cannot get access social support and humanitarian assistance. Most displaced households were reported to be joining host communities and IDP camps in Galkayo, Adado, and Dhusamareb towns.

According to UNHCR, Galgaduud and Mudug have seen the second and third highest regional levels of conflict-related displacement, respectively, across Somalia in 2023 (with the most displacement recorded in Sool region of the north). About 207,000 people were displaced in the Galgaduud and Mudug regions between January and September 2023. Nearly 88 percent of all displacements were due to conflict while the rest were due to drought and other factors. Most conflict-related displacement occurred in the Galgaduud region. Most of the displaced sought shelter and food within both regions.

According to both FSC reports and field information, there has been a reduction in humanitarian assistance despite worsening acute food insecurity in this livelihood zone. A significant level of food assistance was reported in Cadaado, Elbur, and Harardhere districts, where humanitarian agencies have reached, on average, nearly 29 to 53 percent of the population during the July to September 2023 period. The highest levels of assistance were reported in the newly liberated district of Harardhere. However, areas of Ceel Dheer and Jariiban had very low levels of assistance, reaching 11 to 16 percent of the population.

Due to the lasting impacts of the prolonged drought, poor households continue to face severe reductions in access to food and income from livestock production and sales. Given this and limited humanitarian assistance, most poor households are currently relying on a mixture of limited labor and self-employment (firewood and charcoal sales) and overstretched kinship and community support through gifts, borrowing, and limited loans. However, given increased competition for these livelihood sources and community resources amid above-average food prices, poor households are not accessing sufficient food and income to cover even their minimum food needs. Food security outcome indicator data collected in July 2023 from the accessible northeastern areas of the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* livelihood zone suggested that more than 20 percent of the population was likely facing food consumption gaps and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes. The conflict-affected central portion of the livelihood zone that is the focus of this analysis was inaccessible for data collection, but outcomes are generally expected to be worse than in the northeastern areas due to the negative impacts of conflict on livelihoods. In October, a follow-up post-*hagaa* household survey indicated worsening food consumption gaps amid low levels of assistance, escalated conflict that resulted in displacement and disruptions to trade, the continued dry spell in October, very low livestock holdings, lack of income from livestock and milk sales, and high debt levels. Overall, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are likely present at the area level.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions, the following assumptions apply to this area of concern:

- Conflict is likely to escalate over the outlook period. This is expected to lead to increased population displacement, reduced access to livestock to grazing areas, and additional food price increases due to trade disruptions and illegal taxation at checkpoints.
- No to very low livestock births are likely through January because of the effects of past drought conditions on conceptions. In addition, further losses of livestock are likely from October to January due to above-average rainfall causing hypothermia in weak animals.
- With above-average October to December *deyr* rainfall, pasture and water availability will likely improve. This will in turn improve the body conditions of the remaining few livestock.
- Local goat prices are expected to follow seasonal trends throughout the scenario period and will likely remain above the five-year average due to lower-than-typical livestock supply to markets driven by conflict, low herd sizes, and poor livestock body conditions. Between October 2023 and May 2024, the price of one local quality goat in Galkayo market is projected to range from 3,000,000 to 3,200,000 SOS, 11 to 33 percent higher than last year and 17 to 30 percent higher than the five-year average. Goat prices are expected to be highest between October and November, and lowest between January and March.

- According to FEWS NET/FSNAU market assumptions, prices of imported rice and other imported foods are likely to be significantly above last year and the five-year average through May 2024 due to supply reductions caused by heavy rainfall disrupting transportation, increased fuel prices, and the ongoing conflict between the government and al-Shabaab.
- Due to access problems driven by insecurity in the *Coastal Deeh* areas of central regions, as well as the planned scale-down of humanitarian assistance between October and December, around 13 to 17 percent of the population of the districts will likely receive HFA. In the absence of plans beyond December 2023, similarly low levels of assistance are expected throughout the scenario period.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

Despite improvement in livestock body conditions during the *deyr* season, livestock herd sizes will likely continue to decline as very low birth rates and increased distress sales and deaths are expected through at least January 2024. With little to no ability to sell animals and highly limited milk availability due to low livestock holdings, households will seek to maximize income from self-employment, gifts (in cash and in-kind), labor opportunities, and borrowing. However, many poor households have exhausted their ability to expand reliance on these sources of food and income, and are expected to engage in emergency-level coping strategies including begging for food or money and moving women, children, and elderly people to IDP camps. In the absence of significant humanitarian assistance, households are expected to continue to face large food consumption gaps and elevated levels of acute malnutrition during the first half of the outlook period. Overall, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes will likely be sustained at the area level.

From February to May 2024, livestock assets are expected to remain significantly below baseline levels overall. However, poor households will likely be able to access a few saleable livestock and some milk for consumption and sales due to improved rangeland conditions and livestock births during the April to June 2024 *gu* rainy season. As a result of slightly improved access to food and income from livestock, area-level outcomes are expected to improve to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the February to May period. However, households will continue engaging in crisis-level coping by selling all available saleable livestock (including some breeding animals), sending women, children, and elderly people to IDP camps, withdrawing children from school/madrasa, and reducing expenditures on livestock production inputs.

Further evidence is provided by the results of a household economy approach (HEA) outcome analysis conducted by FEWS NET in October 2023. According to this analysis, poor households will likely face significantly reduced income from livestock and livestock product sales (typically more than half of poor households' total food and cash income) due to the impacts of below-average rainfall in the past five consecutive seasons, as well as a nearly 50 percent decrease in remittances and gifts and a significant reduction in income from wild fruit and other livelihood sources such as fishing. Poor households' total income, even after coping strategies, will not be sufficient to cover the cost of their minimum food needs, leading to significant food consumption gaps, with the most significant deficits expected in January and February 2024.

Riverine livelihood zones of southern regions (Figure 7)

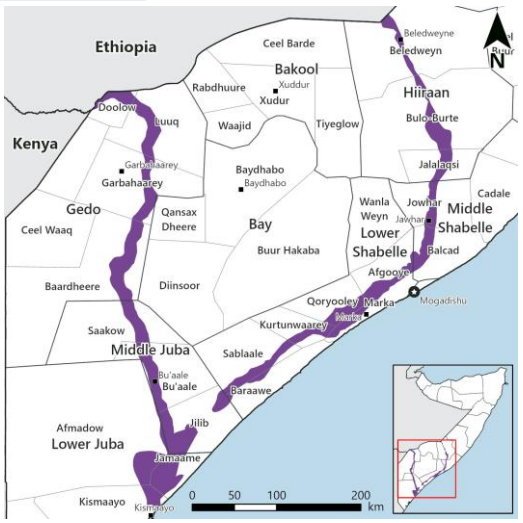
Current Situation

The riverine population has experienced reduced crop production in the last two seasons due to flooding, poor supplementary July to September *hagaa* rainfall, and pest infestations. Most recently, 2023 *gu* crop production was significantly below average due to flooding. According to FSNAU and partners' post-*gu* assessment in July 2023, maize production was only an estimated 61 percent of the long-term average in the Juba regions (5,400 MT). In Middle Shabelle, while *gu* maize production was slightly above average (10,100 MT), many poor households couldn't cultivate due to the high cost of inputs and their need to earn income (largely from agricultural labor) to survive. Consequently, many poor households had no carryover stocks from the *gu* cropping season.

From July to September, the riverine population cultivated off-season crops after *gu* flood waters receded. However, planting was delayed in many areas due to extensive flooding. Due to a combination of factors, including poor July-September *hagaa* rainfall, moisture stress in some areas, widespread pest infestations, and recent October floods, off-season production in riverine areas has fallen significantly short of what was projected in the post-*gu* 2023 assessment.

Most recently, October flooding has inundated off-season croplands, submerged numerous riverine villages, and displaced a significant portion of the riverine population. Additionally, government early warnings about the likely flooding associated with El Niño, disseminated through local telephone networks, prompted many farmers to harvest immature crops prematurely, resulting in reduced production levels. Preliminary teleconferencing assessments conducted by FEWS NET in mid- to late-October in the Gedo, Hiiraan, Juba, and Shabelle regions indicate that riverine households likely harvested only around 50-60 percent of the post-*gu* 2023 projection estimates. In Hiiraan and Lower and Middle Shabelle riverine areas around the Shabelle river, only 42 percent of the projected estimate of 4,100 MT of maize is expected to have been realized, while in Gedo and Lower and Middle Juba regions around the Juba River, roughly 50 percent of the projected 6,000 MT was likely harvested in September.

Figure 7 **Reference map for *Riverine Pump* (SO13) and *Riverine Gravity* (SO14) livelihood zones**



Source: FEWS NET

The off-season harvest in September/October, although significantly below earlier projected levels, has boosted market supplies, supporting generally stable maize prices or even driving slight reductions. For instance, maize prices decreased by 5–10 percent from September to October in Jilib of Middle Juba (10,360 SOS/kg) and Jowhar of Middle Shabelle (9,200 SOS/kg), while prices remained stable at 8,900 SOS/kg in Jamame of Lower Juba. These market prices are slightly to moderately (6–11 percent) above five-year average levels. Similar trends were observed in the rural areas, where maize prices declined by 21 percent from September to October in Rahole village of Middle Juba (10,800/kg) and remained stable at 10,000/kg in Walimoy of Middle Shabelle. Overall, the October prices in Rahole and Walimoy rural markets are similar to the five-year average (3 percent higher) and 18 percent higher than the five-year average, respectively.

Field reports incidate that floods are disrupting *deyr* seasonal cropping activities, reducing opportunities for agricultural labor. Typically, income from agricultural labor during the *deyr* season constitutes over 50 percent of poor households' income, but access to this activity is currently significantly below normal. Moreover, the persistent rains and flooding are impacting road networks and marketing activities, restricting the movement of goods and people. This is having a negative effect on cereal availability at both household and market levels, leading to a significant increase in prices of food and essential goods.

Recent flooding has caused significant impacts in affected areas. Dolow, Luq, Buurdhuubo, and Baardheere towns were partially flooded after river water levels rose above the bridges and inundated most of the farms and houses. Water pumps, farm tools, and irrigation canals were destroyed. Most food in the stores and shops was soaked and could not be used. In Hiiraan, river floods have started and are now filling swampland along the riverbanks, inundating the farms and destroying the standing crops. In Juba, flash floods cut off the roads and suspended both trade and population movements. More recently, flood water from the Juba River is now moving towards swamps and destroying the standing crops. Approximately 50-60 percent of riverine areas are likely to be affected through mid-November. In Beletweyn, Baardheere, Buurdhuubo, Dolow, and Luq towns, many people were displaced. Most riverine villages were stranded, and many people were moved to higher-elevation land within the districts. In the Shabelle regions, open river breakages in Jowhar have started spilling flood water, damaging the standing crops and suspending agricultural activities.

Given the absence of *gu* carryover stocks and only a marginal off-season maize harvest for some households in late September and early October (which can only sustain households through October)—along with significant reductions in access to typical food and income due to recent flooding—riverine households are increasing consumption of wild foods (including river fish, fruits, and vegetables) and borrowing food. However, this is insufficient for many poor households to meet their needs given above-average food prices and limited humanitarian food assistance even in the aftermath of flooding. As such, men who are able have migrated to agropastoral areas to access agricultural labor income. Some households have moved to the main towns in order to look for labor and beg for food for their families. Overall, many poor households in the riverine areas of Lower Juba, Middle Juba, Lower Shabelle, and Middle Shabelle are currently facing food consumption gaps and/or engaging in damaging livelihood coping strategies, with area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes likely.

Assumptions

In addition to the national-level assumptions, the following assumptions apply to this area of concern:

- Due to poor September and October off-season harvests, most poor riverine households will have little to no carryover cereal stocks during the November to December period.
- The forecast significantly above-average October to December *deyr* rainfall and associated flooding will likely damage remaining cereal stocks from the September/October off-season harvest, reduce *deyr* cropping activities and associated agricultural labor opportunities for poor households, and damage standing *deyr* main-season crops, ultimately leading to a very poor main-season *deyr* cereal harvest in January.
- The forecast significantly above-average October to December *deyr* rainfall and associated flooding will likely continue to disrupt road networks and market activities, leading to low market and household food availability and atypically high prices of food and other essential commodities between November and January. In the February to May period, flood waters are expected to recede and improvements in road networks, trade, and food availability are expected.
- Flooding during the October to December *deyr* season will likely disrupt riverine agricultural livelihoods and income-earning activities and lead to massive displacement toward neighboring inland agropastoral areas.
- Between January and March, after the flood waters recede, riverine households are expected to access opportunities for agricultural labor associated with recessional cultivation, including planting maize and other crops such as sesame and other vegetable varieties. This will improve poor households' access to income from agricultural labor during this period.
- In March/April, an average to above-average off-season *deyr* harvest is expected to increase households' access to food and income from crop production and boost market stocks.
- According to FEWS NET's price projections for October 2023 to May 2024, maize prices are expected to increase seasonally through around March and remain higher than the five-year average due to poor *gu* 2023 crop production and a significantly below-average off-season harvest due to flooding. In the Qoryoley reference market, maize prices are projected to trend 12-33 percent above the five-year average through March due to supply shortages, before off-season production boosts market supplies, driving seasonal price declines. Prices are projected to increase from 8,040 SOS/kg in October 2023 to 11,890 SOS/kg in May 2024, with the highest prices expected in the December-March period.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes

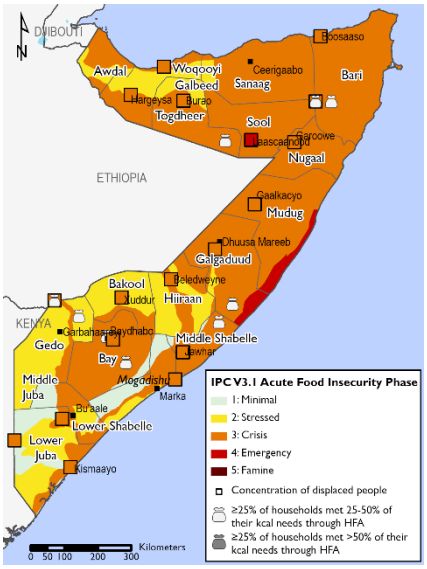
In the October to January period, poor riverine households are expected to face significant disruptions to typical livelihood activities due to flooding. Access to typical food and income sources will be significantly lower than normal due to lack of food stocks and reduced availability of agricultural labor opportunities, amid other impacts of flooding such as damage to homes and assets. Availability of bush products—which households may seek to sell—is also expected to be minimal due to the floods. Although access to wild foods such as fish, fruits, and vegetables will increase, the contribution of wild foods to households' total food requirements will be much lower than what is needed. Although households are likely to resort to credit purchases and borrowing, access to credit will be limited due to the need to repay past debts and the ability of households to borrow will be limited by the increase in people seeking support from wealthier households. Some active household members are expected to migrate to the ports of Mogadishu and Kismayo and other main towns in search of labor opportunities and send money back home. However, others will be unable to move due to flooding-related access constraints. Overall, many poor households are likely to face moderate-to-wide food consumption gaps or engage in severe coping to mitigate gaps. Given the widespread nature of the flooding and associated impacts, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is expected across all riverine areas through January.

From February to May 2024, poor households' access to food and income is expected to improve as they will engage in recessional cropping activities, with average to above-average income from agricultural labor expected. Meanwhile, wild foods such as fish and water lilies will remain abundant as supplements. In March/April, an average to above-average off-season harvest is anticipated to provide opportunities for cash crop sales across wealth groups, while poor households will also likely have access to crop zakat (gifts) from wealthier households. Despite the improvement, a significant number of poor riverine households are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) due to inadequate food stocks, as they will have to pay for past debts. As such, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely across all riverine areas during the February to May period.

Most Likely Food Security Outcomes in Areas Receiving Significant Levels of Humanitarian Assistance

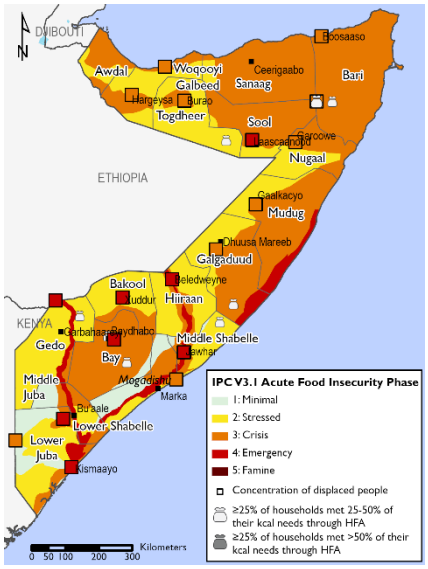
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.1 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 👜 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 👝 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Current food security outcomes, October 2023



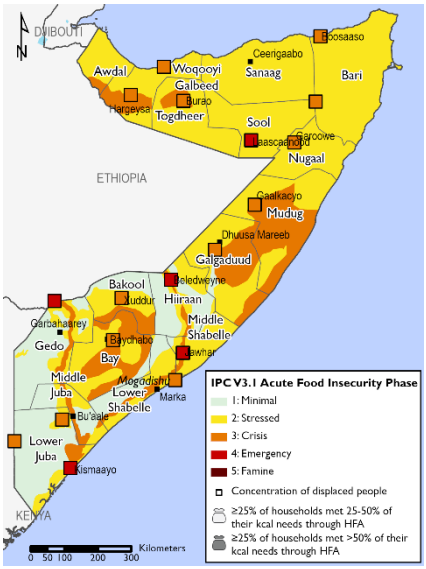
Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

Projected food security outcomes, October 2023 to January 2024



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2024



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

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About Scenario Development

To project food security outcomes, FEWS NET develops a set of assumptions about likely events, their effects, and the probable responses of various actors. FEWS NET analyzes these assumptions in the context of current conditions and local livelihoods to arrive at a most likely scenario for the coming eight months. Learn more here.