

Heavy rainfall supports Gu crop development in most areas, though significant flooding also reported

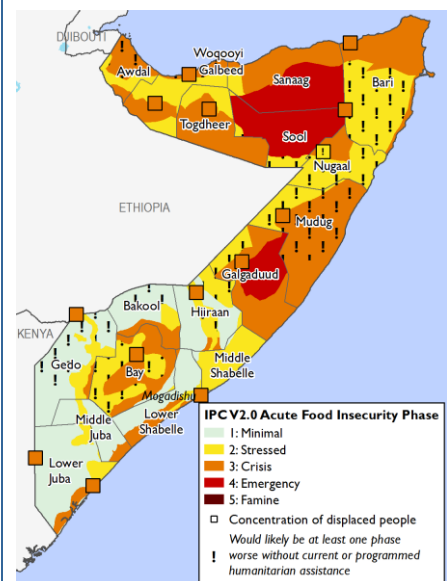
KEY MESSAGES

- In several areas of southern Somalia, food security is expected to improve more than previously anticipated as a result of likely above-average *Gu* harvests. However, in northern and central regions, poor pastoralists will still have few salable animals to purchase food. In the absence of assistance, wide areas of northern and central Somalia are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is likely in parts of Northern Inland Pastoral and Aduun Pastoral livelihood zone through May and in Guban Pastoral livelihood zone between June and September.
- Rainfall during the first months of the 2018 *Gu* season has been well above average across most of the country. Due to this and heavy rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands, river water levels have sharply increased and flooding has occurred in several areas, including Hiraan, Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bay, and Togdheer. Flooding has caused crop damage and displaced households. Further flooding is likely through May.
- *Gu* crops have germinated and based on current crop conditions and forecast rainfall through June, it is now expected that cereal production in rainfed areas will be above the recent five-year average. In riverine areas, as a result of current and expected crop damage from flooding, below-average maize production is expected in June. However, above-average off-season maize production is likely in September.
- Pasture and water availability have steadily increased in April, and livestock body conditions have improved to normal in most areas. With medium goat and sheep births in most regions, livestock herd sizes are slowly recovering. However, herd sizes are still expected to remain well below normal throughout 2018 and several consecutive favorable seasons are needed for herd sizes to recover to typical levels.

CURRENT SITUATION

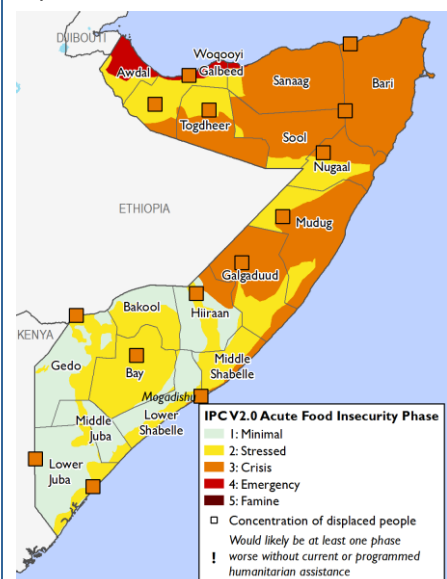
Rainfall started in late February/early March across most of Somalia, and total rainfall was 200 percent of average in most areas as of April 20 (Figure 1). Due to this and heavy rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands, water levels increased sharply in both the Shabelle and Juba Rivers (Figure 2), and flooding has occurred in several areas. In Belet Weyne town, floods displaced roughly 70 percent of the population, inundated crops, and destroyed food in local shops. In Lower Shabelle, 250 households were displaced by flooding in Qorioley town and some households from 6 villages were displaced in Walnalayweyn. In Middle Juba, 12 villages were affected by floods and some households were displaced. Over 2,000 hectares (ha) of cropped land in Qansaxdheere and Diinsoor of Bay, 2,500 ha in Jamame of Lower Juba, 1,500 ha in Togdheer, and 60 percent of farms in riverine areas of Hiraan were flooded.

Projected food security outcomes, April to May 2018



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

Projected food security outcomes, June to September 2018



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

In most regions, pasture and water availability have increased. However, rainfall in the Northeast has been below average and pasture and water availability remain below normal. Although Guban Pastoral livelihood zone does not typically receive rainfall during the *Gu* season, localized areas have received light to moderate rainfall. This and flashfloods in neighboring Golis mountains have provided pastoralists with improved access to water sources and migration options.

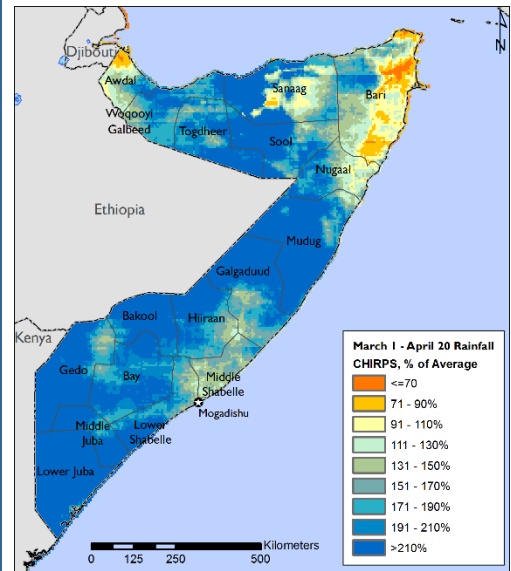
Given that the forecast in February called for below-average *Gu* rainfall, it was previously assumed that livestock body conditions would remain below average in most northern areas and agropastoral areas of Hiraan and Togdheer. However, given above-average *Gu* rainfall to date and the subsequent regeneration of pasture and water sources, livestock body conditions have improved to average in most areas. Medium goat and sheep births occurred in most areas in April. Few camel births occurred in central or northern areas, though, and few to no births of any livestock took place in Guban Pastoral livelihood zone, due to limited conception in 2017. Milk availability is seasonally increasing, but remains below average due to continued low livestock herd sizes.

Land preparation and planting began in late March/early April and seeds have germinated in most southern and central agricultural and agropastoral areas. Crops are in good condition in most regions, though some crops have been destroyed in the above-mentioned flood-impacted areas. Ground information indicates the area planted is normal and that agricultural labor opportunities are available at typical levels. Agricultural labor wage rates are also normal, at roughly 5-8 percent above average in Middle Juba and Lower Shabelle, and 8-12 percent below average in all other major agricultural regions.

Local cereal availability has increased in April with the off-season harvest, estimated at 6,000 MT. This production, alongside stable imports and continued humanitarian assistance, has supported slight declines in staple food prices. In the first quarter of 2018, the retail price of a kilogram of sorghum in Baidoa of Bay declined 37 percent, from 8,938 Somalia Shillings (SOS) to 5,658 SOS. The price is now near the five-year average (Figure 3). Over the same time period, the retail price of maize in Qorioley declined from 8,667 SOS to 5,867 SOS and is also near average. However, in Togdheer Agropastoral livelihood zone, the retail price of a kg of sorghum in March was 6,000 SOS, the highest on record and 46 percent above average.

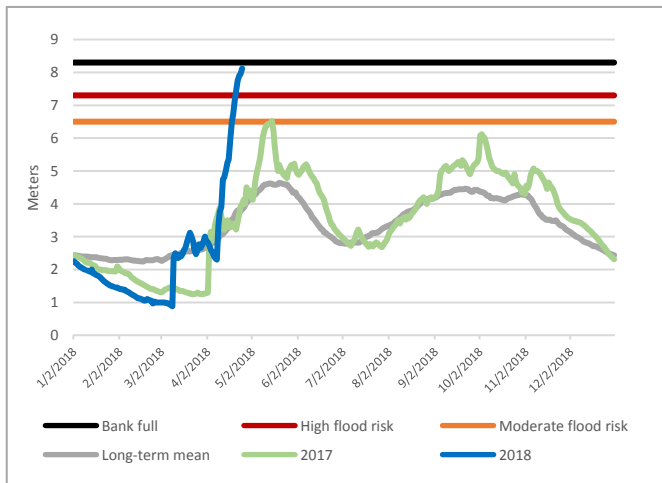
Since December 2017, 1,613 cases of AWD/cholera and 9 deaths have been reported in Somalia, concentrated in Banadir, Hiraan, Lower Juba, and Middle Shabelle. This is considerably lower than the [over 36,000 cases and 697 deaths](#) reported between January and April 2017.

Figure 1. Rainfall as a percentage of normal, March 1 to April 20, 2018, compared to 1981-2010 mean



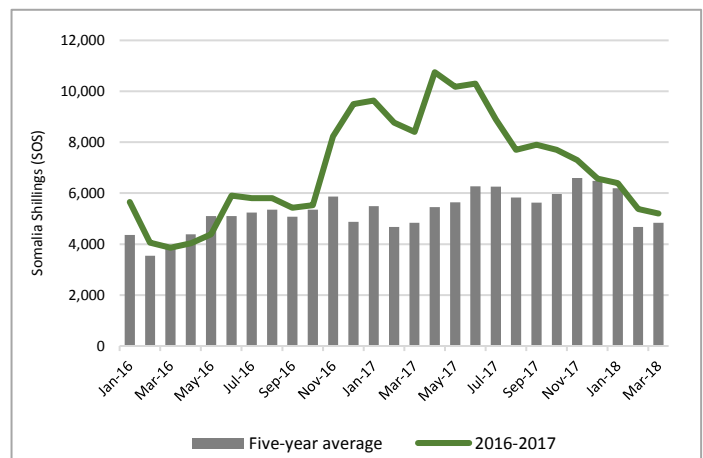
Source: FEWS NET/USGS, CHIRPS prelim

Figure 2. River water levels of the Shabelle River at Belet Weyne



Source: SWALIM data

Figure 3. Retail price of sorghum in Baidoa, Bay, January 2018 to March 2018 compared to each months respective five-year average



Source: FSNAU data

According to the Food Security Cluster, humanitarian actors reached an average of 1.84 million beneficiaries a month between January and March 2018 with humanitarian assistance, compared to 2.5 million in the last quarter of 2017 (Figure 4). Assistance is likely reaching around 70 percent of the estimated population in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse.

Food security is improving in many southern areas as poor households have normal access to income from agricultural labor and cereal prices have declined to normal. The daily wage rate currently buys 10-18 kg of local cereal, 20-60 percent more than the same time last year. Humanitarian assistance also continues to have a significant impact in several areas. Minimal (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes exist in most areas, though Crisis (IPC Phase 3) persists in Bay Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral, Southern Rainfed Agropastoral, Southern Agropastoral of Hiraaan, and Togdheer Agropastoral livelihood zones, where poor households experienced more significant crop and asset losses in 2017 and it is expected many still face at least small food consumption gaps as they repay debts. In addition, it is likely households recently impacted by floods do not have access to all typical income sources and are facing difficulty meeting their basic food and non-food needs.

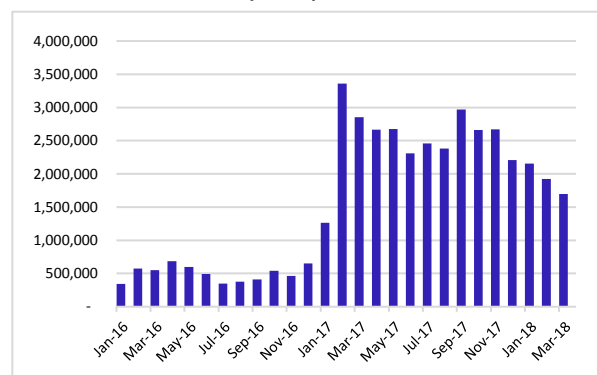
In northern and central areas, livestock-to-cereal terms of trade are favorable, but households have limited number of livestock to sell given significant losses in 2017. Food security is improving somewhat with livestock births and the availability of milk, though food and income sources remain insufficient to meet all basic needs. Continued humanitarian assistance is preventing worse outcomes, though, and many areas are Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) or in Crisis (IPC Phase 3!). This includes Guban Pastoral livelihood zone, where data from the post-*Jilaal* assessment indicate Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes persist (Figure 5). In Addun Pastoral livelihood zone of Galgaduud and northeastern Northern Inland Pastoral livelihood zone, where assistance has been relatively low, it is expected food security has deteriorated to Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

As a result of the current situation, the following assumptions have been updated from those used in FEWS NET's most likely scenario for February to September 2018:

- In southern and central Somalia, *Gu* rainfall is forecast to be below average in May and average in June. Given above-average rainfall in March and April, total seasonal rainfall is now expected to be average, with some areas of above-average rainfall. In northern Somalia, *Gu* rainfall is forecast to be below average throughout the remainder of the season. Total rainfall is likely to be slightly below average, though deficits are likely to be more significant in northeastern areas.
- Based on rainfall performance and ground information, it is expected that the area planted for cereals is average in rainfed areas. In riverine areas, it is expected some farmers are putting more land than is typical under cultivation for cash crops, and less area under cultivation for maize.
- Given current crop conditions, and the forecast for relatively lower rainfall totals in May, which will allow crops to dry and develop normally, it is now expected that cereal production in rainfed areas will be above the recent five-year average. The conclusion of above average 2018 *Gu* production is also due to the fact that the recent five-year average is relatively low given several poor seasons of production in 2016 and 2017.

Figure 4. Number of beneficiaries reached with emergency humanitarian assistance, January 2016 to March 2018



Source: Somalia Food Security Cluster

Figure 5. Outcomes of post-*Jilaal* survey in Guban Pastoral livelihood zone

| | Post-Deyr Dec 2017/Jan2018 | Post- <i>Jilaal</i> March 2018 |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Food Consumption Score | 38% poor; 16% borderline | 32% poor; 37% borderline |
| Household Hunger Scale | 3% severe; 22% moderate | 7% severe; 25% moderate |
| Global Acute Malnutrition (WHZ) | 6.6% (4.7-9.1) | 10.0% (6.9-14.1) |
| Crude Death Rate | 0.99/10,000/day | 0.98/10,000/day |
| Livelihoods coping (% using strategies indicative of) | 6% Emergency; 14% Crisis; 51% Stressed | 6% Emergency; 4% Crisis; 45% Stressed |

Source: FSNAU data

- Given the forecast for continued moderate to heavy rainfall in the Ethiopian highlands, further flooding is expected through May. As a result, additional crop damage in riverine areas is likely. With this and the expectation that some farmers are cultivating more cash crops in place of maize, below-average maize production in riverine areas is likely. However, high levels of recession cultivation are likely and above-average off-season maize production is expected.
- As a result of the above assumptions concerning *Gu* production, the retail price of sorghum is now expected to be slightly lower than previously projected, and remain somewhat below the five-year average from June through September.
- Given the delivery of humanitarian assistance in early 2018 and ground information that humanitarian actors continue to operate in many areas, it is expected that assistance will continue to reach between 50 and 75 percent of the estimated population in need through May. However, given the absence of details on planned and funded assistance throughout 2018, no assistance is assumed beyond May.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2018

In southern agricultural and agropastoral areas, food security outcomes are likely to be better than previously projected. Poor households in rainfed areas are likely to harvest more than the recent five-year average, and this combined with normal labor opportunities and average or below-average staple food prices will support adequate food consumption in most areas through September. Despite improvements, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are likely in Bay High Potential and Bay Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral, Riverine Gravity Irrigation, Southern Rainfed Agropastoral, and Southern Agropastoral livelihood zones as households in these areas sold or lost many livelihood assets in 2017 and have not fully recovered typical livelihoods. In addition, poor households impacted by floods, most likely concentrated in riverine areas, will likely have fewer labor opportunities through June and harvest below average production and some may be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through June.

In northern and central areas, the favorable rainy season will lead to greater than expected improvements in food security as livestock body conditions and productivity will be better than previously expected. As a result, most pastoralists will have greater access to milk, and herd sizes will continue to slowly recover with normal births during the *Gu* season. However, herd sizes remain very low for many pastoral households and they are unable to sell sufficient livestock to purchase adequate food to meet their households' basic food needs, or they are unwilling to sell these livestock as this would further lower herd sizes and risk livelihoods recovery. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are still expected in Addun Pastoral, East Golis Pastoral, Togdheer of Hawd Pastoral, and Coastal Deeh Pastoral livelihood zones.

In the Sool and Sanaag of Northern Inland Pastoral, milk availability will remain much lower than normal and few livestock will be saleable through May. Furthermore, lower levels of assistance in these regions – as observed in April and confirmed by WFP - are also expected in May. Poor households are likely to face larger food consumption gaps during this time and be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Livestock will be migrating in search of relatively better pasture and water, though, and livestock body conditions are expected to improve in late May/early June, increasing access to milk and the ability of pastoralists to sell a few livestock. Improvement to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is expected from June to September.

In Guban Pastoral livelihood zone, few to no animals conceived in 2017 and, as a result, very limited births will take place during the *Gu*. Milk will not be available through September for most in this livelihood zone, and although some will receive remittances and access labor from Djibouti, these incomes sources will not be available to all. Currently households have 10-15 goats and would need to sell nearly all their remaining livestock – resulting in an extreme loss of livelihood assets – in order to meet their basic food needs through September. As a result, this area is expected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in the absence of assistance.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET's Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).