

# PRESS RELEASE

## Future Outlook: Somalia Faces High Risk of Famine

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Based on early predictions for the upcoming *Gu* rainy season (April-June), the Food Security Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSAU), together with FEWS NET/Somalia, is issuing an early warning that parts of Southern Somalia are at **High Risk of Famine/Humanitarian Catastrophe** from July to December 2006. This is mainly due to severe lack of access and availability of **both food and water** resulting from an abnormally severe drought and persistent civil insecurity.

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (COF) recently released findings indicating a significant possibility of below normal rains for the upcoming main *Gu* season, inclusive of most of Somalia and the cross border areas with Kenya and Ethiopia. The COF projections are consistent with the Livestock Early Warning System (LEWS) projections indicating below normal forage conditions for the Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia cross border area.

While there is also a possibility that the *Gu* season will be above normal, given the significant possibility of a below normal outcome--combined with the current precarious Humanitarian Emergency in Southern Somalia and the sustained possibility of widespread conflict--it is prudent for all stakeholders to prepare for a worst-case humanitarian and livelihood scenario. By the third week of May, the midpoint of the *Gu* rainy season, a more definitive statement on the future outlook can be made.

In a worst-case scenario, parts of Southern Somalia (in particular Gedo Region and parts of Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bay, and Bakool) are at **High Risk of Famine/Humanitarian Catastrophe** during the period of July to December 2006. As well, parts of Hiran are at High Risk of Humanitarian Emergency and parts of Lower Shabelle are at High Risk of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis. In Northern and Central regions, on-going Acute Food and Livelihood Crises are likely to continue, impeding recovery from the previous drought two years ago. (See map on the following page for further details. For descriptions of this classification terminology and their respective implications for action, see the *Integrated Food Security and Humanitarian Phase Classification* reference table available on [www.fsasomali.org](http://www.fsasomali.org)).

Currently there are an estimated 1.7 million people in North, Central, and Southern Somalia facing conditions of Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis or Humanitarian Emergency (see FSAU Technical Series IV.8 for more details). Preliminary estimates in the worst case scenario are that this number will **increase to 1.8 million** between July and December 2006, which includes an estimated 800,000 highly vulnerable children. While seemingly not such a large increase, it does include a **major shift in severity**, with an over **40% increase** in the number of people facing Humanitarian Emergency or Famine conditions (from the current 900,000 to 1.3 million). Combining the IDP population, estimated at 400,000, means that roughly **2.2 million** Somalis are facing a severe food security crisis.

This worsening of severity has strong implications for the humanitarian response including: increased urgency, more comprehensive sectoral relief, and an increased imperative for an adequate international response as compared with other on-going crises in the world.

Cross border analysis conducted by FSAU, FEWS NET, SC-UK, and WFP also raises alarms for a deteriorating situation in Southern Ethiopia and Northeastern Kenya (inclusive of the greater Somali Livelihood System), with those areas at **Moderate Risk of Famine/Humanitarian Catastrophe** from July to December, emphasizing the need for a proportionate cross-border response.

In the scenario that the *Gu* rains are normal to above normal, there will still be a need for continued humanitarian assistance to support livelihood recovery due to extremely high asset losses, weakened human health conditions, and debt accumulation from the current drought.

In either scenario, there is a pressing need for a holistic response that is not only multi-sectoral, but gives due emphasis to three broad objectives: **saving lives, supporting livelihoods, and addressing underlying causes of chronic food insecurity**. Although the crisis is particularly severe in Southern regions, the humanitarian community can not lose sight of on-going crises in Central and Northern regions.

"Already we are seeing earlier predictions of human suffering and loss of livelihoods coming true", says Nicholas Haan, UN FAO Chief Technical Advisor to the FSAU. "We are bracing ourselves for a major Humanitarian Catastrophe, including the death of potentially thousands of people and widespread displacement." The FEWS NET Representative, Mohamed Aw-Dahir, notes that, "It is even conceivable that the normally perennial Shabelle and Dawa rivers could dry up, which would broaden the devastation of this drought."

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For additional information visit: <http://www.fsasomali.org>, For FEWS NET reports visit: <http://www.fews.net>

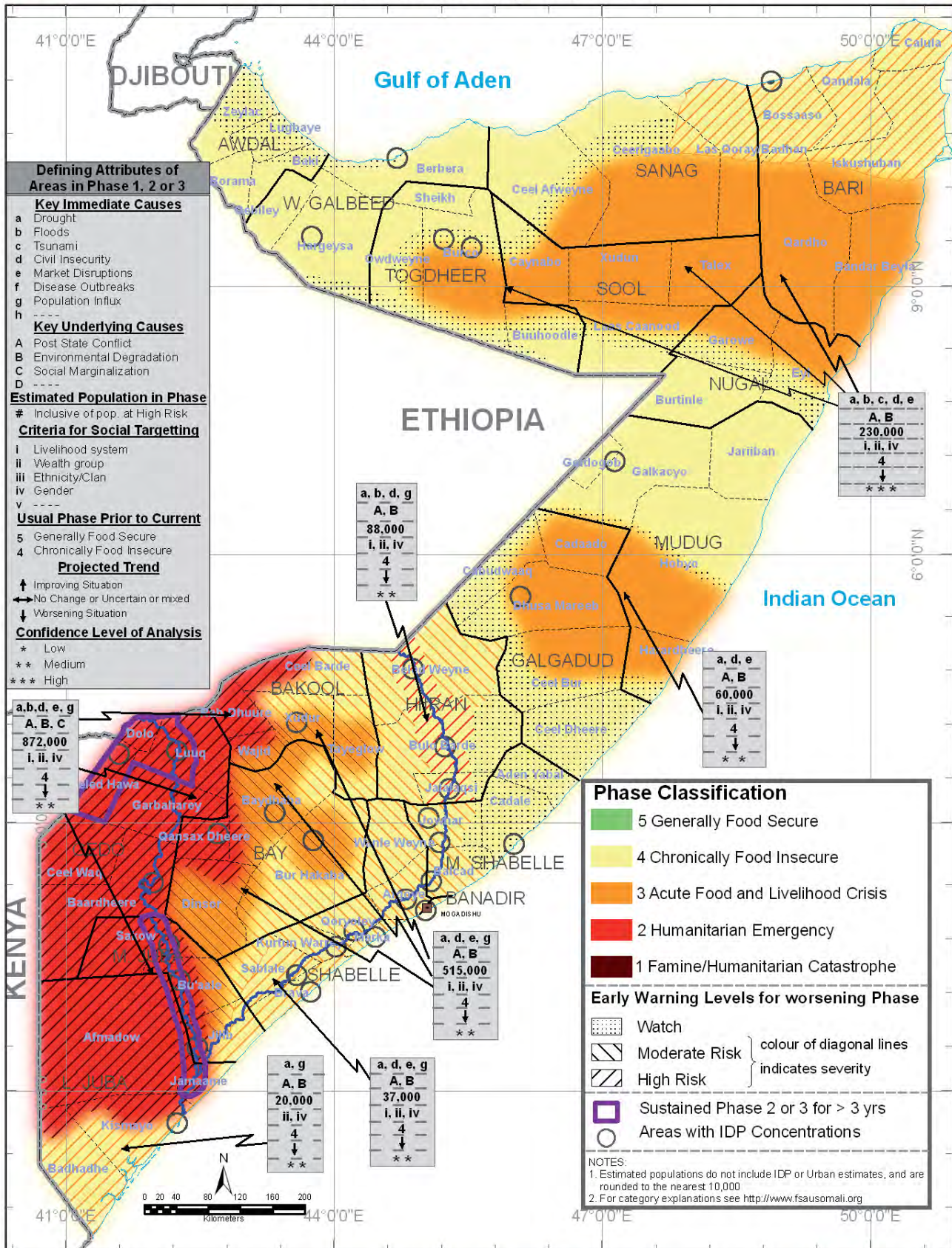
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**SOMALIA FOOD SECURITY SITUATION ANALYSIS: BELOW NORMAL GU 2006 RAINS SCENARIO**  
 Projections, July 2006 Through December 2006



Updated: March 13, 2006

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 The regional & District boundaries reflect those endorsed by the Government of the Republic of Somalia in 1986.



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