

## **1.5 million people in Somalia still facing acute food security crisis or worse outcomes despite improvements** *294 000 children are acutely malnourished*

**September 2, 2018, Mogadishu/Washington** – Despite recent improvement, an estimated 1.5 million people in Somalia are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3)<sup>1</sup> or worse through December according to findings from the post-*Gu* seasonal assessment conducted in June and July 2018. Between April and June, food security continued to improve due to average to above-average rainfall beneficial to seasonal food and income sources and market conditions combined with sustained and large-scale humanitarian assistance. Forecast average to above-average *Deyr* (October-December 2018) rains, expected average to above-average off-season harvests, and favorable market conditions are expected to further improve food security conditions through December 2018. However, acute food insecurity remains prevalent among pastoral populations who lost most of their livestock and became destitute during the 2016/2017 drought and Cyclone Sagar; riverine populations affected by flooding in April and May 2018; and others experiencing large-scale, protracted displacement due to conflict and natural hazards. These groups are expected to face food consumption gaps or engage in unsustainable coping strategies to meet their food needs, and humanitarian assistance is required to prevent further deterioration of their food security and nutrition situation. This seasonal assessment was jointly led by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FSNAU, a project managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET, a project funded by USAID) and carried out with the active participation of Government institutions and other partners.

The 2018 *Gu* rains started early in some areas, ended normally in June, and were generally average to well above average, except in the northeast, which received slightly below average to near-average rainfall. River and flash floods occurred in many low-lying areas, particularly along Shabelle and Juba rivers, while Cyclone Sagar brought torrential rainfall and flooding to the northwest in May. The 2018 *Gu* was the wettest season in nearly two decades in several areas and ended drought conditions that had persisted since the 2016 *Gu*. Rainfall has improved pasture and water availability, and normal livestock migration patterns have resumed across most of the country. Livestock productivity, herd size, and milk availability have also improved, and favorable livestock-to-cereal terms of trade has improved food access for pastoralists reliant on market purchases. In addition, emergency food assistance reached 1.9 million people a month between February and July, according to the Somalia Food Security Cluster, and this prevented more severe outcomes in several areas. Many areas are in Stressed (IPC Phase 2!) or Crisis (IPC Phase 3!) with this assistance. However, adverse impacts of the 2016/2017 drought persist in some areas, most notably among pastoralists who lost most of their livestock and people who became destitute and were displaced.

In southern Somalia, 2018 *Gu* season cereal production is estimated at 147 200 tonnes, including 7 200 tonnes of off-season harvests expected in October. This level of production is 17 percent higher than the long-term average (1995-2017) and 58 percent higher than the five-year average (2013-17). In the northwest, an estimated 19 000 tonnes of 2018 *Gu/Karan* cereal production is expected to be harvested in November, which is 58 percent lower than the 2010-17 average due to erratic rainfall. Poor households in the crop-dependent Northwest Agropastoral livelihood zone and some parts of southern Somalia (mainly riverine) currently have little to no food stocks and limited farm labor opportunities, due to localized below-average production, flooding, and the extended lean season.

Data from OCHA indicates that the total population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is currently 2.6 million. Results from the post-*Gu* assessment indicate that most of the 13 primary IDP settlements are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), and this is expected to be sustained through December 2018. However, food security and nutrition indicators in Bossaso IDP settlement were indicative of Emergency (IPC Phase 4). In most urban areas, declining food prices and increased employment opportunities have improved food security outcomes to Stressed (IPC Phase 2), including in urban areas that previously experienced trade disruptions due to insecurity. However, some urban areas in northern and southern Somalia affected by flooding and depreciation of the local currency are classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

A recent forecast issued by the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF50), indicates a greater likelihood of normal to above normal 2018 *Deyr* (October-December) rains across Somalia. As a result, pasture and water availability, crop cultivation, livestock reproduction, access to agricultural employment, water and food prices are expected to continue to improve through late 2018. However, forecasted average to above-average rains may also cause flooding in some low-lying and riverine areas, which could have a negative impact on off-season harvests.

Between August and December, food security is expected to improve in most areas of the country. However, it should be noted that that many central and northern pastoral areas and some southern areas will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) until September/early

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

October, when the onset of the rainfall leads to improved livestock productivity, livestock births increasing saleable animals, and increased agricultural labor opportunities. In the absence of assistance, food security outcomes are expected to deteriorate to Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Guban Pastoral livelihood zone and to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in Northern Inland Pastoral livelihood zone in Sool and Sanaag and Riverine Pump Irrigation livelihood zone in Hiiran and Gedo. More than 1.5 million people will face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) through December 2018, which represents a significant improvement from the 2.7 million people projected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse between February and June 2018. An additional 3.1 million people are classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2), which brings the total number of people in Somalia facing acute food insecurity through December 2018 to 4.6 million. Those facing acute food security Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse urgently need humanitarian assistance and livelihood support through December 2018 to prevent food security deterioration. Livelihood support is also required for people categorized as Stressed (IPC Phase 2). Approximately 17 000 urban IDPs (Hargeisa, Burao, Bossasso, Beletweyne and Mogadishu settlements) experiencing extreme food security outcomes have been classified as Catastrophe (IPC 5). These IDP settlements deserve urgent attention.

Results from 30 separate nutrition surveys conducted by FSNAU and partners in June and July 2018 indicate that the overall nutrition situation in Somalia has improved due to better food security conditions, reduced outbreak of disease, and sustained humanitarian interventions. The national level of acute malnutrition has improved to Serious (10–14.9 percent Global Acute Malnutrition-GAM) with a median GAM of 14.0 percent, compared to a Critical prevalence (15–29.9 percent GAM) in the 2017 Gu, which recorded a median GAM of 17.4 percent. There was no improvement in the national acute malnutrition prevalence compared to the 2017/18 Deyr (median GAM of 13.8 percent). Despite this improvement, a high level of acute malnutrition persists in several population groups due to underlying/structural causes. In 12 of the 33 populations surveyed, GAM prevalence was Critical. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) prevalence was Critical ( $\geq 4 - 5.6$  percent) in the Mogadishu IDP settlement and Guban Pastoral livelihood zone only. The Crude Death Rate (CDR) was Critical (1 to  $<2/10$  000/day) in three out of 33 population groups surveyed, while morbidity rates remain high ( $>20$  %) in many parts of the country. Based on these indicators, urgent treatment and nutrition support is required for an estimated 294 200 children will likely face acute malnutrition through December 2018, including 55 200 who are likely to be severely malnourished (total acute malnutrition burden). Integrated support interventions should be sustained to maintain recent improvements in acute malnutrition prevalence and to prevent deterioration in the nutrition situation. Nutrition and mortality situation in Guban Pastoral and among IDPs in Mogadishu deserves urgent attention.

#### Areas and Populations of Concern

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

Regions of Somalia	Total Population (2014 Estimates)	Number of Acutely Food Insecure People (August-December 2018)			
		Stressed (IPC 2)	Crisis (IPC 3)	Emergency (IPC 4)	Catastrophe (IPC 5)
Awdal	673,264	149,000	121,000	36,000	-
Woqooyi Galbeed	1,242,003	401,000	152,000	17,000	6,000 (Hargeisa IDPs)
Togdheer	721,363	218,000	49,000	6,000	3,000 (Burao IDPs)
Sanaag	544,123	140,000	86,000	1,000	-
Sool	327,427	80,000	134,000	-	-
Bari	730,147	168,000	170,000	32,000	1,000 (Bossasso IDPs)
Nugaal	392,698	105,000	30,000	-	-
Mudug	717,862	227,000	93,000	-	-
Galgaduud	569,434	203,000	81,000	1,000	-
Hiraan	520,686	114,000	41,000	11,000	2,000 (Beletweyne IDPs & Urban)
Middle Shabelle	516,035	68,000	6,000	-	-
Lower Shabelle	1,202,219	123,000	-	-	-
Banadir	1,650,228	456,000	189,000	30,000	5,000 (Mogadishu IDPs)
Bay	792,182.0	261,000	101,000	7,000	-
Bakool	367,227	81,000	20,000	-	-
Gedo	508,403	109,000	30,000	5,000	-
Middle Juba	362,921	93,000	9,000	-	-
Lower Juba	489,307	80,000	77,000	11,000	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,327,529</b>	<b>3,077,000</b>	<b>1,388,000</b>	<b>157,000</b>	<b>17,000</b>

The following areas of concern are considered hotspots in need of urgent nutrition and health support interventions. They have a Critical prevalence of acute malnutrition ( $\geq 15\%$  GAM) or  $\geq 10.7$  percent of children have a Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) below the 125 millimeter threshold. They are: Northern Inland Pastoral of northeast, Hawd Pastoral of northeast, Northwest Guban Pastoral, North Gedo Riverine, Beletweyne District (Riverine & Agro-pastoral), South Gedo Agro-pastoral, South Gedo Riverine, Mataban, Jalalaqsi and Buloburte districts of Hiiran Region, Juba Riverine as well as IDP Populations in Bossaasso, Garowe, Galkacyo, Qardho, Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismayo, and Dolow.

FSNAU and FEWS NET will continue to monitor conditions and outcomes and report on the situation. All information will be made available through [www.fsnau.org](http://www.fsnau.org) and [www.fews.net](http://www.fews.net). **For more information, please contact:** Nancy McNally, Communications Officer, FAO Somalia, Tel: +254 -739469107, Email: [nancy.mcnally@fao.org](mailto:nancy.mcnally@fao.org) and Marie Maroun, Communications officer, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), Tel: +1 202 524 7749, Email: [mmaroun@fews.net](mailto:mmaroun@fews.net)

