

In the aftermath of drought, up to 2.1 million people in Somalia face acute food security Crisis or worse outcomes *1 million children likely to be acutely malnourished*

September 2, 2019, Mogadishu/Washington – Up to 2.1 million people across Somalia are expected to face food consumption gaps, high acute malnutrition, or depletion of assets indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3)¹ or worse outcomes through December 2019. Moreover, an estimated one million children under the age of five are likely to be acutely malnourished through mid-2020. Sustained and large-scale humanitarian assistance, which is planned and likely through September, is currently preventing more severe outcomes in many areas. In the absence of humanitarian assistance from October to December, however, food security is expected to deteriorate. Current high levels of food insecurity are driven by drought conditions from late 2018 through mid-May 2019, exacerbated by below-average and erratically distributed rainfall during the 2019 *Gu* season (April-June), which began late and finished early. Many households are still recovering from the severe 2016/2017 drought or have been affected by conflict, and 2.6 million people remain displaced. The *Gu* cereal harvest failed in most regions, leaving most poor agropastoral and riverine households unable to meet their minimum food needs given significantly below-average food stocks and income from seasonal agricultural employment. In pastoral areas, the impact of the drought on livestock led to a lack of access to milk, and many poor households have accumulated large debts while struggling to feed their families and rescue their remaining livestock. Although the 2019 *Deyr* (October-December) rains are forecast to be average to above average, the positive impact on food security will not be realized until late 2019. However, seasonal production activities will mitigate more severe deterioration during this period. These findings are based on the 2019 post-*Gu* seasonal food security and nutrition assessment conducted across Somalia during June-July 2019 and subsequent analyses, 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, UN and NGO partners.

Contrary to weather forecasts, the 2019 *Gu* rains started late and were significantly below average in most of Somalia, causing moderate to severe drought conditions to persist through mid-May. Rainfall in most of central and southern Somalia was 25-40 percent below average, and the Shabelle and Juba river levels remained very low. An increase in rainfall from mid-May to mid-June led to improved browse and water conditions in northern and southern Somalia. However, the short duration, low amount, and erratic distribution of the rains, as well as low river levels, led to significant reductions in area planted and yield of cereal crops. 2019 *Gu* cereal production in southern Somalia is estimated at 41 000 tons, including 6 900 tons of off-season harvests expected in late August/September. The total cereal harvest in southern Somalia is the lowest *Gu* harvest since 1995 and 68 percent lower than the long-term average for 1995-2018. In the northwest, where *Gu* rainfall was below average but relatively better in terms of distribution, 2019 *Gu/Karan* cereal production is expected to be harvested in November/December and is estimated at 23 200 tons, which is 44 percent below the 2010-2018 average.

Poor pasture conditions are again evident in Mudug, Galgaduud, Bakool, Bay, Gedo and Middle Juba, with atypical livestock migration reported in Gedo. In northern and central pastoral areas, where significant livestock loss occurred during the 2016/2017 drought, the availability of saleable animals remains low, constraining the ability of poor households to feed their families and purchase water for their animals. Milk availability is largely below-average to poor. Although goat prices currently remain high, driven by low supply and increased demand related to recent *Hajj* festivities, many families are unable to sell their animals without endangering the sustainability of their herds and their livelihoods. Livestock-to-cereal terms of trade remain generally favorable, providing pastoralists with more than one bag (50kg) of cereals for the sale of one goat. However, dwindling market stocks from previous harvests and the poor 2019 *Gu* harvest led to sharp increases in sorghum prices in July, and the livestock-to-cereal and wage labor-to-cereal terms of trade exhibit a downward trend.

According to the Somalia Food Security Cluster, there has been a significant scale up of emergency food assistance since May 2019. 1.2 to 1.4 million people were reached each month from May to June, 1.9 million people were reached in July and planned assistance is expected to continue at similar levels in August and September. The increased and sustained level of assistance is likely preventing worse food security outcomes in many areas. In the presence of assistance through September, most of rural Somalia is classified as Stressed (IPC Phase 2), while Guban Pastoral, Bay-Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral, and parts of Hiiraan, Galgaduud, and the Jubas are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). This includes 1.2 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) and an additional 3.6 million that are Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

An estimated 2.6 million people across Somalia remain internally displaced. Post-*Gu* assessment results indicate that most of the 14 major Internally Displaced Person (IDP) settlements are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the presence of humanitarian assistance. In most urban areas, mostly stable food prices and employment opportunities have helped to sustain food security outcomes in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Minimal (IPC Phase 1). However, households in urban areas in Sool, Sanaag and Hiraaan regions are facing food consumption gaps and are classified as Crisis (IPC Phase 3), driven by the high cost of living and limited income-earning opportunities.

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

In the October-December 2019 *Deyr* rainfall season, consensus climate forecasts released in late August by the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF53) indicate a greater likelihood of normal to above-normal rainfall performance across most of Somalia. The rains are expected to improve pasture and water availability, crop cultivation, livestock production, and access to agricultural employment. However, heavy rainfall brings an increased risk of flooding and disruption in riverine and low-lying areas.

In the absence of assistance during the October- December period, food security is expected to deteriorate in most of northern and central Somalia and some parts of the South. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to be widespread in northern and central agropastoral and pastoral livelihood zones, as distressed sales of livestock will outpace births and result in stagnant or declining livestock herd sizes. However, seasonal milk availability and restored livestock body conditions and value, along with agricultural labor opportunities, will offer some food and income. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is most likely in Guban Pastoral livelihood zone, as births will not occur until December-January, and in Bay-Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral livelihood zone, given the severity of *Gu* food deficits. Without sustained humanitarian assistance, 2.1 million people will face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) outcomes. An additional 4.2 million people are expected to be Stressed (IPC Phase 2), bringing the total number of people facing acute food insecurity to 6.3 million. Current levels of humanitarian assistance must be sustained through December in order to prevent anticipated food security Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes. Livelihoods support is also required for people that are Stressed or worse (IPC Phase 2 or higher).

Results from 33 separate nutrition surveys conducted by FSNAU and partners in June and July 2019 indicate the persistence of widespread acute malnutrition in Somalia due to a combination of factors, including food insecurity, high morbidity, low immunization and vitamin-A supplementation, and poor care practices. At the national level, the median prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) has remained Serious (10–14.9%) over the past three seasons (13.8% in 2019 *Gu*, 12.6% in 2018 *Deyr* and 14.0% in 2018 *Gu*). A Critical (15-29.9%) prevalence of GAM was observed in 10 out of the 33 population groups surveyed, with more areas likely to deteriorate from Serious to Critical between August and October 2019. A Critical (4-5.6%) prevalence of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) was observed in the Riverine livelihood of Beletweyne district and in urban Beletweyne. Morbidity among children was high ($\geq 20\%$) in 15 out 33 population groups surveyed. However, Crude Death Rate and Under-Five Death Rate were relatively low in most areas. Urgent treatment and nutrition support is required for an estimated 1 008 500 children under the age of five years (total acute malnutrition burden), who will likely face acute malnutrition through June 2020, including 178 400 who are likely to be severely malnourished. Integrated interventions should be provided to support recovery and prevent deterioration in the nutrition situation.

Areas and Populations of Concern

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

Regions	Population (2014 Estimates)	Number of Acutely Food Insecure People (Rural, IDP and Urban Combined)					
		Current (July-September 2019)			Most Likely (October-December 2019)		
		Stressed (IPC 2)	Crisis (IPC 3)	Emergency (IPC 4)	Stressed (IPC 2)	Crisis (IPC 3)	Emergency (IPC 4)
Awdal	673,264	273,000	40,000	21,000	265,000	87,000	39,000
W. Galbeed	1,242,003	558,000	50,000	13,000	505,000	177,000	22,000
Togdheer	721,363	261,000	82,000	6,000	274,000	104,000	12,000
Sanaag	544,123	164,000	61,000	23,000	188,000	94,000	46,000
Sool	327,427	115,000	69,000	14,000	111,000	108,000	27,000
Bari	730,147	214,000	34,000	7,000	238,000	71,000	14,000
Nugaal	392,698	97,000	20,000	4,000	115,000	42,000	7,000
Mudug	717,862	213,000	59,000	7,000	239,000	86,000	16,000
Galgaduud	569,434	224,000	38,000	3,000	283,200	57,000	6,000
Hiraan	520,686	130,000	90,000	6,000	145,000	107,000	12,000
M. Shabelle	516,035	159,000	24,000	5,000	191,000	38,000	10,000
L. Shabelle	1,202,219	343,000	54,000	18,000	496,000	108,000	36,000
Bakool	367,227	123,000	37,000	8,000	117,000	31,000	26,000
Bay	792,182	160,000	134,000	28,000	218,000	196,000	71,000
Gedo	508,403	229,000	25,000	6,000	336,000	39,000	10,000
M. Juba	362,921	84,000	48,000	1,000	91,000	69,000	2,000
L. Juba	489,307	76,000	52,000	20,000	93,000	92,000	33,000
Banadir	1,650,228	207,000	65,000	25,000	330,000	149,000	50,000
TOTAL	12,327,529	3,630,000	982,000	215,000	4,235,200	1,655,000	439,000

The following areas of concern are considered hotspots in need of urgent nutrition and health support interventions. They currently have or are projected to have a Critical GAM prevalence, indicated by a weight-for-height z-score of 15-29.9% or by a Mid-Upper Arm Circumference below 125 mm of $\geq 10\%$: East Golis Pastoral, Hawd Pastoral of Northeast and Central, Riverine Pump Irrigation of Hiran and Gedo, Riverine Gravity Irrigation of Middle and Lower Shabelle and Juba, Bay-Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral, Sorghum High Potential Agropastoral of Bay and Shabelle, Southern Agropastoral and Southern Inland Pastoral (SIP) of Hiran and Gedo and SIP of Bakool. IDP areas of concern are Bossasso, Qardho, Galkacyo, Dollow, Baidoa and Mogadishu. Beletweyne is an urban area of concern.

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 and www.fews.net. For more information, please contact: Alberto TrilloBarca, Communications Officer, FAO Somalia, Tel: + 252 619 154 103/+254 768 055 361, Email: Alberto.TrilloBarca@fao.org or Sterling Riber, Knowledge Management and Communications Advisor, Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), Email: sriber@fews.net.

Somalia Acute Food Security Situation Overview

Current (July-September 2019)

Most Likely (October-December 2019)

