

Poor October to December seasonal rainfall and sustained ethnic clashes continue

KEY MESSAGES

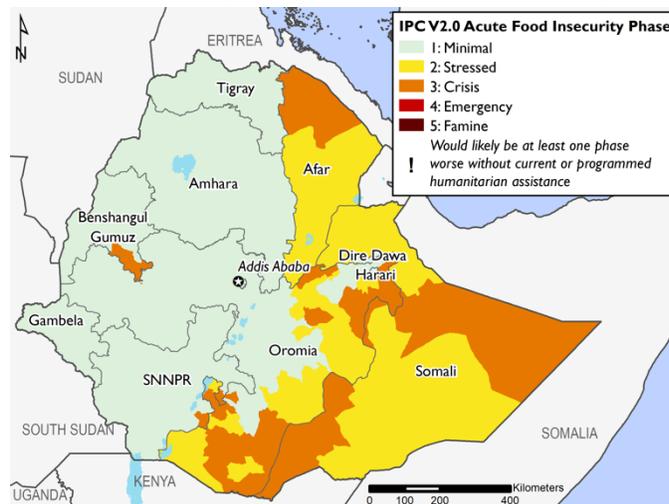
- *Deyr/Hagaya* seasonal rainfall (October to December) in southern pastoral areas has been below average. It has been also erratic in temporal and spatial distribution and the onset was delayed. Southeastern pastoral areas continue to recover from drought in 2016 and 2017 and will remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through at least May 2019.
- *Meher* harvests are generally average throughout much of the country. Over parts of eastern Oromia, southern Tigray, eastern Amhara, and northern SNNPR, however, rainfall was below-average, leading to reduced production. Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected in affected areas, as well as in many northern pastoral areas.
- While the country continues to respond to the needs of drought affected populations, large populations are also displaced by conflict throughout the country. Areas where intercommunal clashes are having the most significant impact on food security outcomes include parts of Oromia, SNNPR, Somali, and Benishangul Gumuz regions.

CURRENT SITUATION

- **Rainfall performance has been mixed over areas of southeastern and southern Ethiopia that typically receive *Deyr/Hagaya* rains between October and December.** Seasonal rainfall started earlier than normal in the east of the Somali Region but was delayed by one to two weeks in most other areas. Moreover, the rainfall was significantly below average and erratically distributed across Somali region and southern pastoral areas of Oromia and SNNPR. Based on rainfall from October to 15 December 2018 and the NOAA/CPC forecast through December 31, wide areas southern pastoral areas of Ethiopia will accumulate large rainfall deficits (Figure 1).

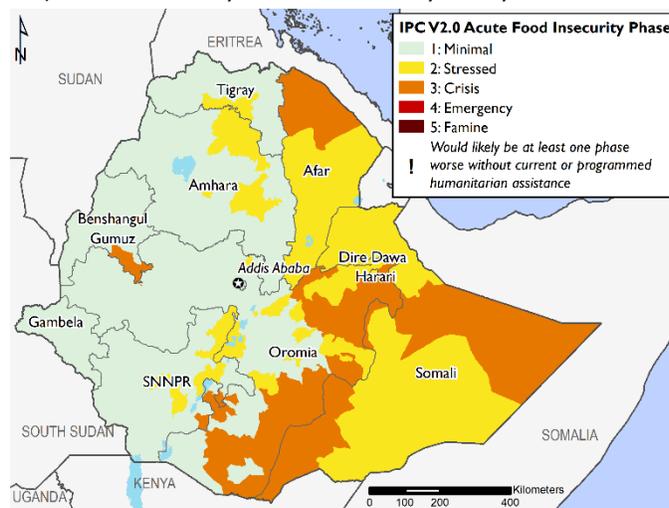
- **Conditions for pasture and water in northern and southern pastoral areas area mixed.** In southern pastoral areas, successive improvements in rainfall seasons had improved water and pasture conditions following droughts in 2016 and

Projected food security outcomes, December 2018 to January 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2019



Source: FEWS NET

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.

2017. This in turn contributed to improved livestock body condition and conception rates and camels and goats are birthing again. Poor rainfall performance during the ongoing *Deyr/Hagaya* season, however, will limit the good recovery seen during previous months. In pastoral areas of Afar and northern Somali (Sitti and Fafan zones) regions, availability of pasture and water is expected to seasonably deteriorate during the dry season through March 2019.

- Livestock prices are generally stable in most markets, improving compared to last year and average.** According to field observations in Somali region and Borana zone of Oromia, livestock prices show an increasing trend. The price increases are associated with an improvement in livestock body conditions and low market supply as pastoralists are recovering from past droughts. As per Somali Region DPPB market data for Warder for the month of November, average locally consumed Goat price increased by 9, 23, and 54 percent, compared to last month, the same month last year, and the five years average respectively. Goat to maize terms of trade were up by about 25 percent compared to same month last year and the five years average.

On the other hand, livestock prices show a decreasing trend in the north of Afar region. For instance, the price of an average sized goat in November in Teru and Avera woredas declined by 38 and 14 percent, respectively, compared to the same month of last year. Livestock market supply is expected to increase in the upcoming long dry Jilal season due to livestock feed shortages and increased household purchase needs.

- Following generally average *Kiremt* seasonal performance, *Meher* harvest prospects at the national level are expected to be near average.** Unseasonal rainfall in October and November, however, did cause minor crop losses in major *Meher* crop producing areas of the country. The *Meher* assessment teams did also confirm localized areas of below-average production due to erratic rainfall, conflict, and pests during the main cultivation season.
- Prices for locally produced staple foods have remained high since the start of the last lean.** Prices are stable at elevated levels. For example, the price of sorghum in October in Boke woreda is 36 and 20 percent higher than October 2017 and the reference year, respectively. The wholesale maize price in Hosanna market increase by 9.3 percent compared to last month (October 2018), 6.4 percent compared to the same month last year, and 33.3 percent compared to the five-year average (Figure 2).

- Conflict across different parts of the country continues to lead to displacement.** According to IOM and partner reports, the number of conflict-related IDPs in 2018 alone could be as high as more than 1.5 million people across the country. The level of displacement is expected to increase as localized conflicts continue. For example, in the second week of December 2018, conflict along the Oromia-Somali border in Borena zone, specifically around Moyale, resulted in the displacement of thousands of people. In this clash, as per the report by Ethiopian News agency (ENA) on December 16, 2018, 21 people died, and 61 others injured.

Figure 1. CHIRPS October-December 15 prelim rainfall and GFS forecast December rainfall as a percentage of normal compared to 1981-2010 average

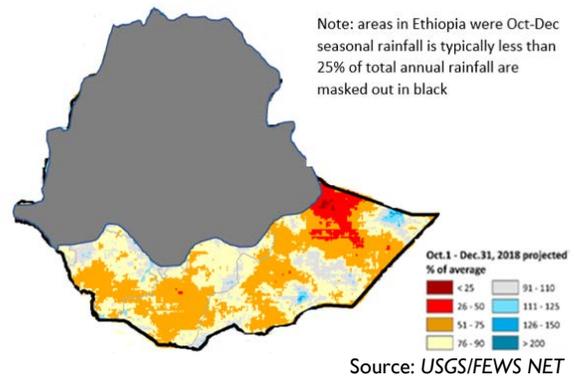


Figure 2. Maize prices in Hosanna market

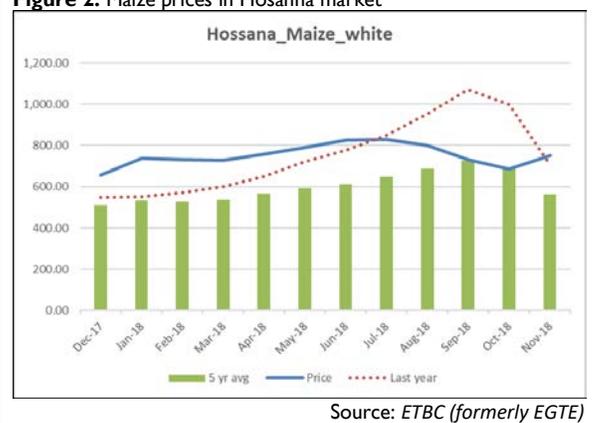
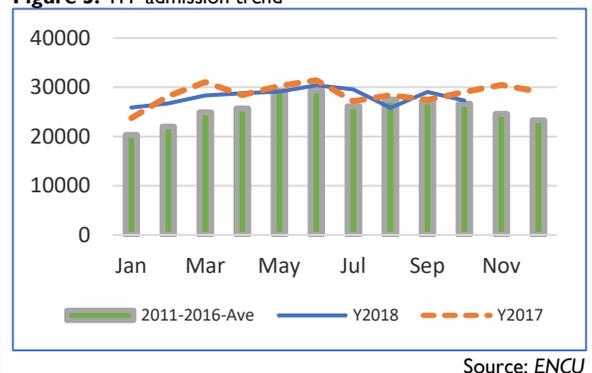


Figure 3. TFP admission trend



The wholesale maize price in Hosanna market increase by 9.3 percent compared to last month (October 2018), 6.4 percent compared to the same month last year, and 33.3 percent compared to the five-year average (Figure 2).

- **Admissions for acute malnutrition treatment in Somali and Oromia regions remain high (Figure 3).** The caseload for treatment of severe acute malnutrition in Oromia and Somali regions was approximately 112,956 and 72,144 admissions between January and October 2018 respectively, or approximately 66 percent of admissions in all of Ethiopia (280,892 children). A total of 11,340 and 6,673 admissions occurred in the month of October alone in Oromia and Somali regions respectively.

Across the country, total TFP admissions of malnourished children under 5 in October 2018 was 6.1 and 7.8 percent lower than September and July. The level of admissions was similar to the same month of last year but 8.3 percent higher than the five-year average.

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the Ethiopia Food Security Outlook for October 2018 to May 2019 remain unchanged, except for the following:

- October to December *Deyr/Hageya* 2018 seasonal rainfall performance totals has been below average across southern pastoral areas, specifically it has been 26-50 percent of average in Degahabur and the surrounding areas. This will adversely affect even further than expected water and pasture availability, which in turn will have negative impacts on livestock body conditions and productivity in the upcoming dry season.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2019

- In large areas of southern pastoral Ethiopia, below-average *Deyr /Hagaya* 2018 rainfall will limit recovery for pastoral households. Between December 2018 and May 2019, the most likely scenario is that food security in areas worst-affected by drought in 2016/17 in the Somali Region is Crisis (IPC Phase 3). Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are also expected throughout the scenario period in pastoral northern Afar, where successive mediocre to poor rainfall seasons have limited availability of pasture and water, in turn reducing livestock productivity and incomes from sales.
- Areas of Oromia, SNNPR, Somali, and Benishangul Gumuz that have seen significant ethnic clashes in 2018 are also expected to continue to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes throughout the scenario period. Displaced households and worst-affected resident populations directly impacted by the insecurity have limited livelihood opportunities and are expected to remain highly reliant on humanitarian assistance provision. Humanitarian actors are reaching some of these populations, including WFP in the Somali region, with the provision of emergency food assistance.
- With the early exhaustion of stocks from the last *Belg* and *Meher* harvests food security is expected to deteriorate from Minimal (IPC Phase 1) between October and December to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in eastern parts of Amhara and Tigray regions. Lowland parts of East Hararghe and West Hararghe zones are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) currently and will move to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in East Hararghe and West Hararghe zones between January and May 2019 due to *Meher* losses due to poor *Kiremt* rainfall as well as increasing levels of conflict-related displacement. Most of the rest of the country will remain in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity from October 2018 to March 2019.

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](#).