

Crisis (IPC Phase 3) persists as food prices increase and drought recovery continues

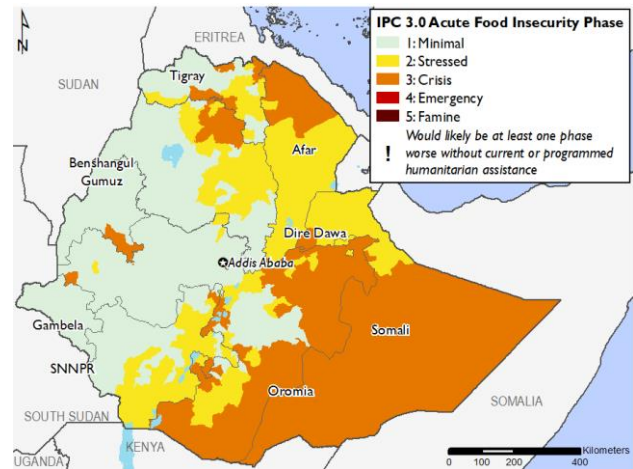
KEY MESSAGES

- Due to below average *Belg* and *Deyr/Hagaya* rains large areas of Somali, Eastern Oromia, and northeastern Afar regions are anticipated to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) through January 2020. Localized flooding associated with above average *Kiremt* rains in parts of Amhara and Gambela region as well as South Omo zone in SNNPR has caused displacement, crop damage, and livestock deaths, restricting typical food and income access. As a result, some households are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2).
- The ongoing average to above average *Kiremt* rainfall is expected to improve Meher crop production. However, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources (MoANR) reports, desert locusts have been spotted in Somali, Afar, Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia regions with a high likelihood of decreased crop production. As per MoANR, no crop damage has been reported, although, locust breeding remains a high threat and strict monitoring with early control is needed to prevent crop and pasture damage.
- According to the Food Security Cluster, humanitarian assistance delivery, across the country has been irregular and delayed. An immediate, regular and sustained resumption of assistance is needed to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps. Despite delays in assistance delivery, food assistance reached about 93, 55 and 3.5 percent of the plan in the first three rounds of distribution as of the first week of August. As a result, assistance is likely improving outcomes among beneficiaries; however, it is not expected to drive improvements in the area-level outcomes.

CURRENT SITUATION

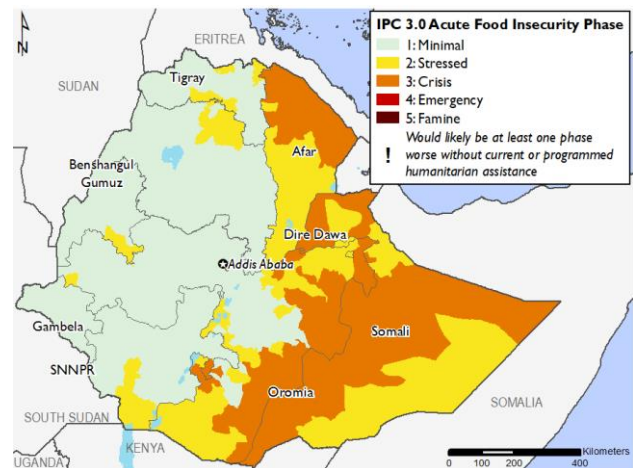
Kiremt rainfall from June through August 2019 has been average to above average across most *Kiremt* rain receiving areas; however, below average rainfall has been noted in localized areas of Afar, West Tigray, Amhara and East and West Haraghe. Moderate to heavy rainfall in the first ten days of August slightly improved vegetative and pasture conditions, although they generally remain below the median (Figure 1). Flooding associated with heavy rainfall in areas of South Gondar, Oromia, and Afar affected more than 88,000 households, nearly 6000 hectares of crop land, and a large number of livestock. According to the June/July 2019 Multi-Agency Belg Season Assessment, most crops are at the vegetative stage while Irish potato and maize crops in some areas are in the flowering stage

Projected food security outcomes, August to September 2019



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, October 2019 to January 2020



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.

which is atypically late for *Belg* crops. In addition, planting of *Meher* crops is not adequately progressing due to shortage of farm tools, seed and fertilizers in IDP-returnee areas. Current estimates indicate the *Belg* harvest, despite being delayed by up to two months, is expected to be slightly below average in Tigray, Amhara, and SNNPR regions.

The *Gana* harvest in lowland Bale, Guji and Borana of Oromia, typically available in July, is still not available due to late planting and insufficient rainfall. Additionally, due to the poor performance of the 2019 *Gu* and ongoing *Hagaa* dry season in southeastern and lowland pastoral areas of Oromia and Somali regions, pasture and water availability is limited and slowly declining. As a result, pastoral households are atypically migrating their livestock to access pasture and water. Livestock body conditions have started to deteriorate, and no atypical livestock death or disease outbreaks have been reported. In northern pastoral areas, due to the shortage of livestock feed, unseasonal migration is also occurring to Amhara and Tigray, which is expected to preserve livestock conditions as pasture is available in these areas.

Local market grain supply remains atypically low and specifically, in low lying pastoral and northeastern areas of the country, market supply is limited as the result of the delayed *Belg* harvest. This coupled with high transportation costs and increased prices of food substitute, demand, and insecurity, in some areas, has led to staple food price increases. Specifically, in lowland woredas of Oromia and Somali and areas of Tigray, where the *Gana* production not yet available, staple food prices are atypically high. In Mehoni market in southern Tigray, in July, the price of 100kg of sorghum was about 75 percent above the same time last year and the five-year average. As per data from Raya Azebo DRM office, the price of goats was 38 percent compared to July 2018 and 49 percent above the five-year average. These price increases are mostly associated with the upcoming holidays in September. In Babile and Fedis markets of East Hararghe, sorghum prices were 30 and 26 percent and 95 and 93 percent higher from the same month last year and reference year (2014/15), respectively.

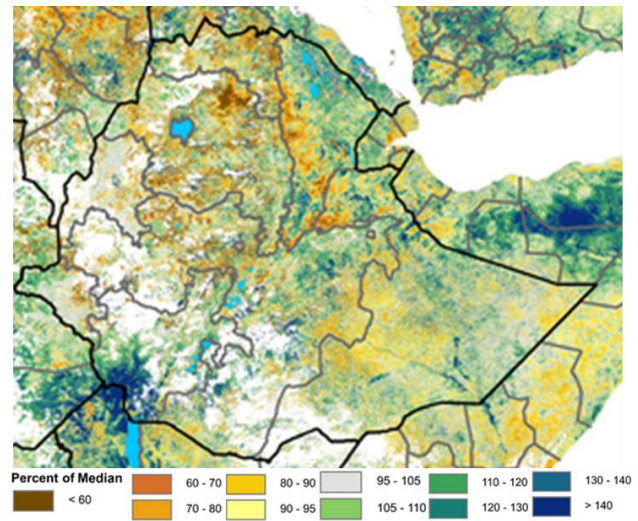
In many areas of the country, particularly, the lowlands of Bale Zone of Oromia; Eastern Oromia, Amhara and Tigray; and most parts of Afar and Somali regions, staple food prices are beyond what poor households can afford, limiting food access. This is not only due to the high food prices, but coupled with below average incomes from employment, such as below average agricultural labor and increased sell of chat, firewood, charcoal, and livestock.

The Government of Ethiopia continues to facilitate the return of IDPs to their areas of origin. According to the NDRMC, as of May 30, over 2 million IDPs returned to their original location. Many IDPs, have only limited (no regular) access to basic health and nutrition services due to scarcity of resource and distance to health facilities. Most displaced and newly returned households have limited livelihood options and ability to participate in ongoing agriculture seasons.

According to the Food Security Cluster (FSC), humanitarian assistance to both displaced and nondisplaced households is irregular and inadequate to meet the level of need across the country. In some areas of the country, most notably, in Bale and West and East Haraghe, only two rounds of assistance were delivered of the five to six planned from March to August. An immediate, regular, and sustained resumption of assistance is needed to reduce household food consumption gaps and protect livelihoods. Despite the delays, some food assistance is reaching different populations. As a result, it is expected assistance is likely improving outcomes among beneficiaries; however, it is not expected to drive improvements in area-level outcomes.

As of June 2019, per the ENCU, Therapeutic Feeding Program (TFP) admissions slightly increased or remained stable from May to June 2019. The number TFP admissions most notably increased in Oromia, Somali and Benishangul Gumuz as the result of a high number of IDPs most likely not receiving regular humanitarian assistance. In addition, other factors contributing to the deterioration of nutritional status of children in some areas include; household shortages of food and potable water supply and increased incidence of disease. As per the Bale Zone Health Department, since January 2019 a measles outbreak continues affecting children and adults with, about 2,750 confirmed cases were treated.

Figure 1. Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) conditions as a percent of median for Aug 11 to 20, 2019



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

In southeastern pastoral areas of Somali Region, Bale lowlands, parts of Guji, and East and Hararghe zones of Oromia, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are present as the result of the delayed, erratically distributed, below average *Gu/Genna* rainfall, and ongoing recovery from the 2016/17 drought. Moreover, in northeastern Amhara, Southern Tigray, and lowland areas of Oromia, specifically Bale and Hararghe zones with limited or delayed 2019 *Belg* harvest, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist. Many households in the eastern part of the country can meet their food needs; however, have difficulty meeting their non-food needs and are in Stressed (IPC Phase 2).

UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the [Ethiopia Food Security Outlook for June 2019 to January 2020](#) remain unchanged except the following:

- The July to August *Karan/Karma/Kiremt* rains in areas of northern Somali Region, and areas of Afar, Tigray, and Amhara were below average, and rainfall is likely to be below average. This is anticipated to negatively affect *Meher* crop performance in localized crop dependent areas and pasture and water availability in pastoral areas.
- Based on June data, funding for humanitarian food assistance was most likely available through at least August 2019; however, delivery was irregular and inadequate. This trend is expected to continue through January 2020 as the *Belg* 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is not yet released, delaying humanitarian assistance operations as retargeting is required.

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH JANUARY 2020

During the October to December period, milk availability is likely to improve in southeastern pastoral areas, but total milk production will remain below average due to low herd sizes and low conception rates during the past season. In addition, staple food prices are anticipated to increase limiting households' ability to purchase food. Therefore, most households in these areas are projected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with more households falling into Crisis (IPC Phase 3), through at least January 2020.

Most *Belg*-dependent agricultural areas of eastern Amhara and southern Tigray are expected to be in Minimal (IPC Phase 1) and Stressed (IPC Phase 2). However, a few *Belg* producing areas, particularly, North and South Wello zone, where crop production was below average, households have limited to no food stocks. This combined reasons with above average staple food prices and reliance on markets for food, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist.

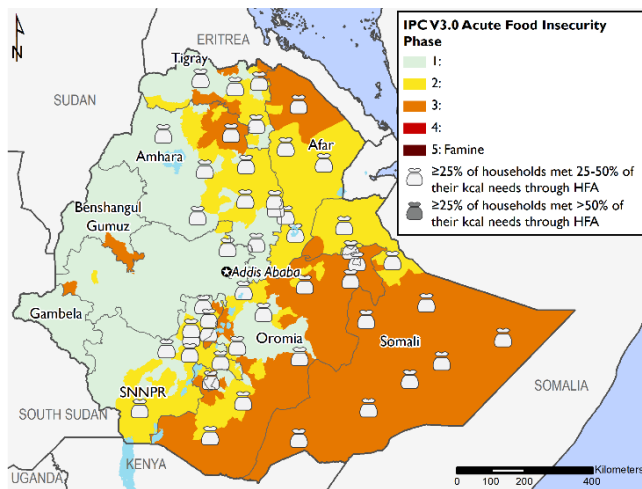
The 2019 *Meher* harvest from October through December 2019 will have a significant impact in improving household food access as households are expected to start consuming own foods and market supply is expected to improve. Poor households are expected to earn additional income from livestock sale and harvesting labor employment to buy food. Thus, poor households in much of northeast Amhara and Tigray will improve to Minimal (IPC Phase 1) except for households of Waghimra zone who are expected to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) from October 2019 to January 2020.

Poor households in lowland areas of East and West Hararge, Bale, and Guji zones of Oromia are expected to face difficulty meeting their food needs due to the delayed *Belg* harvest, very high staple food prices, and reliance on markets for food through September. In October, food prices are anticipated to decrease with the harvest and households will start accessing own foods. As a result, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to continue through September with an improvement in outcomes to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) with the harvest in October. Displaced people from ethnic conflict and social unrest along the border with Somali region and in Gedeo of SNNPR and West Guji of Oromia are expected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) throughout the scenario period. As IDPs return to their place of origin, they are likely to start engaging in agriculture and pastoral activities, as possible.

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

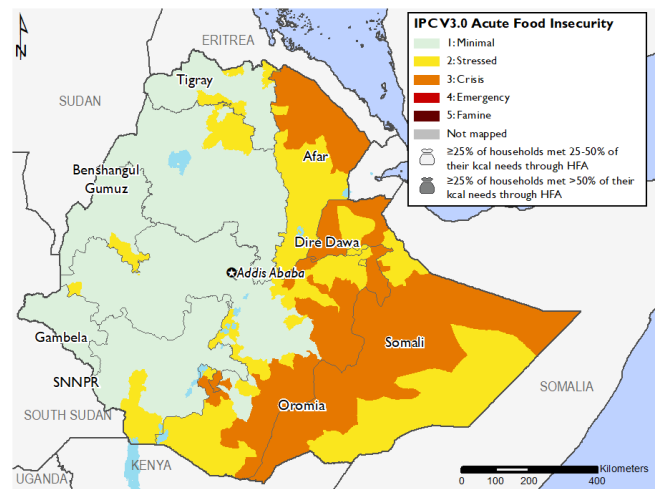
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.0 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. ☼ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). ☼ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

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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](#).