

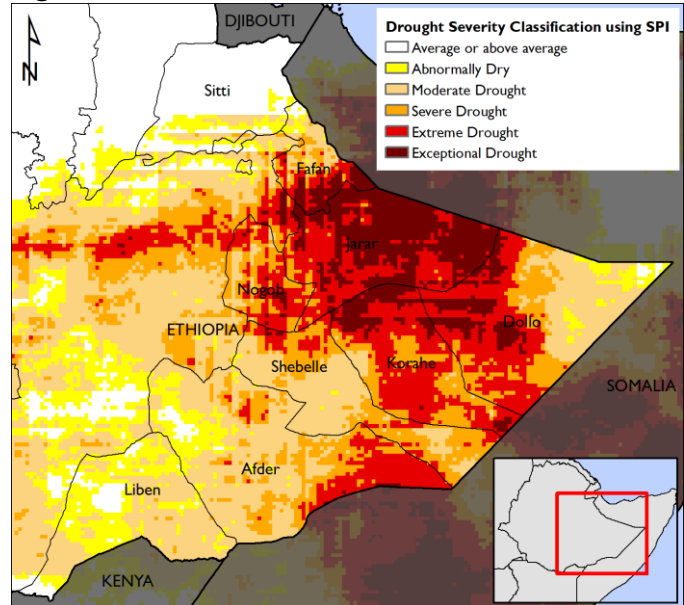
Severe food insecurity in Somali Region likely to deteriorate further given lack of food aid

In Ethiopia's Somali Region, a food security Emergency is ongoing following a severe drought over the past year. This drought has resulted in very large livestock losses which have sharply reduced households' access to food and have driven large-scale displacement. Serious human disease outbreaks are also ongoing. FEWS NET rapid assessments and other field reporting indicate high levels of acute malnutrition, excess mortality among children, and a heavy reliance on emergency food aid, especially in Dollo, Koraha, Afder, and Jarar Zones, where the drought has been most severe. Field reports indicate that food assistance delivery has been interrupted in Dollo and Koraha Zones, and even in areas where assistance delivery continues, the amount of aid provided is inadequate to fully address emergency needs. This suggests that food security outcomes could deteriorate further over the coming weeks, to extreme levels, if additional assistance is not provided quickly.

[Rainfall over the Horn of Africa was below average over the last year with significant impacts on food security across much of the sub-region.](#) Ethiopia's Somali Region is one area that has been especially dry, with large areas experiencing Extreme or Exceptional Drought (Figure 1). This drought, and its impacts on pasture and water availability, has resulted in significant declines in household livestock holdings due to both distress sales and deaths. While food prices remain generally stable and some safety-net transfers have occurred, the magnitude of these livestock losses has sharply reduced households' access to food by limiting income from both livestock sales and, given the deaths of pack camels, other income-generating activities, like charcoal and firewood production.

As of June, the worst-affected households were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) meaning that they faced large gaps in meeting their basic food needs or that these gaps were imminent given recent asset stripping. This lack of food has driven large-scale displacement and the concentration of households in IDP camps. It has also, in combination with serious outbreaks of [Acute Watery Diarrhea \(AWD\)](#) and [measles](#), contributed to atypically high levels of acute malnutrition. Excess mortality among children has also been reported from the worst-affected areas. In Dollo and Koraha Zones, no emergency food

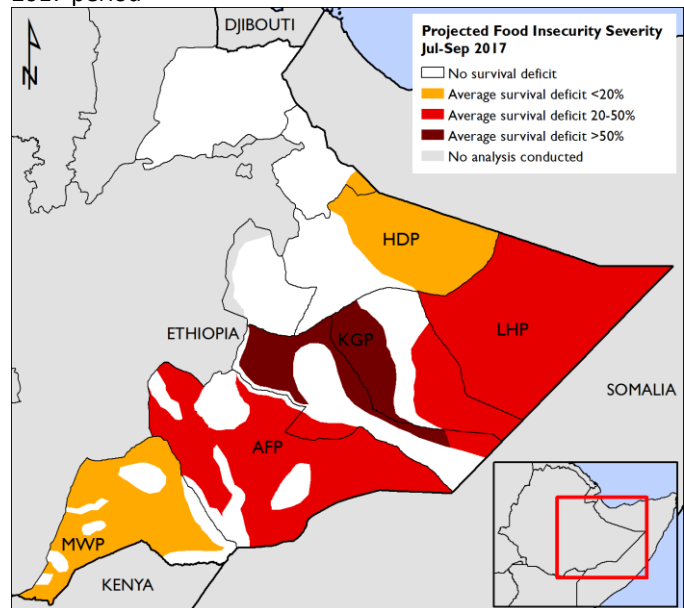
Figure 1. Drought severity between June 2016 and May 2017



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

Note: Drought classification uses [U.S. Drought Monitor Standardized Precipitation Index \(SPI\) thresholds](#)

Figure 2. Estimated size of survival deficits for the Poor Wealth Group, by livelihood zone, during the July-September 2017 period



Source: FEWS NET

Note: An HEA survival deficit is the proportion of survival requirements (2,100kcal of food per person per day and drinking water) that households cannot access.

assistance has been provided since the conclusion of the fourth round of food aid distributions in May, in part due to a lack of funding. Targeted supplementary feeding (TSF) is being provided at stabilization centers, but there is an anticipated pipeline break for TSF by the end of July.

While April/May rainfall has modestly replenished water sources, pasture, and browse, and forecasts for the upcoming October-December rainy season are positive, the outlook for pastoralist food security in Somali Region is very concerning. Households have few, if any, livestock to sell and given the lack of camel and goat conceptions during the past two seasons, milk availability will remain very low during 2017 and herd sizes will increase very slowly, even if the October to December rains are good. To quantify the impact of the drought on local households, FEWS NET conducted a Household Economy Approach (HEA) Outcome Analysis, using the recently updated baselines for Somali Region. This analysis indicates that, even with safety-net transfers, approximately 2.5 million people will require emergency food assistance in Somali Region during the July-December period. Of this total, roughly two-thirds will face survival deficits (see note above) of more than 20 percent, indicating Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Areas of particular concern include the Korahe-Gode Pastoral (KGP), Afer Pastoral (AFP), and Lowland Hawd Pastoral (LHP) livelihood zones, where poor households are projected to face survival deficits which approach, or exceed, 50 percent - the threshold for Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)¹ - during the July-September 2017 period (Figure 2).

Given the severity of current and projected food security outcomes, an immediate resumption of emergency food distributions is critically needed in Dollo and Korahe zones, alongside a continuation of nutrition, health, and WASH programming. Once assistance resumes, it should continue through at least early 2018. At a regional level, food assistance planning should consider that the population in need of emergency food assistance that is suggested by the FEWS NET outcome analysis is significantly larger than current food assistance delivery plans. If this food assistance does not resume by the end of July, Poor households in the worst-affected pastoral areas will begin to move into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) and levels of acute malnutrition and mortality may rise further.

¹ [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#), or IPC, describes acute food insecurity at the household level and area level. At the **household level**, Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) is described as: *“Even with any humanitarian assistance, household group has an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even with full employment of coping strategies.”* For additional information please see the appendix.

Appendix

The following addendum provides additional information on the IPC scale and the distinction between household and area classification, especially as it relates to more extreme food security situations.

1. The IPC has two different reference tables, one of which is used to classify the food security of households and the other of which is used to classify the food security of an area. The full IPC manual can be found [here](#).
2. The IPC defines Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5 on the **Household** Reference Table) as when a convergence of available evidence indicates that *“Even with any humanitarian assistance, [the] household group has an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even with full employment of coping strategies.”* One indicator of Catastrophe is a “survival deficit” of >50 percent based on Household Economy Outcome Analysis meaning that households can access less than 50 percent of kilocalories needed for survival.
3. The IPC defines Famine (IPC Phase 5 on the **Area** Reference Table) as occurring when, in a specific area, the following three criteria are all met: more than 20 percent of households are classified as facing Catastrophe, the prevalence of acute malnutrition among children under 5 (GAM) exceeds 30 percent, and the Crude Death Rate exceeds 2/10,000 people/day.
4. **It is possible to have households which meet the criteria listed under bullet number 2, and are therefore classified as Catastrophe, but not have an ongoing Famine.** This could be because the proportion of households classified as Catastrophe is less than 20 percent. Alternatively, the proportion of households classified in Catastrophe could be greater than 20 percent but levels of acute malnutrition and mortality may remain below the Famine threshold.
5. Currently, available data does not indicate that a Famine is occurring in Ethiopia’s Somali Region. However, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) is widespread and the recent FEWS NET Outcome Analysis, along with field reports from Dollo and Korahe Zones, indicate that some households may move into Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in the absence of emergency food assistance provision.