

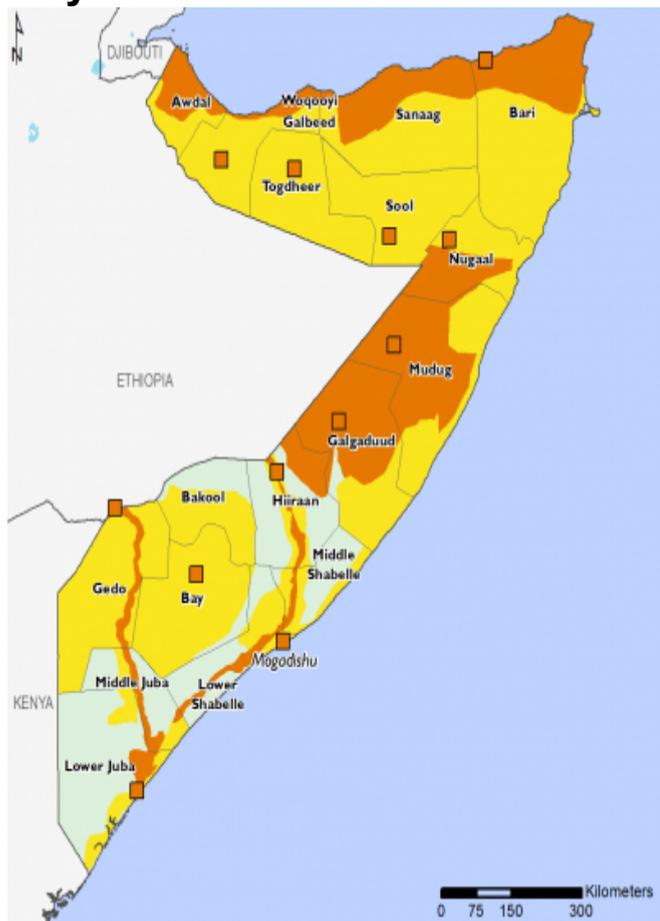
East Africa

Somalia

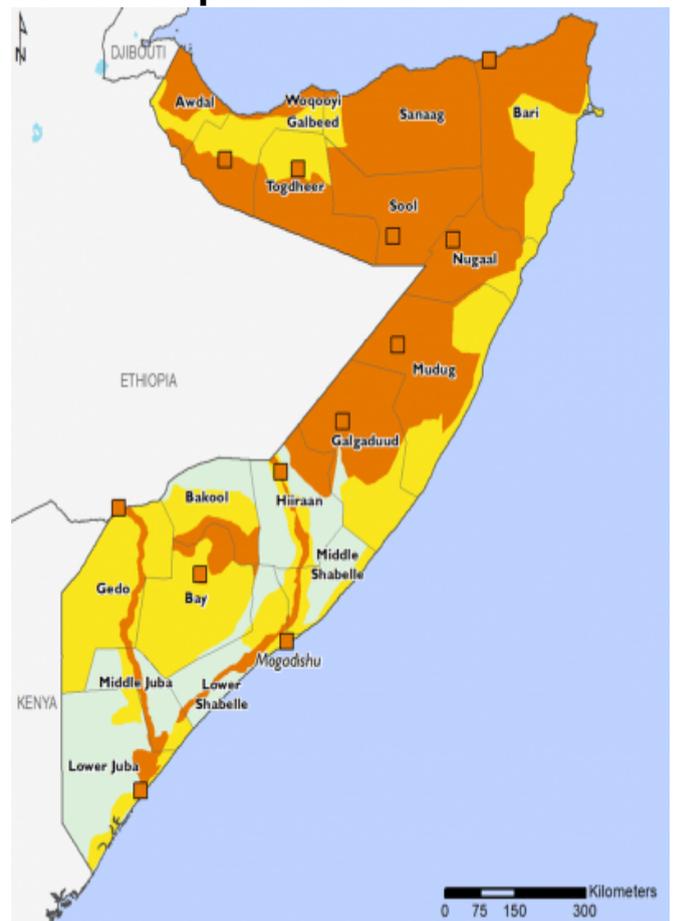
Key Message Update

3.5 million people are expected to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from June to September 2020

May 2020



June - September 2020



IPC v3.0 Acute Food Insecurity Phase

- 1: Minimal
- 2: Stressed
- 3: Crisis
- 4: Emergency
- 5: Famine

Concentration of displaced people

! *Would likely be at least one phase worse without current or programmed humanitarian assistance*

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.

May 2020

Key Messages:

The economic impacts of COVID-19, floods during the ongoing *Gu* (April to June) rainfall season, and desert locust upsurge are driving an increase in the food insecure population and the severity of food insecurity in Somalia. In May, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely across most of the country. Although a scale up in humanitarian food assistance in April reached 1.55 million people and reduced food consumption gaps at the household level, 40 percent of the total 2.7 million people that are estimated to be in need of food assistance did not access it. Widespread deterioration to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) is expected during the July to September dry season in the absence of large-scale humanitarian food assistance. Up to 3.5 million people are anticipated to be unable to meet their minimum food needs.

On May 29, the Somalia Ministry of Health reported 1,828 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 310 recoveries, and 72 fatalities. According to local and international health experts, the high number of positive cases relative to the number of tests suggests the actual number of cases is likely much higher. 65 percent of cases are located in Mogadishu, which hosts the highest IDP population (497,000 people) and urban poor (606,000 people) population, many of whom live in crowded settlements with limited access to health and sanitation services or potable water. Movement restrictions to limit the spread of the disease include social distancing, night curfews, and border closures. However, there is low adherence to the restrictions by the general population across Somalia, particularly given the imperative of earning daily income to purchase food. This raises the risk for direct impacts of COVID-19 on the food security of at-risk households, who may lose income for food purchases or shift expenditures to health care costs if infected.

Movement restrictions within Somalia and in countries hosting large Somali diaspora communities have led to a reduction in business activity and a decline in remittances, driving a decline in the economic outlook and a decline in income across all wealth groups. Poor urban and IDP households are among those worst affected, as they depend on daily wages and rely directly or indirectly on remittances to fill critical gaps in income and food sources. According to key informants working in three leading money transfer agencies, the cash value and number of people receiving remittances declined by about 30-35 percent from March to April. The private sector reports disruption to transport businesses, money transfer businesses, and import/export businesses. The federal government projects an 11 percent decline in nominal GDP for 2020.

Although average to above-average *Gu* rainfall has been broadly favorable for crop and livestock production in most livelihood zones, heavy rainfall in late April and early May caused flash floods and flooding of the Juba and Shabelle rivers in 29 districts across the country. OCHA estimates that up to 412,000 people have been displaced, more than 50 percent of whom are from Beletweyne district of Hiiraan region. The floods inundated homes and markets, cut off market supply routes in the south, and damaged farmland. Damage to off-season and *Gu* crops and the suspension of *Gu* cultivation activities occurred in Riverine Pump Irrigation and Riverine Gravity Irrigation livelihood zones of Gedo, the Jubas, Hiiraan, and Middle Shabelle regions, as well as in agropastoral areas of Diinsoor and Qansaxdheer districts in Bay region.

Desert locust breeding in northern and central Somalia remains of high concern. According to key informants, desert locust swarms or hoppers are present in West Golis Pastoral (Borama, Hargeysa, and Zeylac districts); Guban Pastoral (Berbera, Lughaya, and Zeylac districts); Hawd Pastoral (Galgaduud, Mudug, Togdheer, and Woqooyi Galbeed regions); and Northwestern Agropastoral (Borama, Gabiley, and Hargeysa districts). Only small vegetable farms in West Golis Pastoral report significant damage, but damage to cereal crops will likely be high when seeds germinate in June in northwestern agropastoral areas. So far, above-average rainfall has offset damage to rangeland by regenerating vegetation at exceptionally above-normal levels. The FAO and Ministry of Agriculture Development of Somaliland started ground fumigation in

West Golis Pastoral in May. Key informants confirm no locusts are present in other central regions or in the South, but there is a high risk that locusts will spread to some of these areas based on climate and vegetation conditions.

Currently, floods in riverine areas and Bay region and a cricket infestation in Bay and the Shabelle regions are among the most significant threats to main season *Gu* crop production and household income from agricultural labor. FSNAU and FEWS NET estimate that approximately 25,000 hectares of planted farmland has been inundated by floods. In addition, a dry spell in mid-May and forecast of poor rainfall through early June is occurring at a critical stage of crop development in Bakool, Gedo, and Hiiraan. Farmers in Bakool also report a lack of funds to purchase seeds and turned to less productive ratooning methods. On the other hand, the absence of desert locust swarms in the South suggest net *Gu* production losses could be lower than previously projected. At this time, FEWS NET still anticipates that crop losses are most likely to occur due to the high risk that locusts will spread to some cropping areas.

A fall in foreign exchange earnings due to declining remittances and international trade, coupled with disruptions to overseas imports of food commodities due to COVID-19 and domestic supply chain disruptions due to recent floods, is driving an increase in imported food commodity prices. As of the 3rd week of May, retail rice prices were 7-16 percent above the five-year average and retail wheat flour prices rose 5-18 percent above the five-year average across most reference markets. In the Northeast and Sorghum Belt regions, imported rice and wheat flour rose 26-40 percent above the five-year average. Prices are expected to rise further and remain high through July, when the *Gu* harvests and re-opening of flooded roads will likely help to alleviate pressure on imported food prices.

In April, livestock exports from Bossaso port doubled compared to March after Saudi Arabia lifted its ban on Somali livestock exports. Although cattle trading between Somalia and Kenya has collapsed after the Kenyan authorities closed Garissa and Dhagahaley cattle markets, an increase in demand from the Gulf states for cattle exports from Kismayo port helped to push cattle prices upward, boosting pastoral and agropastoral households' income and purchasing power. Although middle and better-off wealth groups primarily benefit from livestock exports, poor urban and IDP households benefit from labor income from livestock trading market activities. At this time, FEWS NET still anticipates that a 30-50 percent decline in livestock exports is most likely from June to August, which is the peak period of livestock demand, due to the likelihood that COVID-19 will affect *Hajj* activities.

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