

# East Africa Regional Food Security & Nutrition Update



Regional Bureau Nairobi, November 2019

## Key messages



18.7 million people across the region are food insecure (IPC Phase 3 and above), which is a deterioration when compared to the level of 16.9 million in October 2018



These include 12.5 million who are food insecure in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda. The main driver is below-average rainfall from the end of 2018 until the current rainy season



More than two million people across South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are currently facing severe floods, which is likely to worsen food insecurity in the affected areas, further exacerbating the overall situation.



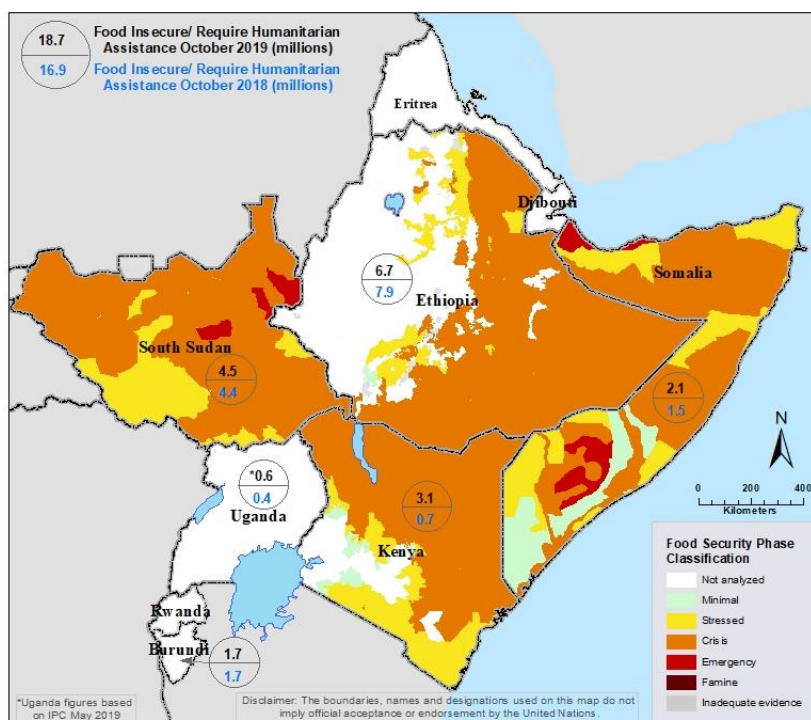
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## Situation Update

In total, 18.7 million people are facing food insecurity requiring humanitarian assistance and the numbers are particularly high in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya, and Somalia. Of these, three million people are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Especially arid and semi-arid lands, areas with ongoing and protracted conflict as well as countries with poor macro-economic conditions are facing severe food insecurity. Furthermore, acute malnutrition levels continue to be high across the region with no signs of sustainable reduction.

Currently more than two million people across South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya are affected by heavy floods, which are especially affecting already vulnerable groups including women and children. The immediate consequences include casualties, displacement, loss of livelihoods, outbreak of livestock diseases, crop losses, upsurge of waterborne diseases, and damaged infrastructure negatively affecting the access to basic services. This is expected to severely exacerbate the food security and nutrition situation in the affected areas until the end of the year.

Food insecurity situation, October 2019



Source: RBN VAM based on most recent IPC analyses and projections



## Food security overview

A total of 18.7 million people across the region require humanitarian food assistance, which is higher than the same period last year where 16.9 million people required assistance. The increase is mainly driven by higher levels of food insecurity in Kenya and Somalia, which have both been severely affected by the lack of rain during the two previous rainy seasons, resulting in below average harvest and poor livestock conditions in many pastoral areas.

The June to September seasonal rains in the northern sector countries of South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti were generally near to above-normal except in northeast Ethiopia, central and eastern Eritrea, rural Djibouti and parts of western South Sudan. This has supported crop production and vegetation regeneration for livestock.

Despite the current harvest season, 4.5 million people are projected to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) in **South Sudan**, nearly one-fifth of which (875,000) are in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Ulang, Duk, Longochuk and Maiwut counties. Furthermore, unprecedented flooding is a serious threat to food security, currently affecting 755,000 people of whom most are women and children in 34 counties in the regions of Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Upper Nile and Greater Equatoria. On 12 November was the second deadline for forming a unity government, however, no immediate solution was found and the pretransitional period was extended for another 100 days. During January to March 2020, the number of food insecure is projected to increase to 5.5 million.

In **Kenya**, the food security situation has deteriorated from 0.7 million people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) last year to a current projection of 3.1 million people as they enter the peak of the pastoral lean season. The situation is especially critical in Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River and Baringo counties. Projections of good short rains (Oct-Dec) led to an anticipation of improvements in the situation. However, recent excessive rain has affected more than 160,000 people in 25 outires due to flooding, flash floods, mudslides and landslides. At least 120 people have reportedly died due to floods and landslides.

A total of 2.1 million people in **Somalia** are food insecure including 439,000 people who are projected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). Late start and early finish of the erratically distributed *Gu* rains (Apr-Jun) negatively affected seasonal crop production. The *Gu* cereal harvest failed in most regions, negatively impacting food security among the most poor riverine and agropastoral households. The cereal harvest in southern Somalia was 68 percent lower than the long-term average for 1995-2018 while in northwest Somalia, the Nov-Dec harvest is expected to be 44% percent below the 2010-2018 average. The recent floods in parts of the Hiraan, Middle Shebelle, Bay and Gedo regions have affected 547,000 people and resulted in destruction of food crops and displacement of more than 300,000 people.

The food security situation in **Ethiopia** is projected to improve from October through January. The number of people in IPC phase 3 or worse is projected to reduce from 8 million in September to 6.7 million during this period. Of these, 1,334,000 are estimated to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The main reason for the recent improvement are improved rains in south and southeast, and availability of the *Meher/Genna* seasonal harvests improving the access to food from own production and contributing to short-term price stabilisation of cereal. The projected normal to above normal rains during the *Hageya* season in pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihood zones of southeast Oromia is also expected to support regeneration of pasture and water conditions and improve households' access to milk. The food security situation is complex and challenging, with populations in the east and south east facing the impact of the lack of rain during two consecutive rainy seasons, nationwide localised flooding and the complex needs of vulnerable groups including IDPs, returnees and host communities. Furthermore, localised floods are affecting livelihoods and limiting livestock access to grazing fields. During February to June 2020, the number of food insecure is projected to increase to 8.5 million

Food insecure and flood affected population estimates, October 2019

Country	Population in IPC 3+ (million)	People affected by recent floods
Ethiopia	6.7	570,000
Kenya	3.1	160,000
Somalia	2.1	547,000
South Sudan	4.5	755,000
Burundi	1.7	-
Uganda	0.6	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>2,032,000</b>

In **Uganda**, the impact of the prolonged dry spell earlier this year in Karamoja sub-region and the rest of the country was reflected in the low market supply of staple food commodities and the high food prices significantly above the 1-year and 5-year averages. The overall national average retail prices for maize grain and beans in October 2019 were above October 2018 levels by 70 percent and 39 percent, and above the 5-year averages by 37 percent and 32 percent respectively

In Karamoja, the average retail prices for maize grain, sorghum and beans in October 2019 were above October 2018 levels by 55 percent, 54 percent and 38 percent and above the 5-year averages by 22 percent, 12 percent and 33 percent respectively.

In the worst affected Karamoja sub-region, the food security situation seems to have improved during the second half of 2019 due to the better rainfall patterns that allowed cultivation and improved supplies from bimodal areas of the country. However, a significant proportion of the population in Karamoja is still experiencing food consumption gaps as 41 percent of the population had inadequate food consumption in September 2019. Among refugees, the proportion of households with inadequate food consumption in September 2019 was 56 percent.

Above average harvests and expected above average rainfall has had a positive impact on food security in **Burundi**. However, poor families without sustainable income opportunities still face market constraints. This is worsened by the price increases experienced in September at the end of the harvest period.

Excessive rains with risk of floods alongside Lake Tanganyika, pressure of Burundian returnees from Tanzania, high malaria burden, the risk of cholera, difficulty in importing food due to lack of US dollars and currency depreciation are the major risk factors to food security.



## Nutrition overview

In **Somalia**, one third of the surveyed areas covered by the 2019 post-Gu assessment had global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalences that exceeded 15 percent (critical levels). One million children under the age of five are projected to be acutely malnourished if no timely humanitarian aid is provided.

The Integrated Phase Classification for Acute Malnutrition conducted in July 2019 in **Kenya**, shows that the nutrition situation is poor in many counties compared to February 2019 especially in Marsabit. Critical levels of malnutrition were observed across most arid and semi-arid land regions of Kenya, with extremely critical (GAM above 30 percent) levels observed in parts of Turkana and Marsabit counties, leading to more than 600,000 Kenyan children under five years are projected to require emergency nutrition services.

**South Sudan** continues to have a huge burden of malnutrition with 58 counties being classified as having Serious (IPC Phase 3) or worse levels of acute malnutrition. A total of 1.3 million children under five are projected to be acutely malnourished in 2020. 'Critical' levels of GAM continue to be observed in most counties in Unity, Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Warrap and in parts of Eastern Equatoria and Lakes. Of highest concern is Renk of Upper Nile, which recorded the highest level of acute malnutrition at 32.1 percent, reaching 'Extremely Critical' levels (GAM of 30 percent and above). Budi in Eastern Equatoria is also of high concern, GAM levels showing 'Critical' level of 27.7 percent.

In **Burundi**, a recent joint national nutrition and food security survey found a GAM prevalence of 5.1 percent while 1.1% of the children were severely acute malnourished (SAM). Furthermore, stunting levels have remained of critical concern. In Kinama and Kavumu, stunting is at critical levels as per WHO classification (47 percent and 52 percent respectively), while in Musasa and Bwagiriza stunting is classified as serious levels of public health significance (37.5% and 37.1%, respectively).

In **Ethiopia**, 253 of 870 woredas are targeted as Hotspot Priority 1 (severely affected), 137 Priority 2 and 118 Priority 3 woredas, representing more than half of the total woredas. Newly arriving refugees from DRC, South Sudan and Somalia are equally suffering from high levels of acute malnutrition above acceptable emergency thresholds.

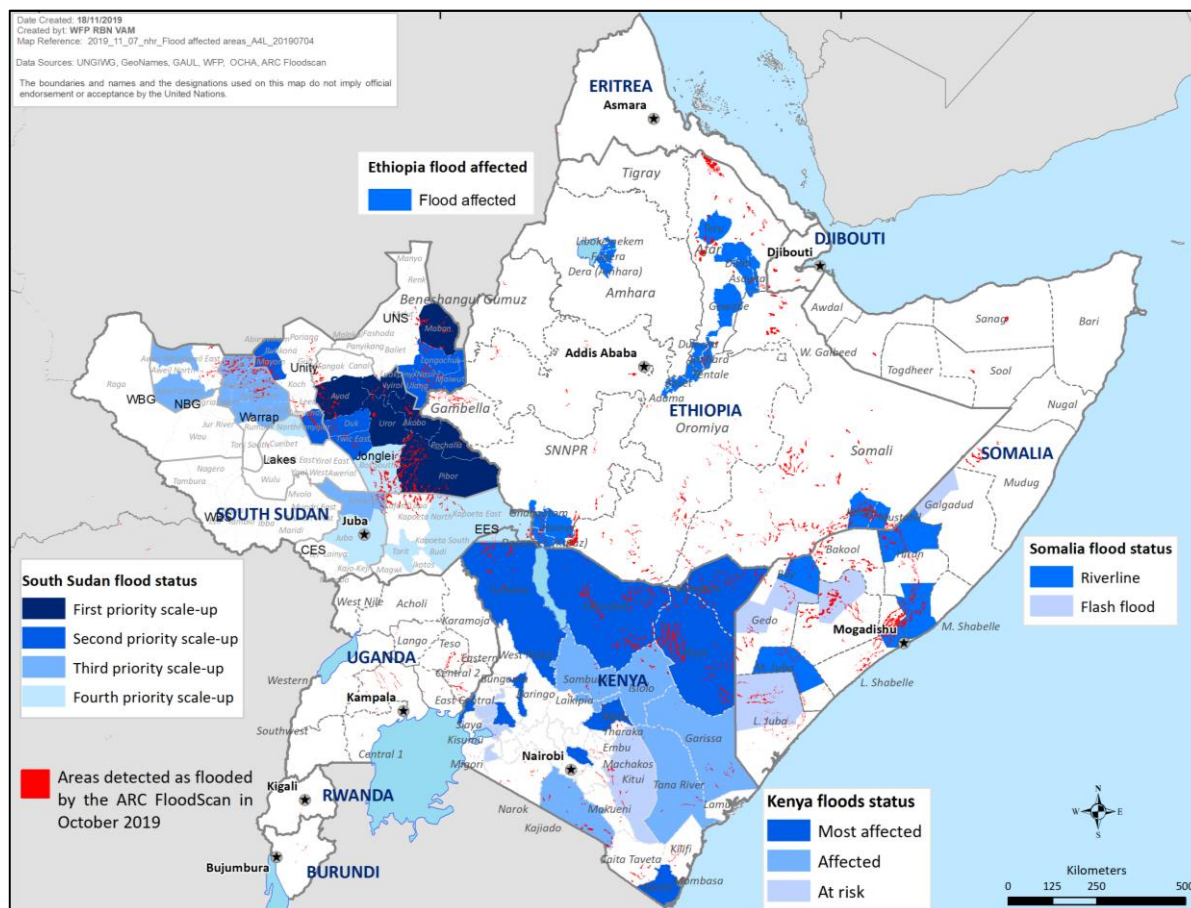
In **Uganda**, in the Karamoja sub-region, moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) admissions have exhibited a decreasing seasonal trend since May 2019. However, total new MAM admissions in September 2019 remained above the same period in 2018 by 26 percent.

In **Djibouti**, the recently completed 2019 SMART survey showed that the Global Acute Malnutrition rate remained serious at 10.3% while the stunting of children under five has been reported at 20.9%; indicating some improvement in overall malnutrition situation compared to the last survey conducted in 2013 which showed a wasting prevalence of 17.8% and a stunting prevalence of 29.7%. A significant increase was observed in acute malnutrition in Ali addeh camp from 5.6% to 9.8%, while stunting levels remained serious. In Holl Holl camp, a further deterioration in stunting levels was seen between 2017-2019 from 30% to 38.9% indicating a significant public health crisis.

## Regional floods update



Ongoing floods due to recent rains, which are expected to continue until the end of November and beyond, have currently affected around two million people across South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. This has further exacerbated the situation and with likely adverse impacts on overall food security in the region.



**South Sudan** has been most severely affected with 755,000 people suffering from the consequences of the floods across 34 counties, many of whom are women and children. This led the President of South Sudan to declare a state of emergency on 29<sup>th</sup> October. FAO estimates that more than 17,000 hectares of cereal crop land may have been destroyed in South Sudan, leading to a potential loss of about 72,000 MT of cereal or 14 percent of the total local cereal production.

In **Ethiopia**, 570,000 people were affected by floods, 547,000 in Somalia and 144,000 in Kenya. Consequences include casualties, displacement, loss of livelihoods, outbreak of livestock diseases, severe crop losses and damaged infrastructure, cutting many communities off from markets and vital services such as health facilities which can cause a spike in disease outbreaks and further increase food insecurity.

In **Kenya**, more than 160,000 people, including nearly 18,000 who are displaced countrywide, have been affected by floods or landslides since the onset of the short rains in October, according to the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS). At least 120 people have reportedly died, including 72 people who lost their lives after a landslide buried their houses in West Pokot County in northwestern Kenya, according to the Government. Infrastructure of undetermined value, including roads and bridges, have been damaged, hampering effective humanitarian response efforts in affected areas. According to the Kenya Meteorological Department, heavy rains are expected to continue across the country over the next few weeks. Flood alerts have been issued especially for Coastal, Northern and Western regions of the country, with the risk of landslides and mudslides expected in parts of the Central Highlands and parts of the Rift Valley, including West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet and Nandi counties.

In **Somalia**, the recent floods in parts of the Hiraa, Middle Shebelle, Bay and Gedo regions have affected 547,000 people and resulted in destruction of food crops and displacement of more than 300,000 people

## Outlook



Above average rain for the Horn of Africa, which initially considered positive due to the two previous failed rainy seasons. However, the favourable weather conditions that were expected to improve the food security situation in the region were followed by the current floods, which are expected to continue until the end of November or further if the rain persists. As more than two million people across South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are affected by the floods, the consequences can be devastating for the already fragile food security, nutrition and livelihood situations in the affected areas. Furthermore, if the wet conditions continue beyond the regular season in the region, farmers may face challenges in harvesting and post-harvest crop management, thus posing a risk of an increase in post-harvest losses and aflatoxin contamination.

Market prices are likely to negatively impact food security in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi due to a relatively higher price level of cereal. This development is a consequence of lower production, border restrictions, tightening of regional supplies and increased export demand. Meanwhile Tanzania, being one of the main suppliers of maize throughout the region, saw significant prices increased due to higher than usual demand both domestically, regionally and from SADC countries. Cereal prices are expected to remain high through December, exceeding the level of previous year and the five-year average. In Somalia, significant improvements in the food security situation are expected from February 2020 due to expected above average *Deyr* harvest and improved herd sizes.

Northern Ethiopia is currently suffering from outbreak of Rift Valley Fever and Desert Locust, negatively impacting the health of livestock and destroying vegetation and crops in the affected areas. Consequently, Saudi Arabia has reportedly banned livestock imports from Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan, where some farmers are already suffering from decreasing purchasing power due to high cereal prices, stable livestock prices and low levels of sellable stocks. Furthermore, there is a risk of the locust infestation spreading to north eastern Kenya, southern Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti and Sudan.

Overall, as the household stock from the current harvests get depleted, food security situation is likely to worsen from January-February onwards in most areas.



WFP/Gabriela Vivacqua



### Ongoing and planned assessments, November 2019 – February 2020

#### Nov 2019

- Somalia IPC data collection
- South Sudan FSNMS
- South Sudan HIV Stigma Study
- Ethiopia FSOM
- Ethiopia multi agency rapid FSA
- Rwanda JAM
- Uganda national IPC acute malnutrition analysis
- Uganda mVAM for refugees and Karamoja

#### Jan 2020

- South Sudan CFSAM
- South Sudan IPC analysis
- Ethiopia IPC update

#### Dec 2019

- Kenya livelihood zone review and update
- Djibouti FSMS
- Uganda refugee FSNA

#### Feb 2020

- Somalia IPC analysis
- Kenya short rains assessment
- Uganda Karamoja FSNA



### For further information

Food security

**Marianne Jensby**  
**Krishna Pahari**

marianne.jensby@wfp.org  
krishna.pahari@wfp.org

Nutrition

**Cyprian Ouma**  
**Allison Oman**

cyprian.ouma@wfp.org  
allison.oman@wfp.org

