

Key messages

- In February 2026, over 67.5 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG were estimated to be highly food insecure (IPC¹ Phase 3 or above) and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Of these, 37.5 million were in six IGAD member states.
- A credible risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) persisted in several areas of Sudan, notably in parts of North and South Darfur, and North and South Kordofan. In South Sudan, parts of Luakpiny| Nasir, Upper Nile, were also projected to be at risk of Famine, with fighting in neighbouring Jonglei (which has so far displaced 280,000 people) likely worsening acute food insecurity in the country. Across both countries, 173,512 people were estimated to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).
- Drought impacts persisted in southeastern Ethiopia, eastern Kenya and much of Somalia, driving high levels of acute food insecurity. In Somalia, the number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) has nearly doubled to 6.5 million compared to the same time in 2025.
- The nutrition situation across the region remained concerning, driven by limited food access, sub-optimal infant and young child feeding practices, and inadequate health and nutrition services. Substantial reduction in assistance is putting many children at risk of losing access to treatment.
- Staple cereal prices were at significantly elevated levels in South Sudan and Sudan, driven by macroeconomic challenges, and conflict and insecurity, as well as in Somalia, due to the ongoing drought impacts.
- The number of forcibly displaced persons in the region remained high, at about 23.2 million as of the end of January 2026. This included 17.2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and over 6 million refugees and asylum seekers, of whom 5.5 million were hosted across the IGAD member states.
- Most parts of the region are forecast to experience near normal to wetter than normal conditions during the March-May (MAM) rainfall season, with the exception of parts of coastal Kenya, which are forecast to experience drier than normal conditions. Given the season's low predictability, continuous and close monitoring is critical.
- Despite high humanitarian needs, attributed to multiple, overlapping shocks and stressors across the region, funding remained well below requirements. Increased advocacy is needed to mobilise resources for life-saving food security and nutrition interventions, as well as to protect livelihoods.

Food insecure population estimates, as of February 2026

IPC analyses	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+ or equivalent)
Djibouti ²	484,802	174,969	54,693		229,662
Kenya ³	6,390,522	3,116,400	586,306		3,702,706
Somalia	7,750,520	4,457,300	2,032,730		6,490,030
South Sudan	4,857,741	4,381,292	1,447,499	27,856	5,856,647
Sudan	15,861,862	14,018,934	4,934,510	145,656	19,099,100
Uganda ⁴	6,821,335	2,109,579	27,224		2,136,803
IGAD Total	42,166,782	28,258,474	9,082,962	173,512	37,514,948
Burundi	4,299,231	1,140,137	0		1,140,137
CAR	2,641,160	1,659,522	269,211		1,928,733
DRC	53,397,354	22,739,874	3,947,779		26,687,653
Tanzania ⁵	959,207	241,622	0		241,622
Total	103,463,734	54,039,629	13,299,952	173,512	67,513,093

Source: IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) for East and Central Africa

¹ The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of standardised tools used to classify the severity of food insecurity using a five-phase scale, that is, Minimal (IPC Phase 1), Stressed (IPC Phase 2), Crisis (IPC Phase 3), Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Catastrophe or Famine (IPC Phase 5)

² Valid through December 2025

³ Includes arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) and refugee settlements

⁴ Covers 13 refugee settlements and 48 districts

⁵ Covers 16 districts, and valid through October 2025

Sector updates

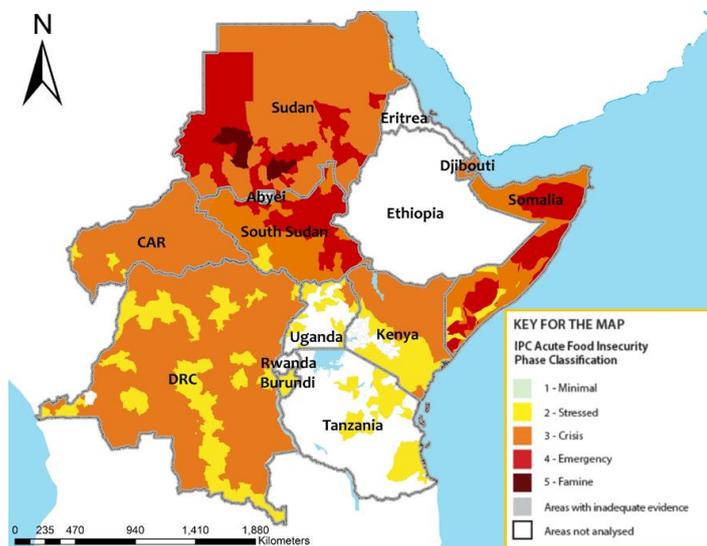
Food security

Acute food insecurity remained alarmingly high across the region, with over 67.5 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG estimated to be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity in February, including 37.5 million people in six IGAD member states – Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

Of these, about 13.3 million people were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), with the highest numbers in Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, largely due to conflict, as well as in Somalia. Nearly 174,000 others in parts of South Sudan and Sudan were in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), with parts of Luakpiny| Nasir in South Sudan projected to be at risk of Famine and several areas in Sudan at credible risk of renewed Famine.

In addition, an estimated 103.5 million people across the region faced Stressed (IPC Phase 2) levels of acute food insecurity, including around 42.2 million people in six IGAD member states. This population requires livelihood support and resilience strengthening.

Regional food security situation, as of February 2026



Source: IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa

Looking at the driving factors, drought impacts persisted in southeastern Ethiopia, eastern Kenya and much of Somalia. This is as the October-December (OND) 2025 rainfall season largely failed, marking the second or third

consecutive poor season in a number of areas, after below-average rainfall during the OND 2024 season and poor temporal distribution during the March-May (MAM) 2025 season.

For cropping households, this has resulted in crop failures and significantly below-average yields, limiting not only their access to food but also income from crop sales. In Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), for instance, maize production from the OND 2025 season was estimated at 106,958 tonnes, about 32% of the long-term average. In southern Somalia, cereal production was estimated at 15,600 tonnes, including off-season harvests expected between February and March 2026, which is the lowest output since 1995 and 83% below the long-term average⁶. At the same time, reduced local supply and high demand have pushed prices up amid increased market dependence. In Somalia's Baidoa region, for example, red sorghum prices in December 2025 were estimated to be 44% higher than the previous year's average⁷.

Among pastoral households, for whom livestock is a key source of food and livelihoods, severe pasture and water shortages continued to undermine livestock body conditions and production. In Kenya's Mandera county – the worst-hit by the drought in the country – 29,664 livestock losses were reported across three sub-counties by the end of January. Milk production was estimated at 87% below the long-term average⁸. Distress livestock sales also reportedly increased among affected pastoral communities across the three countries, but high supply and declining animal saleability continued to exert downward pressure on prices.

Drought-related displacement was also observed, with an estimated 166,000 people displaced in Somalia in 2026⁹.

At the time of reporting, 17 counties in Kenya were experiencing drought impacts, with Kilifi, Kwale, Mandera and Wajir classified in the "Alarm" drought phase, and Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kitui, Lamu, Marsabit, Samburu, Taita Taveta, Tana River, Tharaka Nithi, Turkana and West Pokot in the "Alert" phase by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)¹⁰. Considering only the ASALs, the most recent IPC analysis shows that the population facing high levels of acute food insecurity in

⁶ [IPC. Somalia Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis January-June 2026. February 2026](#)

⁷ [FEWS NET. Atypically harsh Jilaal dry season begins following failed Deyr rains. January 2026](#)

⁸ [NDMA. Mandera County Drought Early Warning bulletin. January 2026](#)

⁹ [UNHCR. Somalia Internal Displacement](#)

¹⁰ [NDMA. National Drought Early Warning Bulletin. February 2026](#)

February has increased by over 50% compared to the same time last year¹¹.

Similarly, in Somalia, where a national drought emergency was declared on 10 November 2025, the number of people facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity has nearly doubled to 6.5 million compared to the same time in 2025.

Conflict and insecurity, particularly in parts of South Sudan, Sudan, CAR and eastern DRC, continued to undermine food security.

In Sudan, 19.1 million people were projected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) through May 2026, including about 4.9 million in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 146,656 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), according to IPC analysis conducted between mid-September and October 2025¹². Based on FEWS NET's February 2026 analysis, while Famine thresholds were no longer being met, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, including populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), persisted in hotspot areas – Dilling, Kadugli, and surrounding western Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan; Um Baru, Kernoï and At-Tine in North Darfur; and El-Obeid town and surrounding rural areas in North Kordofan. A credible risk of renewed Famine (IPC Phase 5), however, remains in Kadugli, Dilling, and the western Nuba Mountains should they become fully besieged again. Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) also persists in Um Baru, Kernoï, At-Tine, rural Al-Fasher, Melit, and Tawila in North Darfur, as well as in areas with high numbers of displaced populations in South Darfur and South Kordofan, and in El-Obeid in North Kordofan, should conflict further disrupt population movements, trade and humanitarian access¹³.

In South Sudan, the most recent IPC analysis, conducted between late September and early October 2025, projected that 5.86 million people across the country (41% of analysed population) would be in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) through March 2026, including 28,000 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Luakpiny|Nasir (Upper Nile) and Fangak (Jonglei). The southern parts of Luakpiny|Nasir, particularly along the Sobat corridor, were expected to be at risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) under a plausible worst-case scenario. Notably, Jonglei state was projected to be in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), with nearly half of its population

(1.08 million people) in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above). Since the analysis, however, recent fighting in Jonglei has displaced at least 280,000 people, and disrupted markets, agriculture and access to basic services, likely worsening food security outcomes¹⁴. In light of this, and ongoing conflict in parts of other states like Upper Nile and Western Equatoria, an IPC update is planned in South Sudan for later in March 2026.

In the DRC, the number of people in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) was projected to increase to 26.6 million through June 2026, from 24.8 million between September-December 2025, in part due to persistent conflict and population displacement in the eastern part of the country.

Similarly, in CAR, where 1.92 million people are classified in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above), conflict and insecurity (especially in the northern and southern parts) remains the primary driver of acute food insecurity, with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees disproportionately affected.

Meanwhile, persistent currency depreciation, inflation and market disruptions continued to constrain food access, particularly in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan, by reducing households purchasing power.

Nutrition

The nutrition situation across the region remained concerning, driven by limited food access, sub-optimal infant and young child feeding practices, and inadequate health and nutrition services. Climatic shocks, conflict and insecurity, and repeated economic shocks continued to exacerbate the situation.

In Ethiopia, although the 2025 Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) indicated a 5% national wasting prevalence, pockets of high wasting remain. Recent SMART+ surveys conducted in the Somali region's Korahe agropastoral livelihood zone and South Omo livelihood zones revealed global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalences of 16.4% and 13.8%, respectively. Preliminary results from a Find and Treat campaign in four drought-affected woredas in Tigray also indicated GAM and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) prevalences of 19.8% and 1.5%, respectively. In terms of

¹¹ [IPC. Kenya Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis January-December 2026. March 2026](#)

¹² [IPC. Acute Food Insecurity Analysis September 2025-May 2026. November 2025](#); El Fasher town (Abu Shouk and Al Salam camps), Kadugli town, and the localities of Dilling, Habila, As Sunut, and Al Lagowa were not classified in the projection due to the volatility of the situation in these areas

¹³ [FEWS NET. Famine thresholds no longer met, but credible risk of Famine persists in parts of Sudan](#)

¹⁴ [WFP. WFP intensifies emergency response as conflict escalates in Jonglei, South Sudan. February 2026](#)

nutrition supplies, the ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) pipeline is secured only through June 2026.

In Kenya's ASALs, the nutrition situation deteriorated in about 65% of counties, largely due to drought-driven food gaps, rising incidences of infectious diseases such as upper respiratory tract infections and diarrhoea, and sub-optimal access to health and nutrition services¹⁵. Of particular concern are Mandera, North Horr|Chalbi in Marsabit and Turkana South| East which have deteriorated to an Extremely Critical acute malnutrition situation (IPC AMN Phase 5), and East Pokot| Tiaty in Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Laisamis|Loyangalani in Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana West, Turkana Central| Loima, Turkana North|Kibish and Wajir which are in a Critical situation (IPC AMN Phase 4). Notably, Laisamis in Marsabit is expected to deteriorate into an Extremely Critical situation (IPC AMN Phase 5) between March and June 2026. As a result, the number of acutely malnourished under-five children has increased to 810,871 – a 9% increase from the 741,883 reported during the 2025 long rains assessment. Another 44,907 under-five children in refugee settlements need treatment. Regarding supplies, while the RUTF pipeline is secure until October 2026, increase in caseloads could lead to earlier depletion.

Similarly, in Somalia, where 1.85 million under-five children are expected to suffer acute malnutrition (including 483,000 in its severe form) through June 2026, the situation risks worsening as drought impacts persist. Notably, 21 areas are projected to be in a Critical situation (IPC AMN Phase 4) in February through March 2026. Limited access to safe water and drought-related displacement have also led to a surge in cholera cases and vaccine-preventable diseases like measles among others. Combined with the country's fragile health system, this poses a critical life risk to acutely malnourished children¹⁶. Disruptions in RUTF and ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF) supplies are expected to aggravate the situation.

Meanwhile, in South Sudan, about 2.11 million under-five children were projected to suffer acute malnutrition through mid-year, with the majority of cases (70%) expected in Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal, Upper Nile, Unity and Warrap states. Of particular concern are 34 counties projected to be in a Critical situation (IPC AMN Phase 4), alongside Duk (Jonglei), Rubkona (Unity), Baliet|Akoka, Ulang and Nasir (Upper Nile) counties projected to be in an Extremely Critical situation (IPC AMN

Phase 5) through March 2026. Additionally, Abyei Administrative Area is expected to deteriorate from Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) to Extremely Critical (IPC AMN Phase 5) during the lean season, starting April. Exacerbating the situation, insecurity is restricting humanitarian access, while funding cuts have reduced the availability and coverage of essential nutrition services. Potential flooding during the June-September (JJAS) season also risks disrupting supply chains and further constraining the delivery of nutrition interventions.

In Sudan, the situation remained alarming with an estimated 4.2 million under-five children and pregnant and lactating women expected to suffer acute malnutrition this year, 800,000 of them in its severe form¹⁷. Notably, SMART surveys conducted in December 2025 across Um Baru and Kernoï localities, North Darfur, revealed acute malnutrition levels above the 30% Famine threshold. In Um Baru, GAM prevalence among under-five children was estimated at 52.9% and SAM at 18.1%, while in Kernoï, GAM prevalence was estimated at 34% and SAM at 7.8%. Limited access to health and nutrition services is increasing the risk of excess mortality¹⁸.

Markets and trade

Fuel prices remained highest in South Sudan and Sudan, at USD. 2.8 and USD. 2.2 per litre respectively, in December 2025, driven by local currency depreciation and scarcity. Prices also remained high in Burundi, at USD. 2.1 per litre, representing a 10% month-on-month increase.

Significant year-on-year local currency depreciation was observed in Ethiopia (18.8% in official markets), South Sudan (15.7% in reference markets) and Sudan (16.9% in commercial banks and 31.1% in parallel markets) in December 2025, largely due to low foreign reserves. This was further exacerbated by reduced oil revenues in South Sudan and ongoing conflict in Sudan.

Despite showing a declining trend during the last quarter of 2025 (mainly due to availabilities from seasonal harvests), staple cereal prices were still high in South Sudan and Sudan. In South Sudan, national average prices for maize and sorghum were about 200% above the recent five-year average. Significant regional disparities were, however, noted with 3.5 kilograms of sorghum, for instance, costing 6,000 South Sudanese Pounds (SSP) in Kopeata South

¹⁵ NDMA. National Drought Early Warning Bulletin. January 2026

¹⁶ OCHA. Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan. January 2026

¹⁷ IPC. Alert: Famine threshold for acute malnutrition surpassed in two more North Darfur localities, crisis worsening in Greater Kordofan. February 2026

¹⁸ Ibid

compared to SSP. 30,000 in Konyokonyo in December 2025. In Sudan, prices were more than four times the national average in North Darfur and South Kordofan, largely due to supply chain disruptions.

Meanwhile in Somalia, sorghum and maize prices recorded an increase in most markets, due to low stocks from the MAM 2025 harvest and concerns over the OND 2025 harvest. By December 2025, national average retail prices were approximately 15% higher than a year earlier.

Double digit year-on-year annual and food inflation was recorded across Burundi, at 34% and 33% respectively, and Sudan, at 68.2% and 60.4% respectively, in December 2025. In South Sudan, inflation was estimated at triple digits, given high prices of goods and services, even though official data is not available.

Displacement

As of the end of January 2026, more than 23.2 million people were estimated to be forcibly displaced across the region. This included about 17.2 million IDPs (a decline from the previous month due increased returns in Sudan) and over 6 million refugees and asylum seekers, of whom 5.5 million were hosted across the IGAD member states.

Uganda with 2 million and Ethiopia with 1.1 million refugees remained the largest refugee-hosting countries in the region.

IDPs and refugees in the region, as of January 2026

Country	IDPs	Refugees
Djibouti	6,086	33,754
Eritrea		117
Ethiopia ¹⁹	1,919,993	1,123,420
Kenya	484,260	835,836
Somalia	3,262,080	96,861
South Sudan	2,067,174	613,968
Sudan	9,258,273	859,550
Uganda	14,853	1,974,427
Burundi	92,227	112,283
Rwanda	22,000	131,288
Tanzania	75,000	229,446
Total	17,201,946	6,010,950

Source: IOM, UNHCR

Sudan, on the other hand, accounted for more than half of the region's IDPs, with about 9.25 million IDPs (2.24 million displaced before April 2023 and over 7 million after), representing a 20% decrease from the 11.58 million high reported in January 2025 due to increased return movements.

Over 4.47 million people from Sudan were also estimated to have crossed into other countries due to the ongoing conflict. This included over 1.3 million people who had crossed into South Sudan, with roughly 67% of them being South Sudanese returnees.

Meanwhile in the DRC, intensified violence in South Kivu had driven over 101,000 Congolese refugees into Burundi since 05 December 2025.

Climate

According to the MAM 2026 seasonal forecast, most parts of the region are expected to experience near normal to wetter than normal conditions, which could ease drought impacts in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Drier than normal conditions are, however, expected over coastal Kenya, including most parts of Kilifi, Kwale and Lamu, raising concern since Kilifi and Kwale are already classified in the "Alarm" drought phase by the NDMA.

Onset is generally expected to be normal to early, with a south to northeast progression, except over localised areas of Ethiopia and South Sudan where a delayed onset is expected.

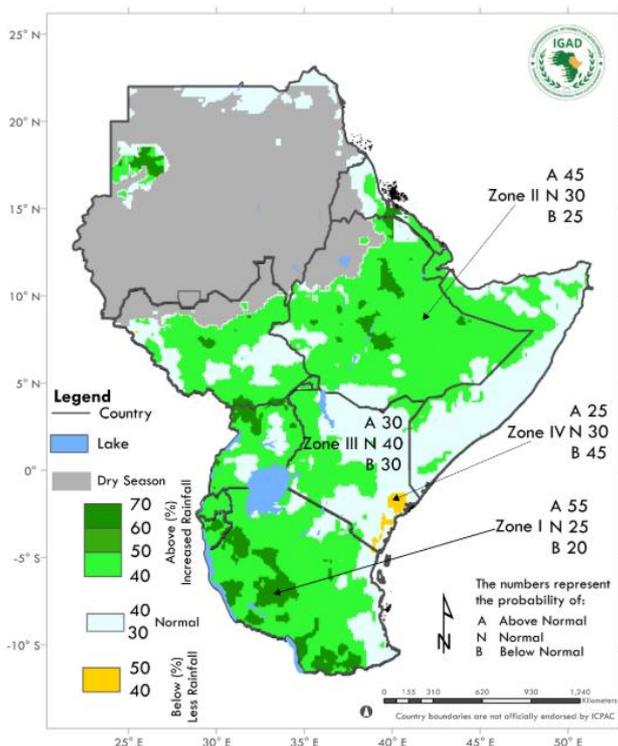
Temperatures are forecast to be warmer than normal over most parts of the region, with enhanced probabilities over Djibouti, Sudan and Tanzania, and a few places in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

Given the low predictability of the MAM season, close monitoring of updated seasonal and sub-seasonal forecasts is crucial.

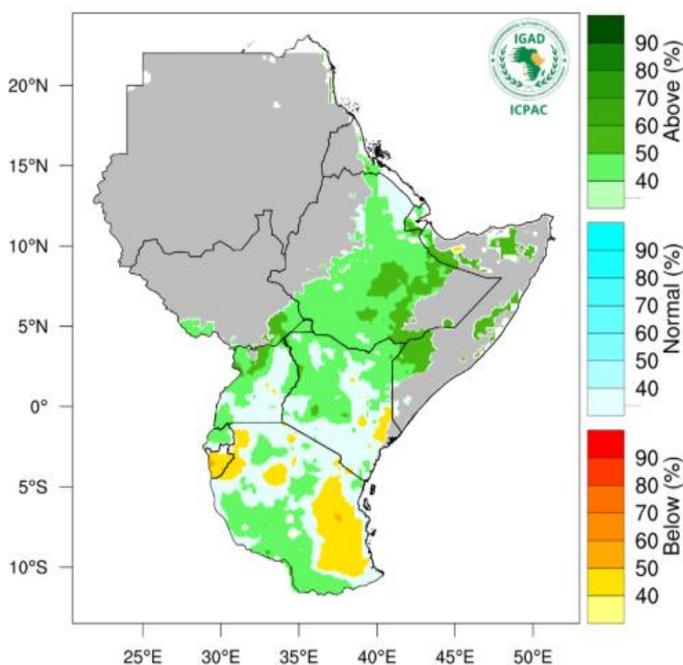
Looking at the March forecast, wetter than normal conditions are expected across most parts of Ethiopia, central to northern and eastern Kenya, southeastern South Sudan, western Uganda, Rwanda, and central to western and southern Tanzania. Drier than normal conditions are expected over parts of Kenya's coast, Burundi, and eastern and northwestern Tanzania.

¹⁹ This figure is not endorsed by the Government of Ethiopia. 1.2 million are hosted in IDP camps

Rainfall probabilistic forecast for March-May 2026



Rainfall probabilistic forecast for March 2026



Source: ICPAC

A review of climate drivers indicates that La Niña is weakening, with a transition to ENSO-neutral in February-April 2026, likely persisting through June-August 2026²⁰. El Niño conditions are likely from May-July | July-September 2026. Typically, El Niño is associated with drier than normal conditions over the northern and western parts of the

region during the JJAS season, and wetter than normal conditions over the eastern parts during the OND season.

Humanitarian response

Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRPs) across countries highlight significant needs. In Somalia, 2.4 million people are targeted for humanitarian assistance out of 4.8 million in need, with 1.6 million prioritised for urgent response. In South Sudan, 4.3 million people are targeted out of 9.9 million in need, including 4.1 million urgently prioritised. Meanwhile in Sudan, 20.4 million people are targeted out of 33.7 million in need, of whom 14 million are prioritised for urgent assistance. Despite these high levels of need, funding continues to fall short of requirements.

HNRP funding (million USD) by country, as of 25 February 2026

Country	Required	Received	Received (%)
Somalia	852	114.5	13.4%
South Sudan	1,463	264.4	18.1%
Sudan ²¹	2,866.2	388.1	13.5%

Source: OCHA

Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Immediate, coordinated and multi-sectoral life-saving assistance in areas with populations in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity, especially those affected by drought and conflict, with populations in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) prioritised for urgent assistance.
- Close monitoring of the food security and nutrition situation in areas where the situation is dire and at risk of further deterioration, including parts of South Sudan and Sudan at risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5).
- Scale-up of programmes to safeguard livelihoods, and support recovery and a return to self-reliance for households facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or worse outcomes, with a focus on context-specific livelihood packages.
- Sustained nutrition interventions to prevent and treat acute malnutrition, including prioritisation of

²⁰ NOAA. ENSO: Recent Evolution, Current Status and Predictions. February 2026

²¹ This is an estimate - final requirements will be published once confirmed

mass screening for early detection and referral, as well as expansion of integrated community case management (ICCM+).

- Increased multi-sectoral assistance (food, water, sanitation, protection, shelter, health and nutrition interventions) in IDP and refugee camps and settlements across the region.
- Close monitoring of the ongoing MAM 2026 rainfall season, and strengthening of anticipatory action initiatives for disaster risk reduction. Regular updates should also be provided to support timely action.
- Close monitoring of climate drivers, including ENSO and IOD, as well as early forecasts for the JJAS season, which generally accounts for more than 40% of total annual rainfall in the northern and western parts of the region and more than 90% in parts of Sudan.
- Collective advocacy to increase awareness of the high needs in the region, mobilise resources, and strengthen coordination among stakeholders for more effective and timely action.

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