November 2020 Update

FSNWG[1] Food Security and Nutrition Update

Key messages

- An estimated 52.9 million people in Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda were severely food insecure (IPC[2] Phase 3+) and in need of urgent assistance in November 2020.
- Over 13 million children[3] across the IGAD region were at risk of acute malnutrition. Within this, 3.6 million were severely malnourished and in need of life saving interventions.
- The COVID-19 global pandemic has resulted in increased cost of living across the region at a time when the incomes of a significant proportion of the population have been declining, pushing additional populations into extreme poverty.
- Local currencies continued to depreciate against the United States Dollar (USD), especially in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan, making the prices of both food and non-food items (NFIs) imports expensive in some of these countries.
- The ongoing conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia continues to cause large scale population displacement, with thousands fleeing to Sudan in search of safety and basic services. The majority of these are women and children.
- The region is expected to continue witnessing drier than usual weather conditions, owing to a La Niña event[4]. This, together with other shocks affecting the region could aggravate food insecurity and malnutrition in the region.

Figure 1: Food Insecure Population Estimates[5]

Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Ethiopia	13,007,693	7,064,142	1,441,541	-	8,505,683
Kenya	3,745,000	1,022,500	296,500	-	1,319,000
Somalia	3,012,000	1,703,000	400,000	-	2,103,000
South Sudan	3,285,000	4,735,000	1,745,000	-	6,480,000
Sudan	17,408,000	5,800,000	1,297,000	-	7,097,000
Uganda	4,485,497	1,642,222	382,809	-	2,025,031
IGAD Total	**44,943,190**	**21,966,864**	**5,562,850**	-	**27,529,714**
Burundi	3,293,345	713,462	42,054	-	755,516
CAR	1,619,209	1,608,758	753,979	-	2,362,737
DRC	29,024,132	16,131,386	5,703,327	-	21,834,713
Tanzania	1,845,763	481,036	7,625	-	488,661
Total	**80,725,639**	**40,901,506**	**12,069,835**	-	**52,971,341**

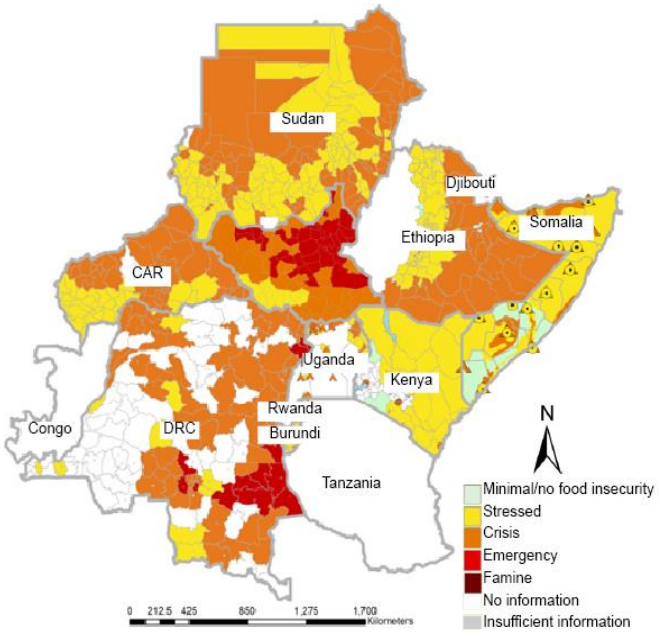
[1] The East and Central Africa Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) is a multi-stakeholder regional forum, chaired by IGAD and FAO, mandated to provide adequate and timely information of food security and nutrition to planners and decision makers to ensure interventions are well coordinated to save lives, safeguard livelihoods and build resilience of at-risk population in participating member countries.
[2] The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of standardized tools used to classify the severity of food insecurity using a widely accepted five-phase scale, that is, Minimal (IPC 1), Stressed (IPC 2), Crisis (IPC 3), Emergency (IPC 4) and Famine (IPC 5).
[3] Aged 6-23 months.
[4] Below-average sea surface temperatures across the east-central Equatorial Pacific are generally associated with drier than usual conditions in the East Africa region.
[5] Based on recent IPC analyses. Countries which do not have recent IPC analyses have been excluded.

Sector updates

Food security

High levels of food insecurity persist in several parts of the region largely owing to the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, economic decline, displacement, Desert Locust upsurge and weather extremes including floods and dry spells. Based on recent IPC analyses, an estimated 52.9 million people in Burundi, CAR, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and in need of urgent assistance in November 2020. Notably, this is an increase of about 8 million people compared to the same period in 2019. While this is partly attributed to the multiple shocks affecting the region, it is also important to note that additional population groups, including refugees and urban residents, have been analysed this year compared to 2019. An additional 80.7 million people are Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and require livelihood support.

Regional food security situation



Source: IPC

Country updates

In Sudan, an estimated 7.1 million people were severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), representing 16% of the population analysed. This indicates a deterioration in the food security situation compared to the June 2020 projection which estimated that 6.4 million people would be severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) during the same time period.

The leading drivers of this situation include a macro-economic crisis that has resulted in high prices for both food and non-food items (NFIs), floods, and conflict and insecurity. According to the IPC, commodity prices have more than doubled compared to the previous year and have increased by more than 500% compared to the recent five-year average[6]. This is underpinned by a combination of factors including a shortage of foreign currency, increased demand for essential food and NFIs from the international market, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Widespread flooding between August and September 2020 also affected about 875,000 people, resulting in displacements and the loss of livelihood assets and food stocks. Political instability and social unrest in eastern Sudan also disrupted livelihoods especially in the Red Sea, Kassala and Gedarif states. Recent conflict in South Darfur is also driving displacement and consequently increased vulnerability to food insecurity.

In Ethiopia, an estimated 8.6 million people are facing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+). Key drivers of acute food insecurity in the country include the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted food availability and access in the context of economic instability characterised by high inflation and high food prices. In addition, the Desert Locust upsurge continues to pose a serious risk of damage to both pasture and crops. According to the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 98 districts had been affected by Desert Locusts, as of October 2020. Conflict and extreme weather events also continue to drive population displacements in various parts of the country, disrupting livelihoods and distorting market systems. As at the end of October 2020, Ethiopia had about 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the majority (66%) displaced due to conflict. More

[6] IPC. Sudan: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis Projection Update October-December 2020. November 2020

displacement is expected in light of the ongoing conflict in Tigray.

South Sudan is facing unprecedented levels of food insecurity, as more than 6 million people – over half of the country's population – face severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+). Key drivers include flooding, conflict and insecurity, associated displacements, socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent poor macro-economic conditions and chronic vulnerabilities owing to protracted years of loss of livelihoods and assets.[7] Urgent action to save lives, reduce food gaps and restore livelihoods is therefore critical.

Nutrition

Levels of acute malnutrition remain high with over 13 million children across IGAD countries projected to be acutely malnourished. Within this, 3.6 million require lifesaving treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

In South Sudan, 1.3 million children are projected to be wasted, including 290,000 who are severely malnourished. The major contributing factors include food insecurity, poor infant and young feeding practices (just about 5% of children aged 6-23 months are estimated to consume a minimum acceptable diet), poor hygiene and sanitation practices and high prevalence of diseases, partly attributed to flooding. In terms of nutrition programs, between January and October 2020, 167,563 children, representing about 57% of the burden, were admitted and treated for SAM. According to ongoing IPC analysis, there is a risk of heightened malnutrition in the country, partly owing to elevated food insecurity.

In Uganda, SAM admissions remain low – 26% lower than 2019 levels. Notably, more than 19 districts recorded a 100% decline in admissions compared to 2019. This is attributed to limited nutrition screenings across the country, owing to major funding gaps for nutrition to support service delivery.

In Burundi, preliminary findings from the 2020 SMART survey indicate that the stunting rate stands at 52%, a slight reduction from 54% in 2019[8], making it one of the countries with the highest stunting rates in the world. Contributing factors include poverty, poor hygiene and sanitation practices, high prevalence of diseases and poor feeding practices. Relatedly, Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD) is still a challenge in the country with just 4.2% of children aged 6-23 months estimated to consume a minimum acceptable diet. Further, preliminary findings from a SMART survey conducted in September 2020 shows a slight increase in Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence to 6.1% compared to 5.1% in 2019. In relation to nutrition programs, between January and October 2020, 49,885 children, representing about 82% of the burden, were admitted and treated for SAM.

Generally, across the region, there have been fewer admissions for the treatment of severe wasting in 2020 compared to 2019. Even so, varied trends were recorded from country to country. For instance, admissions have been lower in Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda, higher in Ethiopia and Rwanda, and largely unchanged in Somalia. Reasons for the declines in admissions also varied from country to country, and while the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have had an impact on wasting service delivery, it has not been the only factor affecting admissions. Overall across the region, admissions started to pick up again in the third quarter of the year following various adaptations to service delivery, including expansion of the family-MUAC initiative.

Market and trade

Progressive improvement and recovery in cross border trade has been noted in the third quarter of the year, and is likely to be sustained through the fourth quarter. This is attributed to availability of

[7] As at November 2020, the South Sudan IPC analysis was still in progress. Updated information will be provided shortly.

[8] https://data.unicef.org/resources/jme-report-2020/

exportable surplus from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda, and easing of COVID-19 restrictions, as well as the streamlining of related procedures at border points. In addition, some borders have reopened, including the borders between Burundi-Tanzania, Rwanda-Tanzania, and Rwanda-DRC, the Somaliland-Ethiopia-Djibouti transport corridor and the Sudan-South Sudan border at Kosti, which opened for the first time since its closure in 2012. Nevertheless, some borders such as the Kenya-Somalia, Eritrea-Djibouti-Sudan, Somalia-Ethiopia, Rwanda-Uganda and Rwanda-Burundi remain closed.

Staple food prices in most markets followed typical seasonal trends but were generally higher in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan compared to 2019 and the recent five-year average. Some localised variations were also noted from country to country. In Kenya, maize prices decreased following start of harvests. Similarly, in Ethiopia, staple food prices decreased due to increased supply as a result of Meher harvests[9]. However, in Burundi and Rwanda, prices increased as supplies tightened (due to the November-December lean season).

Several markets in Ethiopia and Somalia were disrupted owing to conflict and heavy rains respectively. In Ethiopia, the ongoing political crisis in the Tigray Region is causing scarcity of commodities and consequently soaring food prices. In Somalia, heavy *Deyr* rains[10] and consequent flash floods disrupted food transport and supplies in south-central Somalia, particularly the main Mogadishu-Jowhar and Baidoa-Afgooye transport corridors, leading to scarcity and increased food prices in most markets in the area.

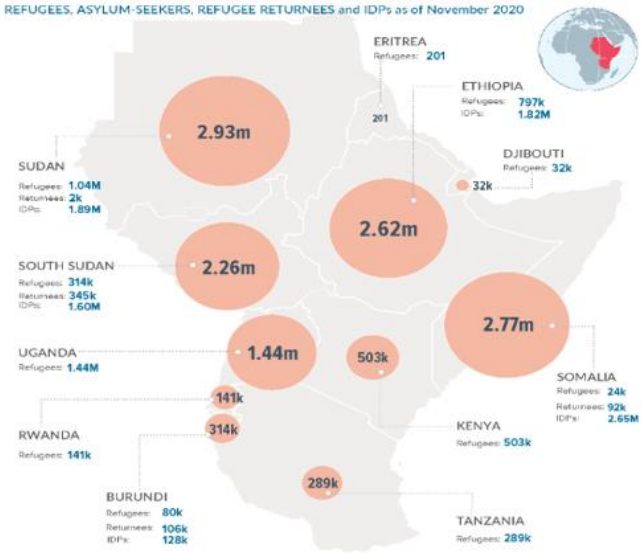
Further, local currencies continued to depreciate against the United States Dollar (USD), making food imports in particular expensive. Notable currency depreciations have been noted in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Sudan. For instance, the Ethiopian Birr depreciated from 41|USD in March 2020 to 50|USD in November 2020. The Kenya Shilling depreciated from 100|USD in February 2020 to 109|USD in November 2020. Markedly, the South Sudanese Pound depreciated from 275|USD in March 2020 to an all-time high of 775|USD in October 2020.

Displacement

Around 12.7 million people remain displaced across Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Of these, 4.6 million are refugees and asylum seekers while 8.1 million are IDPs.

Due to significant humanitarian funding gaps, approximately 3.3 million refugees – 72% of the total refugee caseload – are facing ration cuts ranging between 10-40%, thereby exposing them to further food insecurity and malnutrition. Only about 28% continue to receive full food ration (2100 Kilocalories per person per day).

Refugees, asylum seekers, refugee returnees and IDPs as at November 2020



Source: UNHCR

As at 31 November 2020, an estimated 144,415 refugees had voluntarily returned to their homes in Burundi, Somalia and South Sudan, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

[9] Core crop season in Ethiopia, with harvests between September and February

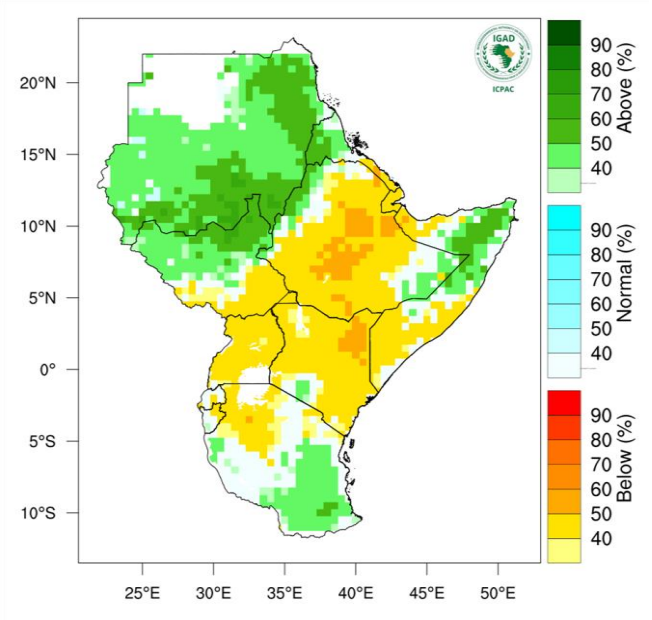
[10] Short rains often experienced between October and December in Somalia

Climate

The La Niña phenomenon continues and is expected to peak in January 2021. There are therefore concerns that this could result in more populations facing acute food insecurity in 2021. This is especially considering that significant populations are already dealing with the effects of the severe floods witnessed in the region, the Desert Locust upsurge and the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the December climate forecast, Kenya, southern parts of Somalia, northern Tanzania and Uganda are likely to record drier than usual conditions. Central and southern parts of Tanzania are likely to record average conditions while a few isolated areas in south western Tanzania, western Burundi and Rwanda are likely to record wetter than usual conditions.

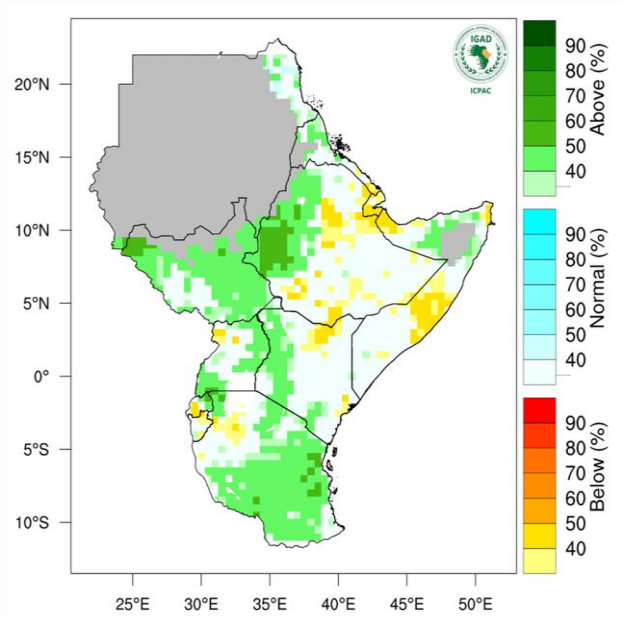
December 2020-February 2021 forecast



Source: ICPAC

In respect to the March-May (MAM) 2021, dry to average conditions are projected over Burundi, much of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, Rwanda, southern and north western Somalia, and north western Tanzania and Uganda. On the other hand, wetter than average conditions are projected over western Ethiopia, western Kenya, north eastern Somalia, South Sudan, much of Tanzania and eastern Uganda. However, it is important to note that this MAM forecast is issued at six months lead time, as such it may be subject to changes.

March-May (MAM) 2021 forecast



Source: ICPAC

Humanitarian snapshot

As at 26th November 2020, 55% (USD 3.6 billion of USD 6.6 billion) of the funding requirement for the 2020 combined humanitarian response plan (HRP) and COVID-19 response in the IGAD region had been met – up from 43% as reported in October 2020. Of this, USD 1.58 billion was meant for food and nutrition responses, representing 53% of the funding requirement for the sectors' responses.

Humanitarian funding by country (million USD)

Country	Required	Funded	Funded (%)
South Sudan	1899.9	971	51%
Sudan	1633.4	847	52%
Ethiopia	1437.8	882	61%
Somalia	1009.9	791	78%
Kenya	286.8	108	38%
Uganda	316.4	23	7%
Djibouti	30	4.5	15%

Source: OCHA

At the country level, 78% of the funding requirement for food and nutrition responses in Somalia had been

met, 63% in Ethiopia, 52% in Kenya, 50% in Sudan and 43% in South Sudan. However, in Djibouti and Kenya, aside the COVID-19 emergency appeal, no other food and nutrition responses appeals received funding. If these funding gaps are not addressed, it is likely that vulnerable populations in the region will continue to face significant food gaps.

Desert Locust upsurge

Widespread breeding is ongoing in eastern Ethiopia and central Somalia. Breeding is also likely in northern Somalia following heavy rains linked to Cyclone Gati. It is, therefore, anticipated that numerous immature swarms will start to form in these areas in early December and increase in January 2021. This will in turn cause waves of immature swarms to migrate to southern Ethiopia and southern Somalia, ultimately invading northern Kenya around mid-December and continue thereafter. There is, therefore, a need for intensified survey and control operations in Ethiopia and Somalia, as well as preparedness in Kenya.

Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends;

- Urgent action to save lives, reduce food gaps and restore livelihoods, especially among populations categorised in Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+).
- COVID-19 adaptations to ensure continuation of essential nutrition services, with a focus on Vitamin A supplementation following global guidance, expansion of early detection of wasting through family-measured MUAC, and infant and young child feeding counselling and messaging using a mix of channels depending on the context.
- Close coordination on social protection and food support to make sure that the specific needs of young children and their mothers are addressed.
- Livelihood support to populations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the negative knock-off effects of the pandemic on economies and consequently livelihoods is expected to deepen poverty, and limit households' purchasing power and food access in turn.
- In light of the Desert Locust upsurge, actors are encouraged to intensify survey and control operations in Ethiopia and Somalia, and preparedness in other at-risk countries such as Kenya.
- Cross border collaboration is also needed in Desert Locust control operations, to minimise the impact of the pests on livelihoods and food security.
- Close monitoring of the situation and contingency planning, in view of the situation in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia.

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