

FSNWG¹ Food Security and Nutrition Situation Update

Key Messages

- The **overall food security situation has improved in most countries** following above-average Oct-Dec 2019 seasonal rainfall that positively impacted on crop and livestock production, as well as the availability of wild foods and fish.
- **31.8 million people across East and Central Africa² are severely food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and require urgent assistance.** Of these, **15.7 million are from IGAD Member States (Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan).**
- Notably, in **South Sudan, an estimated 20,000 people are projected to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)** as a result of widespread flooding, reduced food production and isolated cases of conflict and insecurity.
- **Desert locust**, which has now spread to all IGAD Member States, as well as to DRC and Tanzania, **remains a serious threat to food security, particularly to the upcoming March-May cropping season**, if it is not effectively controlled.
- **Diseases, such as measles, cholera and malaria, and the risk of Ebola Virus Disease and COVID-19 are serious threats across the region.**
- Countries in the region continue to receive new refugees and asylum seekers on a daily basis. There has been a **threefold increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers in the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region over the last decade, that is, from 1.2 million in 2008 to 4.6 million by the end of 2019.** The region now hosts 67% of the refugees in Sub-Saharan Africa and 20% of the total global refugee population.
- **Refugee populations remain disproportionately affected by severe food insecurity due to limited agriculture and livelihood opportunities, limited coping mechanisms and humanitarian funding shortfalls** that have led to ration cuts in some settlements.
- More than **8 million people from Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan and 5 million people from DRC are internally displaced.** Continued conflict and insecurity, as well as climatic shocks, remain the major drivers of internal displacement.
- **Conflicts, insecurity and localized inter- and intra-communal violence continue resulting in loss of lives, disruption of livelihoods, population displacements, and restricted access to basic social services, markets, and humanitarian assistance.**
- **Upcoming elections in several countries in the region in 2020 could further lead to tensions with humanitarian implications.**

Figure 1: Food Insecure Population Estimates (in millions)², February 2020

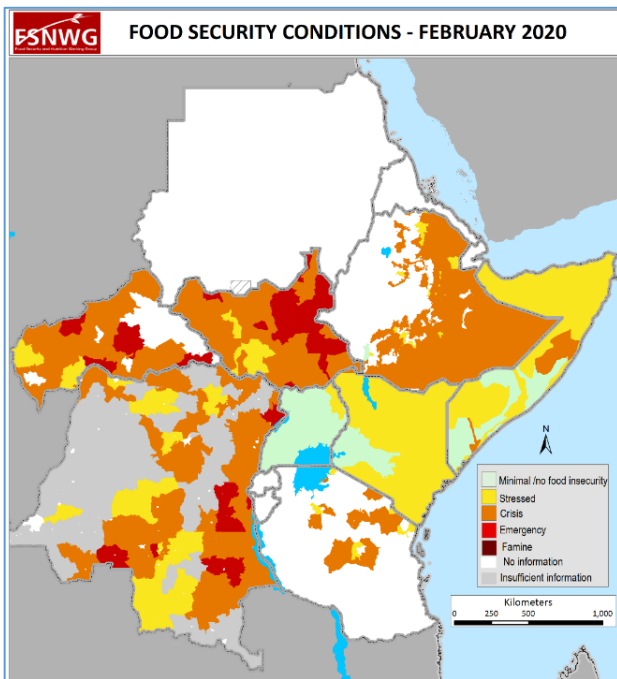
Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
CAR	1,729,594	1,241,886	373,418		1,615,304
DRC	20,986,039	9,955,921	3,635,796		13,561,718
Ethiopia	10,295,846	6,497,082	1,976,708		8,473,790
Somalia	2,856,000	960,000	190,000		1,150,000
South Sudan	3,590,000	4,515,000	1,475,000	20,000	6,010,000
Tanzania	1,655,600	760,000	224,700		985,300
Total	41,113,079	23,929,889	7,875,622	20,000	31,796,112

¹The East and Central Africa Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) is a multi-stakeholder regional forum, co-chaired by IGAD and FAO, mandated to provide adequate and timely information of food security and nutrition situation to planners and decision makers to ensure interventions are well coordinated to save lives, safeguard livelihoods and build resilience of at-risk populations in participating member countries.

²The FSNWG covers 13 East and Central African countries: Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and CAR. The countries missing in Figure 1 are yet to complete the IPC analyses.

Areas of Concern for Food Security and Nutrition

In terms of magnitude, the DRC has the highest number of food insecure population (IPC Phase 3 and above), followed by Ethiopia and South Sudan. In South Sudan, approximately 20,000 (out of the 6.01 million people in IPC Phase 3+) from the counties of Akobo and Duk in Jonglei State are classified in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), representing a decline from 40,000 in January 2020 likely due to intensified humanitarian assistance. Looking forward into April 2020, the IPC projects that the situation in South Sudan will likely further deteriorate, with the number of people in IPC Phase 3+ increasing to 6.48 million though none is projected to be in IPC Phase 5.



Source: IPC and FEWS NET

In Ethiopia, 8.5 million people are projected to be food insecure (including 6.5 million people in IPC Phase 3 and 2 million people in IPC Phase 4) during the February and June lean season in areas that rely on *Belg* agricultural and pastoral production, when harvests from the *Meher* season will likely be dwindling and therefore insufficient to sustain adequate food consumption. It is expected that staple prices will remain high due to limited availability and increased demand as food stocks reduce thus affecting market-dependent pastoral communities. High demand for scarce staples will likely lead to a decline in terms of trade and

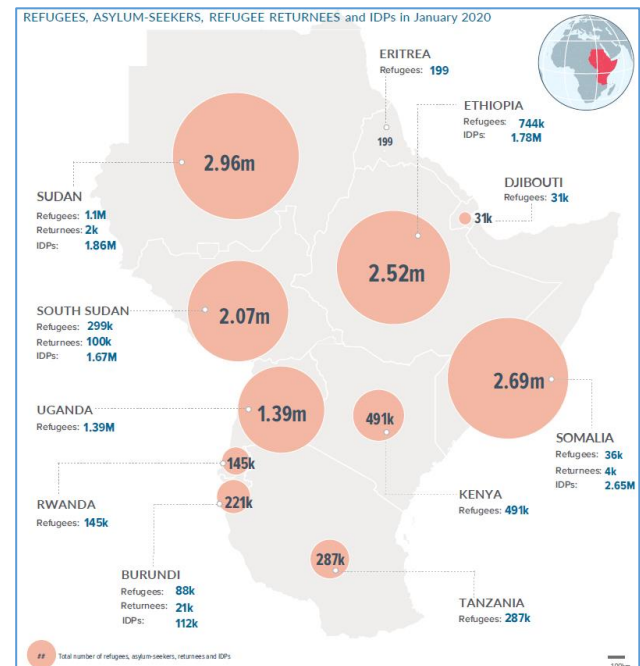
purchasing power of poor households further limiting food access.

In the DRC, 13.6 million people are projected to be food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), including 3.6 million in emergency (IPC Phase 4), majorly due to effects of conflict (activities of armed groups or inter-community conflicts).

Nutrition programmes continue to be delivered focusing on prevention and treatment of wasting across the region, but important gaps in coverage remain due to resourcing shortfalls - especially Kenya and an ongoing risk of RUTF stock outs. Current areas of most concern in terms of acute malnutrition are northern Kenya, riverine areas of southern Somalia and Jonglei, Upper Nile and Central Equatoria States in South Sudan, however, updated nutrition analyses are expected in the coming months from Kenya and Ethiopia.

Refugees, Asylum Seekers and the IDPs

The east, horn of Africa and great lakes region (UNHCR) hosts the highest number of refugees in Sub-Saharan Africa (67%), and about 20% of global refugee population. In addition, the region hosts over 13 million internally displaced people who require humanitarian assistance including 5 million from DRC.



Source: UNHCR

This region is therefore among those with largest humanitarian needs globally given that it also hosts

over 31.8 million food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and malnourished population.

Challenges in refugee’s access to food

A key concern for refugee’s response in the region is funding shortfalls which is limiting provision of adequate food and non-food assistance to refugees. As a result, refugees are now facing food ration cuts in the recommended 2100 kcal per person per day. For instance, there is an ongoing 10-20% ratio cut in Djibouti, 16% cut in Ethiopia with removal of Sugar, 30% cut in Kenya with removal of fortified food, 30% cut in South Sudan with removal of fortified food, and missing food assistance in some locations in Sudan, according to the UNHCR.

In addition, shortfalls in provision of milling allowances and firewood for cooking meals, adequate soap and other core relief items forced most refugees to use one or more of the negative coping strategies, including skipping/reducing meals, taking loan on interest, selling household assets, begging, child labour and engagement in risky/harmful activities.

Of particular concern is **Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia** where widespread locust breeding is in progress and new swarms continue to form, threatening the upcoming cropping season.

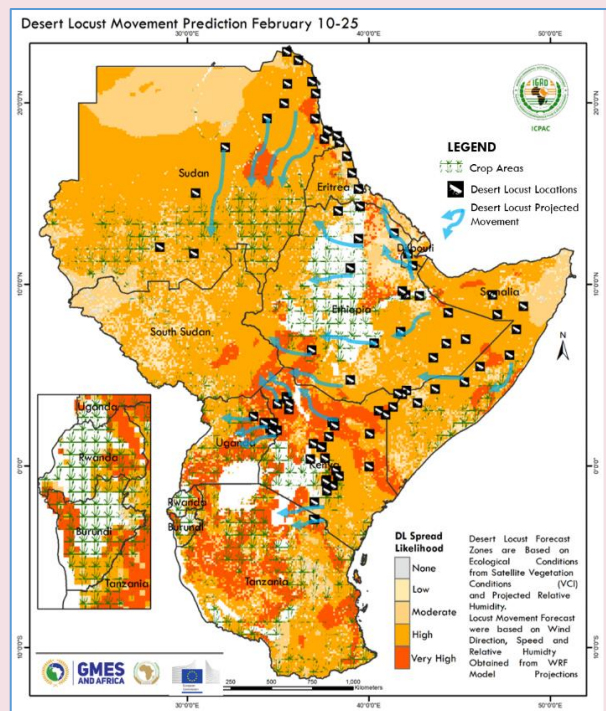
Desert locusts are confirmed to have spread to all IGAD Member States and other neighbouring countries such as Tanzania and the DRC. Aerial and ground operations are in progress in most affected countries although control operations generally remain insufficient.

Ecological conditions remain favourable for desert locust breeding, survival and spread, raising the risk to both pasture and crops in 2020. Surveillance and prompt control operations are being prioritised and should be stepped up.

Please refer to the [FSNWG Special Report on Desert Locust](#) for additional information on impact scenarios to food security. Most recent information about the spread of desert locusts across the region can also be found at FAO’s [Desert Locust Watch](#).

Heightened Desert Locust Threat to the March-May 2020 season

The Desert Locust situation remains alarming and potentially presents an unprecedented threat to food security and livelihoods across the Greater Horn of Africa.



Source: ICPAC/GMES

Outlook

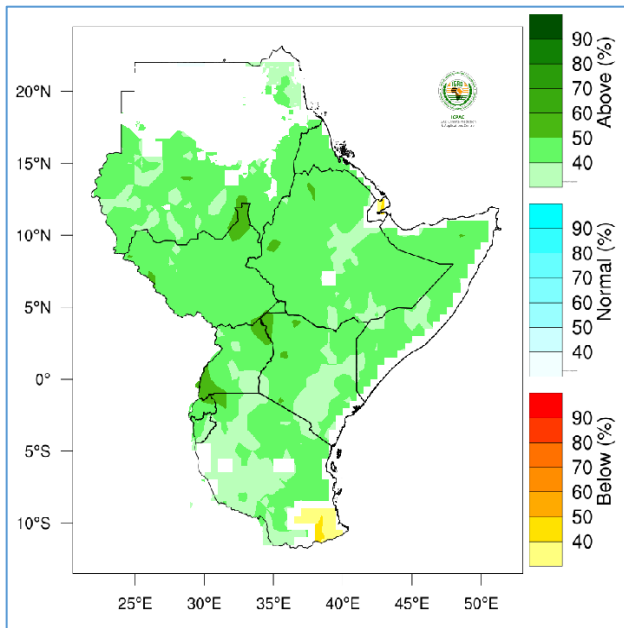
March-May 2020 Seasonal Climate Forecast

According to ICPAC, most agricultural/pastoral communities in the Greater Horn of Africa region are expected to receive above-average rainfall during the March-May 2020 season.

In general, this presents positive opportunities for improved food security and livelihoods as cropping areas, as well as pastures and other grazing areas are expected to benefit from the forecasted above normal rainfall.

However, heavy rainfall might increase the likelihood of flooding and landslides which could disrupt the livelihoods of households in flood prone areas. It is important to note that most of these areas already experienced severe floods in the previous season, and further flooding, would slow down recovery and escalate associated negative impacts.

In addition, water-borne disease outbreaks especially cholera and measles that are ongoing in parts of Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and DRC will likely escalate.



Source: ICPAC

The risk of spread of *coronavirus* is also high with potential threats to life and livelihoods. Stakeholders are encouraged to take all necessary measures to prevent spread to this resource-constrained region.

Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends;

- Continued joint humanitarian response to address food security burden among populations in Crisis (IPC Phase 3+) or worse phases, including the internally displaced and refugees.
- Continued prioritisation of nutrition interventions to address current malnutrition

burden among children and other vulnerable populations, and prevent further deterioration in the nutrition situation.

- Intensify desert locust control operations and scale up livelihood protection and nutrition interventions to mitigate the possible impact of locust invasion on livelihoods across the entire GHA, with particular attention in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia with the highest infestation so far.
- Prepare for any election-related violence eventualities considering there are several upcoming political milestones this year, given that election-related violence and tensions have in the past led to food security emergencies.
- Farmers and stakeholders are encouraged to take advantage of the anticipated favourable March – May seasonal rains, and maximise food production. Disaster management stakeholders are also urged to collectively plan and prepare for any disaster eventualities resulting from the forecasted above-average rainfall.
- Concerned authorities and stakeholders should be mindful of the fast-spreading *Coronavirus* disease and take all necessary measures to prevent further spread as it could potential impact on people’s livelihoods.
- **The FSNWG will continue to monitor all issues related to food security and nutrition, and provide updates for proper planning and decision making.**

Please download [the more detailed FSNWG Slides for Feb 2020](#) for in-depth sectorial analyses.

Contacts

For questions and /or any other feedback, please contact the FSNWG Secretariat through:

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