

FSNWG¹ Food Security and Nutrition Update

Key messages

- An estimated 65.1 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC² Phase 3+) and in need of urgent assistance in May 2021. Of these, about 34.2 million were from seven of the eight IGAD Member States.
- Below average March-May 2021 rains risk a second consecutive season of drought in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Generally, food insecurity is expected to deteriorate across many parts of the region, aggravated by a poor March-May 2021 production.
- Conflict and insecurity, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, depressed rains, and high food and water prices continue to aggravate malnutrition in the region. Ethiopia and South Sudan remain major sources of concern.
- The humanitarian situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia remains grave as available information points to critical levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition. Exacerbating the situation is access challenges that are adversely affecting the delivery of humanitarian and other essential services.
- Funding shortfalls continue to affect refugee response in the region. Over 3.4 million refugees, or three-quarters of the refugee population in the region, have been affected by food ration cuts linked to funding shortfalls, risking a deterioration in their food security and nutrition situation.
- Wetter than usual conditions are forecasted over Eritrea, much of northern Ethiopia, western Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda during the June-September (JJAS) 2021 rainfall season. JJAS is an important agricultural season in the northern states of IGAD as it marks the start of most agricultural activities. Good crop prospects are thus likely.

Figure 1: Food insecure population estimates

Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Djibouti	389,000	167,000	27,000		194,000
Ethiopia	17,353,112	10,279,333	2,592,136		12,871,469
Kenya	5,557,860	1,769,839	238,555		2,008,394
Somalia	2,925,900	2,251,900	400,100		2,652,000
South Sudan ³	3,138,000	4,668,000	2,413,000	108,000	7,189,000
Sudan	14,810,899	5,457,113	1,841,160		7,298,273
Uganda	4,542,829	1,630,877	371,860		2,002,737
IGAD Total	48,717,600	26,224,062	7,883,811	108,000	34,215,873
Burundi	3,955,432	1,206,500	128,129		1,334,629
CAR	1,591,200	1,657,212	632,524		2,289,736
DRC	40,779,169	20,533,697	6,728,624		27,262,321
Total	95,043,401	49,621,471	15,373,088	108,000	65,102,559

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

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 relevant stakeholders for improved decision making

² 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).

³ Based on IPC Global Support Unit's consolidated findings from the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group and two external reviews (Famine Review and Quality Review), following a breakdown in technical consensus in the estimation of populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in six counties. According to the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group, 3,144,000 people were in Stress (IPC Phase 2), 4,743,000 in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), 2,467,000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 31,000 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)

Sector updates

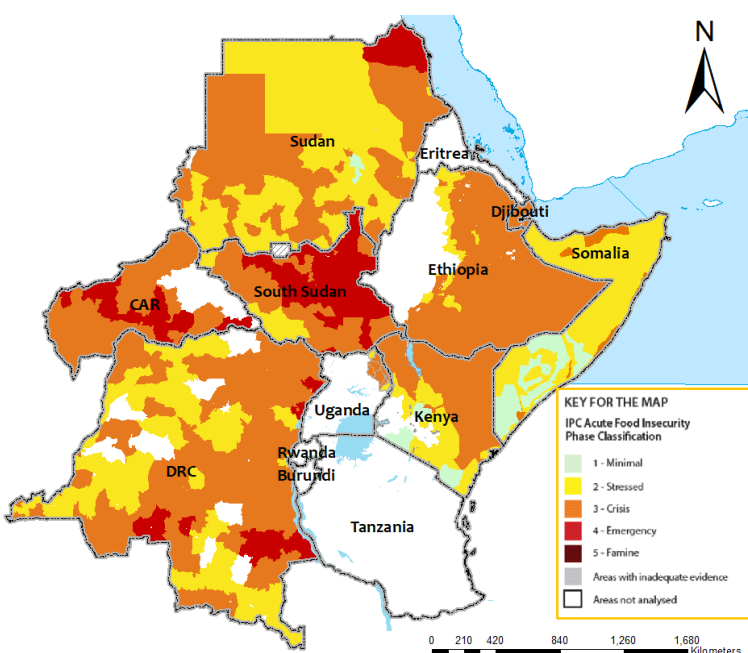
Food security

The number of acutely food insecure people in the region has been gradually rising. The IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) for East and Central Africa estimates that 65.1 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and in need of urgent food assistance in May 2021 (see Figure 1). This is in comparison to 62.9 million people in the previous month. Of these, about 34.2 million were from seven of the eight IGAD Member States - Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The other 30.8 million were from Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

An additional 95 million people were Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and in need of livelihood support, including 48.7 million from the IGAD region.

Regional food security situation

Source: IPC GSU for East and Central Africa



Country updates

Sudan: An estimated 7.3 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) and were in need of urgent food assistance. Of these, 1.8 million were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Floods, economic challenges and localised conflict were the main drivers of food insecurity in the country. Above average rains during the June-September 2020 rainy season caused significant damage to households' assets, and infrastructure. Economic challenges, characterised by a devaluation of the Sudanese Pound (SDG), high inflation and high food and non-food prices, have also negatively impacted households' purchasing power and subsequently access to food. In addition, increased localised conflict especially in Darfur (Geneina) and Kordofan states triggered population displacements.

As a result, the highest proportions of populations in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity were found in North Darfur, followed by West Darfur, North Kordofan, South Kordofan, and Red Sea states.

Sudan is expected to face increased food insecurity between June-September 2021, due to the impacts of the lean season, combined with a typically above-average food prices and continued localised conflict.

Somalia: Pockets of drought conditions were observed between December 2020 and late April 2021. This followed below average 2020 Deyr⁴ rains and production, warmer than normal 2021 Jilaal season⁵, and delayed and poor 2021 Gu⁶ rains, which led to a deterioration in pasture, browse and water availability. Atypically high prices of water and staple cereals were also recorded as a result.

Despite the increased rainfall observed between late April and mid-May 2021, cumulative amounts remained below average in many parts of central and southern Somalia. As forecasts indicate little to no rainfall through mid-June 2021, potentially signalling an earlier than normal withdrawal of the Gu season, the 2021 Gu season cereal production is expected to be 20-40% below average. Likely to exacerbate the situation is the desert locust, as ongoing breeding in

⁴ Short rains season in Somalia between mid-September and December

⁵ Dry season in Somalia between January and March

⁶ Main rains season in Somalia between mid-March and June

northern Somalia poses an additional risk to Gu season crop production.

An estimated 2.73 million people across Somalia are, therefore, expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity through June 2021. From July 2021, this number is expected to rise to 2.83 million people as the country heads into the Hagaa season⁷.

CAR: An estimated 2.29 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+), including 633,000 who were classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Conflict continued to be the leading driver of food insecurity in the country. The violence that occurred in December 2020, around the time of presidential and legislative elections, added to the civil insecurity that has affected households' sources of food and income for almost a decade. 2020 harvests were also disrupted by a deteriorating security situation, resulting in limited production and low food stocks.

The COVID-19 pandemic also played a significant role as households' incomes reduced, following loss of livelihoods.

Nutrition

Conflict and insecurity, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, depressed rains, and high food and water prices continue to aggravate malnutrition in the region. Ethiopia and South Sudan remain major sources of concern.

Ethiopia: The country has the highest number of under five children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) targeted globally in 2021. Based on the most recent data, 40,875 children were admitted for SAM treatment in March 2021 alone, representing a 30% increase compared to March last year.

At the regional level, similar trends were observed in Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions, which registered 24-38% increase in SAM admissions in March 2021 compared to the same period last year.

In the Tigray region, available data points to high levels of acute malnutrition. Of the total under five children

screened between February and May 2021, 2.8% on average are suffering from SAM, while 18% on average are suffering from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM)⁸. Access challenges continue to exacerbate the situation.

South Sudan: About 1.4 million children under the age of five years are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition through 2021. Of these, 313,391 require life-saving treatment for SAM.

Notably, in the first four months of 2021 alone, a total of 70,700 children suffering from SAM were admitted into therapeutic nutrition programmes. The highest admissions were recorded in Jonglei (21.6%), followed by Unity (14.9%) and Northern el Bahr Ghazal (11%).

Following the 2020 South Sudan IPC report, UNICEF has prioritised 10 counties for a scaled-up response – Pibor, Akobo, Aweil South, Bor South, Ayod, Tonj North, Tonj East, Tonj South, Duk and Twic East. During the first four months of 2021, a total of 13,438 under five children from these counties were admitted for SAM treatment.

Further, recent nutrition SMART surveys conducted by UNICEF in Pibor, Akobo West and Tonj North counties estimate the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM)⁹ in these counties at 21.6%, 19% and 18.4% respectively, exceeding the internationally agreed emergency threshold.

Displacement

COVID-19 cases continued to increase among displaced populations. As of 18 May 2021, a total 3,196 cases had been confirmed among UNHCR's populations of concern in the region, representing roughly a 15% increase compared to April 2021. South Sudan had the highest caseload with 772 cases.

Somali refugees continued to arrive in Dollo Ado in Ethiopia. Between April and May 2021, an additional 2,417 new arrivals were recorded, mainly from Bakool, Banadir, Bay, Gedo and Hiraa regions. Though UNHCR and partners are providing life-saving services to the arriving refugees, humanitarian needs remain high. For instance, a nutrition screening of the newly arrived refugees indicated critical levels of acute malnutrition,

⁷ Dry season in Somalia between July and September

⁸ Based on MUAC

⁹ Ibid

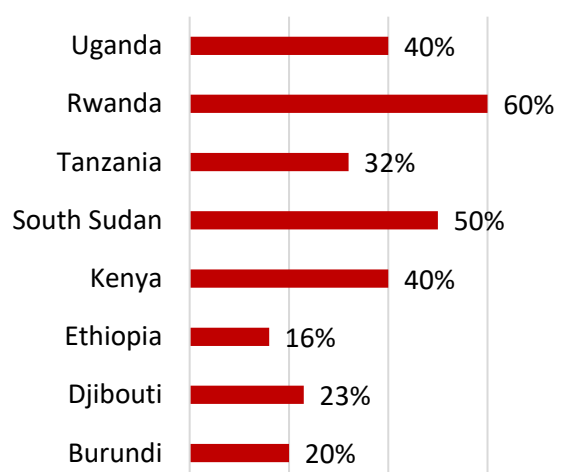
with a GAM prevalence¹⁰ of 26% among children under the age of five.

Funding shortfalls continue to affect the refugee response in the region, causing a deterioration in the food security and nutrition situation of refugees in the region.

So far, over 3.4 million refugees, or three-quarters of the refugee population in the region, have been affected by food ration cuts linked to funding shortfalls.

In view of this, in Rwanda, UNHCR, WFP and the government are exploring a prioritisation approach where, the amount of food assistance provided to refugee households is based on their assessed level of vulnerability. For instance, the highly vulnerable receive 80% of the full food ration (2100 kilocalories per person per day), the moderately vulnerable receive 40%, while those who are not considered vulnerable do not receive food assistance.

Food ration cuts in refugee operations in the region



Source: UNHCR

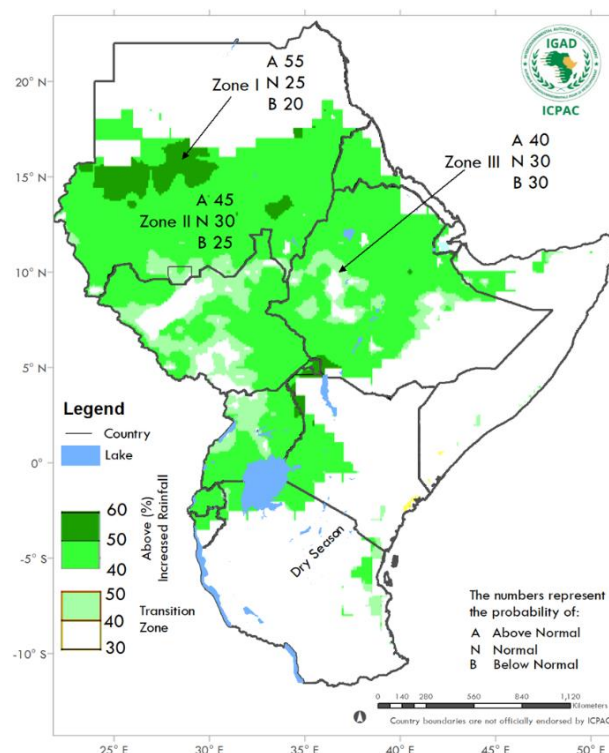
Climate

The June-September (JJAS) rainfall season is an important season for Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, being that it is the main farming season for staple crops for some of these countries.

According to the JJAS 2021 forecast by the IGAD Climate Predication and Applications Centre (ICPAC), wetter than usual conditions are expected over Eritrea,

much of northern Ethiopia, western Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

June-September (JJAS) 2021 rainfall outlook



Source: ICPAC

The forecast also indicates a 15% higher than usual chance of receiving more than 400 mm accumulated rainfall over central Sudan, and a 5% increased chance of receiving rainfall exceeding 400 mm over western Ethiopia and western South Sudan.

In terms of rainfall onset, an earlier than usual start of the season is expected over western Ethiopia, eastern South Sudan and southern parts of Sudan. A delayed start to the season is, however, expected in northern and eastern Eritrea, north-eastern and eastern Ethiopia, northern Somalia and margins of northern Sudan.

For detailed information, including sectoral impacts and advisories, please refer to [ICPAC's JJAS 2021 Summary for Decision Makers](#) as well as the [June - September 2021 seasonal forecast](#).

¹⁰ Ibid

Humanitarian funding

There has been an estimated USD. 1 billion increase in humanitarian funding in the region since last month. This follows increased funding particularly in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. Nonetheless, the humanitarian response in the region remains underfunded.

Overview of humanitarian funding by country (million USD), as of 03 June 2021¹¹

Country	Required	Funded	Funded (%)
Ethiopia ¹²	1,500	290.1	19.3%
Somalia	1,090	214.2	19.6%
South Sudan	1,680	564.8	33.7%
Sudan	1,940	335.8	17.3%

Source: OCHA

In addition to the Humanitarian Response Plans' funding, countries also received funding outside the plan – Ethiopia (USD. 88.5 million), Somalia (USD. 167.3 million), South Sudan (USD. 153.9 million) and Sudan (USD. 105.5 million).

Food security remains the most funded programme, followed by refugee and nutrition programmes.

Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Scale up of multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance to save lives, and safeguard livelihoods, especially in areas with populations categorised in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity.
- Scale up of livelihood programmes for improved self-reliance, resilience building and social protection for households facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or worse outcomes.
- Sustained nutrition interventions to support recovery and prevent a deterioration of the nutrition situation. Nutrition services should also be expanded to areas with low coverage.

- Contingency plans relating to drought, including safety net programmes, in view of the poor performance of the March-May 2021 season in several parts of the region.
- Collective advocacy to increase awareness of crises in the region and mobilise resources to respond to the various humanitarian needs in the region.

Resources

- [Summary for Decision Makers - JJAS 2021](#)
- [Agriculture Monitoring for Eastern Africa](#)

Contacts

- **IGAD:** Charity Mumbua
(charity.sammy@igad.int)
- **FAO:** Brenda Lazarus
(Brenda.Lazarus@fao.org)

¹¹ Pertaining to HRP

¹² HRP is yet to be fully approved by the Government