

FSN WG¹ Food Security and Nutrition Update

Key messages

- Approximately 60 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 July 2021. Of these, about 29 million were from seven of the eight IGAD Member States.
- Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) admissions continued to rise across the region, particularly in Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, reflecting a worsening malnutrition situation.
- Staple food prices in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda are seasonally declining with the start of harvests in the bimodal areas. However, compared to the recent five-year average, staple food prices are up significantly in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, primarily due to inflation.
- Heavy rains and floods were recorded in July, particularly in South Sudan and Sudan, which have affected thousands of people, damaging homes, farmlands, and infrastructure, disrupting livelihoods and the provision of basic services, and causing population displacements.
- There is an increased probability of below-average rains during the upcoming October-December 2021 season, attributed to an increased probability of a negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and La Niña. This raises the likelihood of a third consecutive season of drought, particularly in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, and Somalia.
- Conflict and insecurity continues to limit humanitarian access across parts of the region., especially in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and parts of South Sudan.

Food insecure population estimates, as of July 2021

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 ³	5,998,068	4,559,015	2,425,984	401,313	7,386,312
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 ⁴	3,138,000	4,668,000	2,413,000	108,000	7,189,000
Sudan	16,525,736	7,072,838	2,696,783		9,769,621
Uganda	470,610	159,930	27,725		187,655
IGAD Total	35,005,174	20,648,522	8,229,147	509,313	29,386,982
Burundi	4,200,579	988,419	56,365		1,044,784
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	81,576,122	43,827,850	15,646,660	509,313	59,983,823

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

¹ The East and Central Africa Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSN WG) 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 Includes findings from an IPC update on Tigray and neighbouring zones of Afar and Amhara, which have not been endorsed by the Government of Ethiopia

⁴ 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

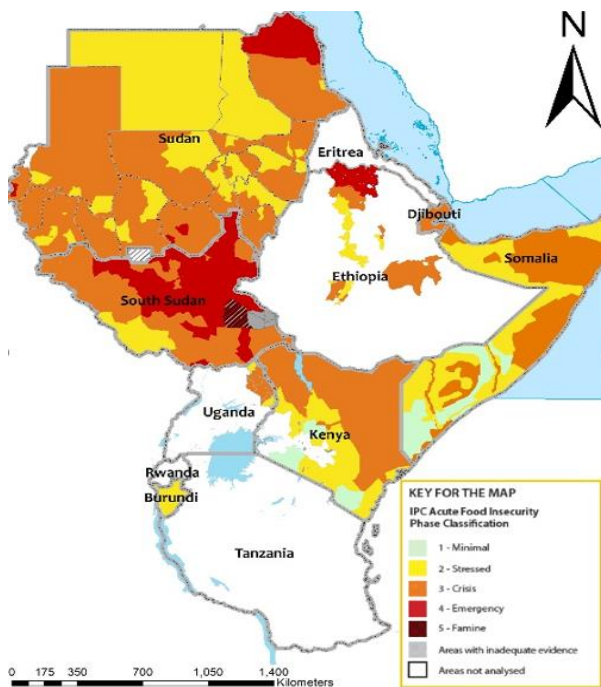
Food security

Food assistance needs are sharply increasing in the region, driven by conflict and insecurity, population displacements, economic shocks and inflation, the impact of COVID-19 on household incomes, and consecutive below-average rainy seasons in various parts of the region.

The IPC Global Support Unit (IPC-GSU) for East and Central Africa estimates that 60 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 July 2021 (see Figure 1). Of these, about 29 million were from seven of the eight IGAD Member States – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The remaining nearly 31 million were from Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

An additional 81.5 million people were Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and in need of livelihood support; 35 million of them were from the IGAD region.

Regional food security situation



Source: IPC GSU for East and Central Africa

Conflict continues to cause deaths and population displacements, disrupt market systems, and prevent households' access to income-generating activities, especially in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan.

In Ethiopia, the conflict in Tigray has displaced over 1.9⁵ million people and led to catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity. According to the IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa, roughly 400,000 people are in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Tigray. An additional four million are in Crisis or Emergency (IPC Phase 3 or 4) in Tigray and the neighbouring zones of Amhara.

South Sudan continues to experience one of the worst food security emergencies globally – an estimated 7.2 million people, about 60% of the country's population, are highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), including 108,000 who are in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)⁶. Of particular concern are Jonglei, Northern Bahr el Ghazal and Warrap states. This is as conflict impacts households' ability to engage in productive livelihood activities and prevents relief actors from delivering food assistance. Generally, humanitarian access has decreased since April 2021 across the country following a surge in attacks against humanitarian workers and assets.

In Sudan, sporadic inter-communal clashes are expected to continue in parts of Darfur, Kordofan and eastern Sudan, leading to a deterioration in the food security situation. Coupled with the effects of high inflation and the peak of the lean season (June-September), this has left an estimated 9.8 million people highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+).

Armed and inter-communal conflicts, as well as civil insecurity, in the DRC and CAR continue to force population displacement and affect households' sources of income and food.

As of May 2021, there were about 12.75 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region (Burundi, CAR, DRC, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan), the majority of whom have been displaced due to conflict. Due to their limited livelihood options and assets, the majority face

⁵ [IOM. Ethiopia - Emergency Site Assessment 6. June 2021](#)

⁶ This conclusion differs from that of the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group which classified 31,000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)

heightened levels of acute food insecurity and are heavily dependent on humanitarian food assistance to meet their food and nutrition needs.

Macro-economic challenges persist across much of the region due to multiple factors such as foreign exchange shortages, inflation, high fuel costs and the secondary effects of COVID-19. These factors continue to contribute to high staple food prices and limit purchasing power among both urban and rural households, especially in Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan. In Sudan, for instance, prices of locally grown sorghum and millet increased in June for the second consecutive month by 7-20%, reaching new record highs, as the Sudanese Pound (SDG) further depreciated in the parallel market from SDG 445|USD in May 2021 to SDG 480| USD in June 2021⁷.

Below-average March-May 2021 rains led to poor crop and livestock production for a second consecutive season in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, and Somalia, resulting in pockets of drought. In Somalia, for instance, preliminary estimates by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) indicate that the 2021 Gu⁸ cereal harvest in July will be at least 30-40% below the long-term average (1995-2020)⁹. As early forecasts indicate chances of another season of below-average rains in late 2021, there is a likelihood of a three-season drought in affected areas.

Conversely, above-average rains and floods in South Sudan and Sudan since July 2021 have significantly damaged farmlands and infrastructure and disrupted livelihoods.

Nutrition

Conflict and insecurity, the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, including high staple food prices, and

high water prices continue to aggravate malnutrition in the region.

In Ethiopia, Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) admissions continued to rise, reflecting a worsening malnutrition situation. Based on the latest available data, a total of 196,394 children across the country were admitted for SAM treatment between January and May 2021. In May 2021 alone, 42,375 children were admitted for SAM treatment, representing a 10.3% increase compared to April 2021 and a 12.2% increase compared to the same period in 2020.

Of particular concern is Tigray, where 10,565 children were admitted for SAM treatment between January and the third week of June 2021. According to the IPC analysis update on Tigray and the neighbouring zones of Amhara and Afar, the proxy Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence in some of the most affected areas in northwestern, central eastern and south eastern Tigray ranges from 20-34%, exceeding the internationally agreed emergency threshold^{10,11}. In view of this, UNICEF projects that up to 102,683 children from Tigray will require treatment for SAM between July 2021 and July 2022.

While there has been a significant improvement in access in Tigray, following the June 2021 unilateral ceasefire, access remains a challenge, preventing some actors from implementing nutrition programmes. Further, the expansion of the conflict into the neighbouring regions of Afar and Amhara will likely lead to a deterioration in the malnutrition situation in affected areas as populations are displaced, and livelihoods and access to basic services are disrupted.

In Somalia, SAM admissions recorded an increasing trend, in line with seasonal patterns observed in previous years.

The highest admissions were recorded in Bakool, Banadir, Bay and Lower Shabelle regions. Notably,

⁷ [FAO. Sudan - Prices of staple food reaching new record highs in June. July 2021](#)

⁸ Main rains season in Somalia between mid-March and June

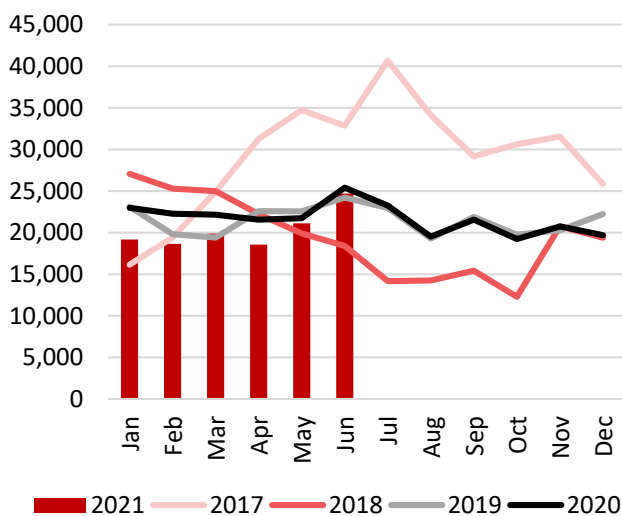
⁹ [FEWS NET and FSNAU. Somalia Food Security Outlook - Multi-season drought is expected to drive high food assistance needs through early 2022. July 2021](#)

¹⁰ Based on purposive sampling, using the Mid-Upper Arm Circumference

¹¹ [IPC. Ethiopia - IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis May-September 2021. June 2021](#)

these are some of the regions worst affected by shocks, including drought and conflict.

SAM admissions in Somalia



Source: UNICEF

In South Sudan, a total of 112,151 children suffering from SAM were admitted into therapeutic nutrition programmes between January and June 2021. The highest admissions were recorded in Jonglei (22%), followed by Unity (15%) and Northern el Bahr Ghazal (10.6%) states.

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. This led to a total of 21,327 children being admitted for SAM treatment between January and June 2021. Out of these, the highest admissions were recorded in Pibor (5,351), followed by Akobo (4,952) and Aweil South (3,036).

Further, nutrition SMART surveys conducted by UNICEF since January 2021 in Aweil South, Pibor, Akobo West and Tonj North counties estimate the prevalence of GAM in these counties at 23.1%, 21.6%, 19% and 18.4%, respectively¹², exceeding internationally agreed emergency threshold.

¹² Based on MUAC

¹³ Short rainy season in Ethiopia, normally between February and April | May

¹⁴ FEWS NET and FSNAU. [Somalia Food Security Outlook - Multi-season drought is expected to drive high food assistance needs through early 2022. July 2021](#)

Markets and trade

Compared to the recent five-year average, staple food prices are up significantly in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

In Ethiopia, in addition to the impact of high inflation, expectations of a below-average 2021 Belg¹³ harvest are responsible for the high prices.

In Somalia, below-average *Gu* cereal harvests are driving an increase in local staple food prices in rural and urban areas. Prices are projected to remain well above the recent five-year average through the end of the year. In Baidoa, for instance, the price of sorghum is projected to be 10-25% above the recent five-year average and peak in November and December 2021¹⁴.

In Sudan, staple food prices are extremely high, and are expected to remain so through the next harvest (November 2021-January 2022)¹⁵ following the continued devaluation of the SDG and high inflation. For instance, during the month of June 2021, the average retail prices of sorghum and millet were more than four times the recent five-year average¹⁶. In addition, in June 2021, the Government of Sudan liberalised fuel prices, resulting in increased prices. It is expected that this will further increase production and transportation costs and negatively impact mechanised agriculture.

On the other hand, staple food prices in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda recorded seasonally normal declining trends following the start of harvests in the bimodal areas.

Climate

According to the August-October 2021 rainfall forecast by the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), wetter than usual conditions are expected over Burundi, Djibouti,

¹⁵ FEWS NET. [Severe food insecurity is expected through early 2022 due to conflict, weather and economic shocks. July 2021](#)

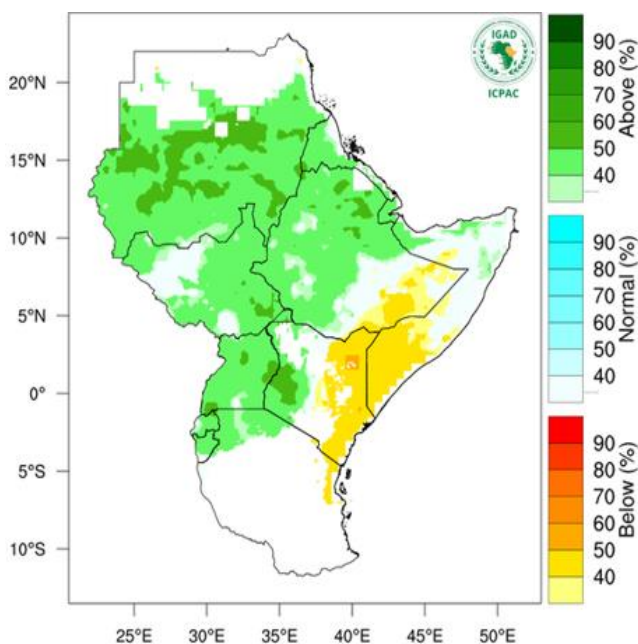
¹⁶ FEWS NET. Sudan – Macro-economic crisis and inter-communal conflicts drive high assistance requirements. June 2021

Eritrea, Ethiopia, western Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda. Meanwhile, average conditions are forecast over a few areas in western Ethiopia, coastal Kenya and north-western South Sudan. Dry conditions are, however, forecast over eastern Ethiopia, eastern Kenya and south-western Somalia.

A review of the state of climate drivers reveals that there is an increased probability of La Niña beginning October 2021. A negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) has also been established and is forecast to persist through the end of the year. Both La Niña and a negative IOD are associated with below-average rains in the East Africa region.

Continued monitoring of the two drivers is, therefore, key as they are expected to increase the chances of below-average rains during the October-December 2021 season.

Rainfall probabilistic forecast for August-October 2021



Source: ICPAC

Humanitarian snapshot

Despite a steady increase in humanitarian funding in the region since the beginning of the year, especially in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan, the

humanitarian response in the region remains underfunded.

Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) funding by country (million USD), as of 29 July 2021

Country	Required	Funded	Funded (%)
Ethiopia ¹⁷	1,500	954.2	63.6%
Somalia	1,090	298.7	27.4%
South Sudan	1,680	790.7	47.1%
Sudan	1,940	468.3	24.1%

Source: OCHA

Countries also received funding outside the HRP – Ethiopia (USD. 283.6 million), Somalia (USD. 318.4 million), South Sudan (USD. 157.8 million) and Sudan (USD. 146.7 million).

Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Coordinated 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, including Ethiopia and South Sudan, where there are populations classified in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).
- Scale-up of livelihood programmes for recovery in emergency contexts, improved self-reliance, resilience building and social protection for households facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or worse outcomes.
- Sustained nutrition interventions to treat and prevent acute malnutrition. Nutrition services should also be expanded to areas with low coverage.
- Close monitoring of the evolution of conflict in the region and its impact on food security

¹⁷ HRP is yet to be fully approved by the Government

and nutrition, especially in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, CAR and DRC.

- Collective advocacy to ensure immediate and continuous access for humanitarian actors to all populations in need of humanitarian assistance.
- Anticipatory action, including contingency planning, in view of the increased probability of below-average rains during the October-December 2021 rainy season.

Contacts

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