

FSN WG¹ Food Security and Nutrition Update

Key messages

- Unparalleled levels of acute food insecurity persist in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Kenya, and across most of Somalia, as a result of the longest and most severe drought in recent history.
- According to the most recent IPC² analysis, about 78.3 million people in 11 of the 13 countries covered by FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and in need of urgent humanitarian assistance in January 2023. Of these, about 48.7 million were from seven of the eight IGAD member states.
- Of particular concern were the over 10.2 million³ people classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), and the 355,010 people classified in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) – 322,010 in Somalia and 33,000 in South Sudan.
- Based on the most recent IPC analysis, Famine (IPC Phase 5) and a Risk of Famine were projected in several central and southern parts of Somalia between April and June 2023, in the absence of a scaled-up humanitarian response.
- Staple cereal prices remained elevated across the region compared to the recent five-year average due to the combined effects of consecutive seasons of below-average harvests in most deficit-producing countries, and high costs of production and transportation.
- The number of forcibly displaced people has been on the rise, with over 4.92 million refugees and 13.49 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) present across the region. This includes 1.69 million people internally displaced in Ethiopia and Somalia in 2022 due to drought.
- Two-month lead forecasts for the upcoming March-May (MAM) rainfall season show increased chances of average to below-average rainfall. Regardless of its performance, however, humanitarian needs – including those for food and nutrition – will remain elevated throughout 2023.
- Given the extreme levels of need across the region, an immediate, multi-sectoral and unified response is urgently required, especially in response to life-threatening needs.

Food insecure population estimates, as of January 2023⁴

Country	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	14,767	179,778	12,390		192,168
Ethiopia					22,600,000
Kenya	5,109,606	3,142,733	1,211,812		4,354,545
Somalia	3,036,040	4,102,930	1,936,740	322,010	6,361,680
South Sudan	3,840,000	4,311,000	1,966,000	33,000	6,310,000
Sudan	17,746,553	6,189,076	1,549,705		7,738,781
Uganda (partial)	2,553,245	1,050,595	50,925		1,101,520
IGAD Total	32,300,211	18,976,112	6,727,572	355,010	48,658,694
Burundi	3,660,000	1,353,000	51,000		1,404,000
CAR	2,004,079	2,011,128	641,565		2,652,693
DRC	7,192,223	21,707,327	2,813,131		24,520,458
Tanzania (partial)	3,294,113	1,092,754	18,030		1,110,784
Total	48,450,626	45,140,321	10,251,298	355,010	78,346,629

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 Excluding Ethiopia

⁴ IPC analysis is ongoing in Somalia, and as such updated figures will be available soon

Sector updates

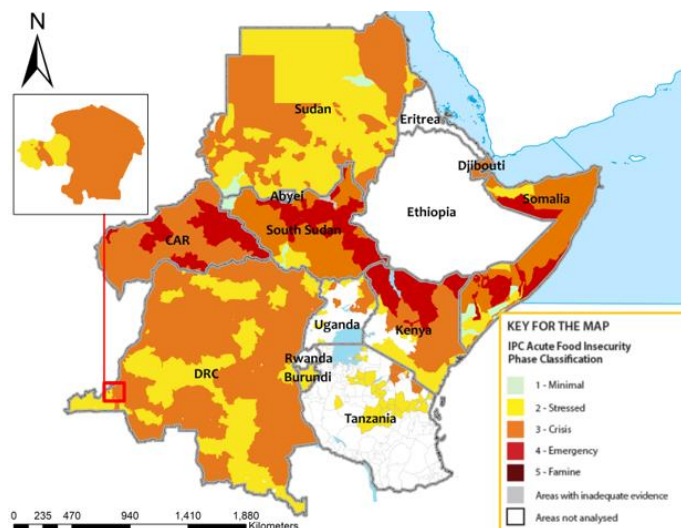
Food security

The food security situation in the region is deteriorating at an alarming rate, owing to the combined impacts of weather extremes, including five consecutive seasons of drought, conflict and insecurity, conflict and climate-induced population displacements, and macroeconomic challenges, including above-average food prices.

According to the most recent IPC data, an estimated 78.3 million people in 11 of the 13 countries covered by FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and in need of immediate humanitarian assistance in January 2023. Of these, 48.7 million were from seven of the eight IGAD member states – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The other almost 29.7 million were from Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania.

An additional 48.5 million people were Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and in need of livelihood support and resilience building, including about 32.3 million people from the IGAD region⁵.

Regional food security situation, as of January 2023



Source: IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa

Looking at the drivers of the current food crisis in the region, the pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Kenya, and Somalia have experienced five

consecutive seasons of below-average rains, resulting in the longest and most severe drought recorded in recent history in the region. The drought has led to poor agricultural production, widespread livestock losses and reduced livestock productivity, severe water shortages and water-borne diseases, population displacements, increased resource-based conflicts, and ultimately, the devastation of many people's livelihoods.

The 2022 October-December (OND) rainfall season – which marked the fifth poor season – started late and was more than 25% below-average in most affected areas. The season's unfavourable crop production prospects are expected to exacerbate the effects of the previous four seasons' subpar harvests.

Increased water scarcity and poor pasture conditions have resulted in the death of over 10.8 million livestock – 4.5 million in Ethiopia, 2.5 million in Kenya and 3.8 million in Somalia – eroding the primary source of livelihoods for pastoral households.

Large scale population displacements have been observed due to extremely limited access to food and other basic needs. As of December 2022, an estimated 1.69 million people had been internally displaced in Ethiopia (511,812) and Somalia (1,179,000) due to the drought. Tens of thousands of others had crossed the border into neighbouring countries⁶.

Food prices have also been on an upward trend due to limited cereal supplies amid high demand, thereby restricting households' access to food. In Kenya, for instance, maize prices in December 2022 were approximately 35-140% above the recent five-year average⁷.

At the time of reporting, 22.5-23.4 million people⁸ across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia were estimated to be facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) due to the drought. This includes 3.1 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) in Kenya and Somalia, and 322,010 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Somalia. In Somalia, though a projected Famine (IPC Phase 5) in 2022 was averted following a scaled-up humanitarian response, acute malnutrition and excess mortality levels remain elevated, particularly in the central and southern parts. Additionally, based on the most recent IPC analysis,

⁵ Excluding Ethiopia

⁶ [UNHCR. Drought Response in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. December 2022](#)

⁷ [FEWS NET. Kenya - Key Message Update. January 2023](#)

⁸ Includes 846,318 people estimated by the Kenya National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) to be highly food insecure in Kenya's non-ASAL areas due to drought

Famine (IPC Phase 5) is projected among agro-pastoral populations in Baidoa and Burhakaba districts, and among internally displaced populations (IDPs) in Baidoa town and Mogadishu between April and June 2023, in the absence of scaled-up and sustained multi-sectoral humanitarian assistance. Several other central and southern areas face an increased risk of Famine.

Two-month lead forecasts for the upcoming March-May (MAM) rainfall season primarily show increased chances of average to below-average rainfall. Nonetheless, regardless of rainfall performance during the season, food needs will remain extremely elevated throughout 2023.

Meanwhile, conflict and insecurity continued to displace populations, disrupt livelihoods, restrict access to basic services and infrastructure, and limit humanitarian access, severely compromising food security in various parts of the region, including parts of South Sudan, Sudan and CAR.

In South Sudan, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes persist in Akobo, Canal Pigi and Fangak counties in Jonglei, Pibor county in Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), Fashoda and Panyikang counties in Upper Nile, and Leer and Mayendit counties in Unity due to conflict, exacerbated by the negative impacts of the 2022 floods⁹. In Akobo, Fangak and Pibor counties, 33,000 people are estimated to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).

In Sudan, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes persist in the conflict-affected areas of Blue Nile, Darfur, Kassala, Kordofan and Red Sea states as households' access to food and livelihoods remains constrained¹⁰.

Similarly, in northern CAR, conflict continues to be the main driver of food insecurity and displacement, exposing many to Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity. As of December 2022, more than 515,600 people in the country were internally displaced, largely due to conflict¹¹.

Macroeconomic challenges, including inflation, local currency depreciation and low foreign currency reserves, compounded by global food and fuel supply and price shocks are concurrently exacerbating food insecurity across the region, by significantly curtailing households' purchasing power.

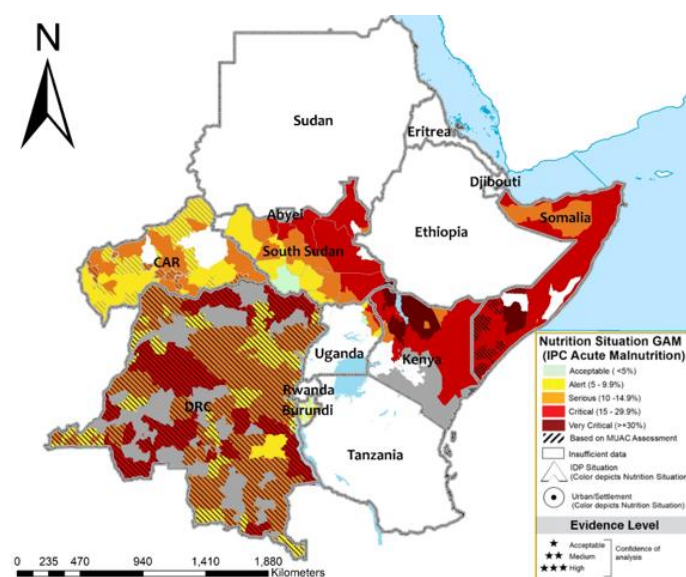
⁹ FEWS NET. South Sudan - Key Message Update. February 2023

¹⁰ FEWS NET. Sudan - Key Message Update. January 2023

Nutrition

Record levels of acute malnutrition continue to be recorded in various parts of the region due to the combined effects of the ongoing drought in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, poor feeding practices, conflict and insecurity, poor access to safe water, and disease outbreaks, including cholera and measles, among others. This is as preliminary surveys conducted in various parts of the region indicate global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence well above the 15% Emergency threshold.

Regional acute malnutrition situation, as of January 2023



Source: IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa

Country updates

Based on the most recent available data, 709,996 under-five children in Ethiopia received lifesaving treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) between January and December 2022, representing a 37% increase compared to the same period in 2021. High proxy GAM rates¹² continued to be recorded in the drought-affected areas. In the Somali region, for instance, proxy GAM among under-five children ranged between 19.9% in Jaraa to 35.3% in Dire Dawa, as per the results of a Find and Treat campaign conducted between November and December 2022. Meanwhile, in the northern part of the country, a cessation of hostilities since November 2022 has allowed

¹¹ UNHCR. CAR Population Movement Dashboard. January 2023

¹² Based on mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC)

resumption of nutrition services across 57 woredas in Tigray.

In Kenya, acute malnutrition cases have sustained an upward trend, especially in the ASALs. In 2022, more than 120,000 under-five children were admitted for SAM treatment, and another 242,000 were treated for moderate acute malnutrition, representing a two-fold increase compared to 2021. Sharp increases in acute malnutrition cases have been observed since August 2022 especially, owing in part to a scaling-up of nutrition interventions, including screenings, as more resources to support interventions became available. Given that the nutrition situation is unlikely to improve in the near future, maintaining the amount of resources required to sustain this scaled-up response is critical.

The nutrition situation in Somalia remains critical with over 1.8 million under-five children estimated to be acutely malnourished, 513,550 of them severely so. Severe drought conditions and limited access to clean water have led to cholera outbreaks, which coupled with measles outbreaks, risk increased levels of morbidity and mortality, particularly in the highly populated IDP camps. Crude death rate (CDR) and under-five death rate (U5DR) levels among agro-pastoral populations in Baidoa and Burhakaba districts, IDPs in Baidoa and Mogadishu, and agro-pastoral populations in Middle Shabelle are estimated to have surpassed the Emergency (IPC Phase 4) thresholds of 1 in 10,000 people per day and 2 in 10,000 under-five children per day, respectively¹³.

In South Sudan, a total of 283,294 (152,878 females and 130,416 males) under-five children were admitted for SAM treatment in 2022, representing a 17.5% increase compared to 2021 and a 40% increase compared to 2020. The highest admissions were recorded in Jonglei state (22.6%), followed by Unity (16.3%) and Northern Bahr el Ghazal (13.2%).

Meanwhile in the refugee-hosting districts of Uganda, a total of 12,849 SAM admissions were recorded in 2022, 16% higher compared to 2021, while in Karamoja, a total of 28,297 SAM admissions were recorded – the highest recorded in the sub-region over the last five years and 50% higher compared to 2021. In the Ebola-affected districts, 580 of 66,920 children assessed for malnutrition in Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) and isolation units were

found to be severely malnourished – 205 of them received nutrition care. On 11 January 2023, Uganda was declared Ebola free.

In Burundi, close to 282,653 under-five children are estimated to suffer acute malnutrition, 59,000 of them in its severe form, owing to the effects of food insecurity, exacerbated by increased food prices, and disease outbreaks.

Markets and trade

The volume of staple cereals traded in the region declined in the fourth quarter of 2022 compared to the recent five-year average owing to seasonal supply increases at the main consumption markets due to recent harvests, and high costs of production and transportation. Nonetheless, import demand was sustained, largely by below-average harvests in most deficit-producing countries such as Kenya and Somalia¹⁴.

Staple cereal prices followed seasonal patterns but remained elevated compared to the recent five-year average due to previous below-average seasonal harvests in most deficit-producing countries, accompanied by increased regional demand from the surplus-producing countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. High costs of production and transportation, brought about by price and supply shocks on fertilizer from the Russia-Ukraine conflict and depreciation of local currencies against the United States Dollar (USD), put further upward pressure on the prices. In December 2022, for instance, the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) and the Sudanese Pound (SDG) recorded a 35.8-36.6% and 22.4%-24.4% year-on-year depreciation against the USD, respectively¹⁵.

In the drought-affected areas, staple cereal prices remained remarkably high. In Somalia, despite seasonally stabilising, prices remained elevated compared to the recent five-year average, while in the ASALs of Kenya and in most markets in Ethiopia's Oromia and Somali regions, price levels were well above the national average. In December 2022, for instance, a kilogram of red sorghum in Baidoa in Somalia retailed for 17,000 Somali Shillings (SOS) on average – 21% higher than the same period in

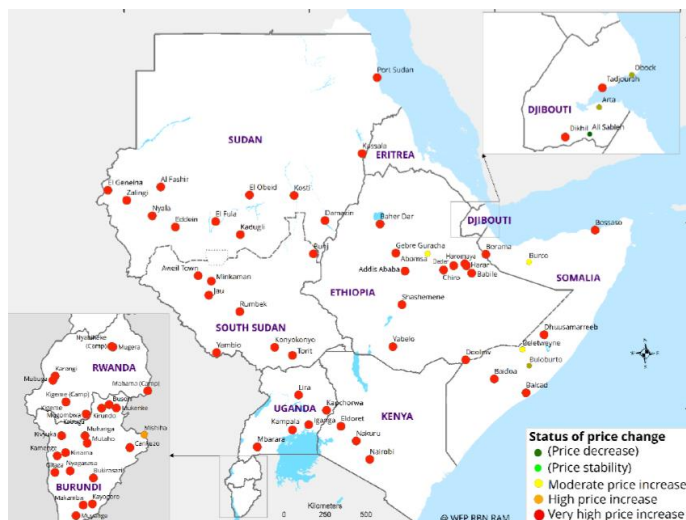
¹³ [IPC et al. Somalia Acute Food Insecurity Situation October 2022-June 2023. December 2022](#)

¹⁴ [Market Analysis Sub-group. East Africa Cross-Border Trade Bulletin - October-December 2022. January 2023](#)

¹⁵ [WFP. Market and Trade Update - 2022 Q4. January 2023](#)

2021 and more than double the long-term average¹⁶. Meanwhile, that of maize in Turkana in Kenya retailed for 115 Kenya Shillings (KES) on average – 74% higher than the long-term average¹⁷.

Staple cereals price change, December 2022 compared to the recent five-year average



Source: WFP

Based on WFP’s market monitoring data, in comparison to the recent five-year average, staple cereal prices in December 2022 increased by more than 50% in South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda and by 11-50% in some few markets in Ethiopia and Somalia.

Relatedly, several countries in the region recorded double digit food inflation – Sudan (65.4%), Rwanda (59.2%), Burundi (39.1%), Ethiopia (32.9%), Uganda (23%) and Kenya (13.8%)¹⁸.

Displacement

As of 31 December 2022, the region hosted an estimated 4.92 million refugees and asylum seekers – including over 230,000 new arrivals in 2022 – and 13.49 million IDPs.

Contributing to displacement in the region is the ongoing drought in various parts – more than 1.69 million people have been internally displaced in Ethiopia (511,812) and Somalia (1,179,000) since January 2022 due to drought. Tens of thousands of others have crossed the border into neighbouring countries.

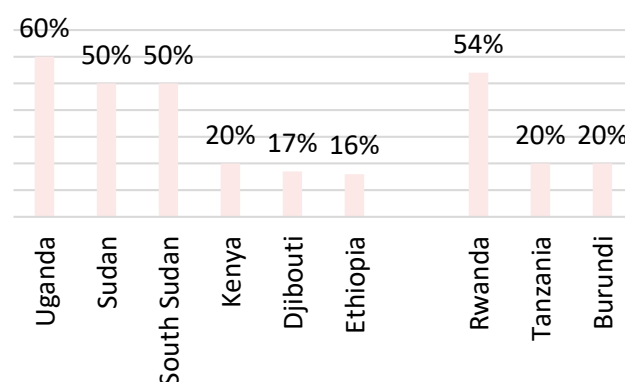
¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ NDMA. Turkana County - Drought Early Warning Bulletin for December 2022. January 2023

The nutrition and food security situation of displaced populations continues to be a major source of concern. Results from UNHCR Standardized Expanded Nutrition Surveys (SENS) conducted in 2022 in refugee camps across Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda reveal a particularly concerning nutrition situation among refugee populations. In Dollo Ado in Ethiopia, the surveys found a GAM prevalence exceeding the 15% Emergency threshold among under-five children in four out of the five refugee camps – Maelkadida (17.2%), Kobe (16.3%), Hilaweyn (16.4%) and Bur amino (19.8%). Meanwhile in Gambella, this was the case in three out of the six refugee camps – Kule (20.7%), Tierkidi (22.1%) and Nguennyiel (18.2%). In Sudan, the surveys found a GAM prevalence exceeding the 15% Emergency threshold in all the eleven refugee camps in White Nile. Meanwhile in Uganda, the prevalence of stunting among under-five children was found to be very high ($\geq 30\%$) in all the four refugee settlements in the South-western region and in Kyangwali settlement in the Mid-western region. In Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, Critical levels of acute malnutrition (above 15%) were reported among new arrival refugee children screened for malnutrition based on mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC), Oedema and weight-for-height z-score (WHZ).

Exacerbating the situation are food ration cuts from the recommended 2100 kilocalories per person per day (kcal|p|d), which has impacted the 4.2 million camp-based refugees in the region as of December 2022. In Sudan, however, an increase of the ration from the current 50% to 100% is planned in January 2023.

Reduction in daily food ration (2100 kcal|p|d), December 2022



Source: UNHCR

¹⁸ WFP. Market and Trade Update - 2022 Q4. January 2023

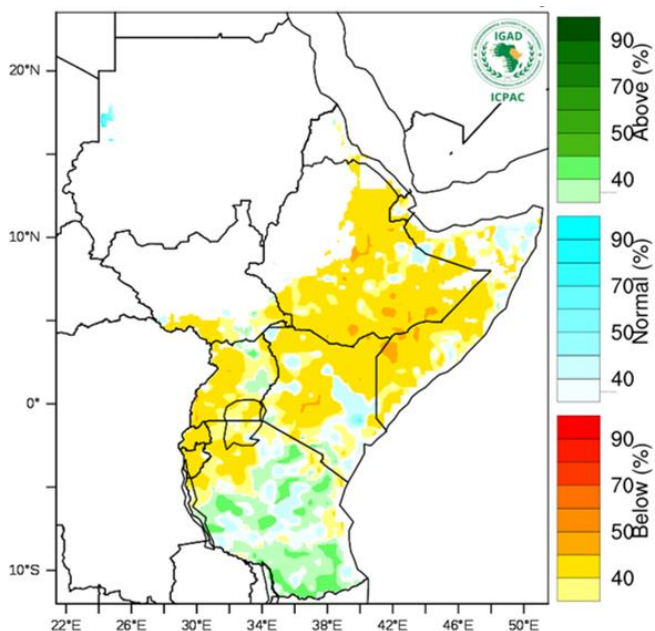
In addition are increases in food prices, the impacts of the ongoing drought, and diseases outbreaks.

Climate

According to the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), below-average rains were recorded over most of the eastern parts of the region during the 2022 OND rainfall season, resulting in a record fifth consecutive season of below-average rains, particularly in the drought-affected areas of southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, the ASALs of Kenya and Somalia. Average rains were recorded over parts of Ethiopia, western Kenya, northern Somalia, parts of South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania.

A review of the state of climate drivers indicates that La Niña remains active in the tropical Pacific Ocean but will likely transition to ENSO¹⁹-neutral from February 2023. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is also in a near a neutral state. Though these drivers are not expected to have a significant influence on the upcoming 2023 MAM rainfall season, exceptionally warm west Pacific sea surface temperatures, associated with below-average rains during the MAM season, are forecast.

Rainfall probabilistic forecast for February-April 2023



Source: ICPAC

Looking at the ICPAC forecast for February-April 2023, drier than normal conditions are expected over much of Kenya, Ethiopia, much of Somalia, southern parts of South Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda and north-western Tanzania. Normal conditions are expected over eastern Kenya, north-eastern Somalia and central Tanzania. Meanwhile, wetter than normal conditions are expected over parts of central to southern Tanzania. Above-average temperatures are also forecast over most parts of the region.

Two-month lead forecasts for the 2023 MAM rainfall season, initiated by ICPAC, indicate increased chances of below-average rains over Ethiopia, most parts of Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and north-western Tanzania. Isolated areas in Kenya, north-eastern Somalia and South Sudan are forecast to record average rainfall. While the forecasts need to be closely monitored, if they materialise, this will put the drought-affected areas in a historic six-consecutive season drought.

Humanitarian response

Humanitarian funding has been inadequate to keep pace with rising levels of need in the region. There is, therefore, a need for sustained advocacy and resource-mobilisation efforts to ensure an immediate, multi-sectoral and unified response, especially to the life-threatening needs in the region.

2022 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) funding by country (million USD)

Country	Required	Funded	Funded (%)
Ethiopia	3,335	1,607	48.2%
Somalia	2,267	1,508	66.5%
South Sudan	1,699	1,138	67%
Sudan	1,936	833	43%

Source: OCHA

¹⁹ El Niño | La Niña Southern Oscillation

Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Immediate global action to avert Famine (IPC Phase 5) in the region. This includes a significant scale-up of contributions to country Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), and other existing and future funding appeals.
- Immediate, coordinated and multi-sectoral life-saving assistance in areas with populations in Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+).
- Rapid scale-up of nutrition interventions to treat malnutrition cases and prevent a deterioration in the overall nutrition situation. Additionally, mass screening exercises should be prioritised, and nutrition services expanded to areas with low coverage.
- Close monitoring of the food security and nutrition situation in areas where the situation is dire and/or at risk of further deterioration. This includes, but is not limited to, areas with populations in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and/or Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).
- Scale-up of livelihood programmes to safeguard livelihoods, and support recovery and a return to self-reliance for households facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or worse outcomes.
- Supporting and strengthening initiatives that seek to address and mitigate conflict and insecurity in the region.
- Close monitoring of the upcoming 2023 March-May season. This is as forecasts show increased chances of average to below-average rainfall.

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