

## FSN WG<sup>1</sup> Food Security and Nutrition Update

### Key messages

- Based on recent IPC<sup>2</sup> data, about 65.8 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) in August 2023. Of these, 35.4 million were from six of the eight IGAD member states. In addition, 20.1 million people were targeted for food assistance in Ethiopia according to the 2023 Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). If this figure is added on, an estimated 85.9 million people needed urgent food assistance in 11 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG, 55.5 million of them in seven of the eight IGAD member states.
- In Sudan, violent armed clashes since April 2023 have plunged the country into a dire humanitarian crisis, pushing many into high levels of acute food insecurity. Around 20.3 million people were estimated to be highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) across the country, largely due to the combined impact of the conflict and macroeconomic challenges.
- High levels of acute malnutrition, alongside multiple disease outbreaks, continued to be reported across the region, underlining the need for increased malnutrition screening exercises and disease surveillance, in addition to prevention and treatment interventions.
- The number of forcibly displaced people has been on an upward trend, with an estimated 4.97 million refugees and asylum seekers, and 15 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), present in the region at the time of reporting. As of 26 August 2023, about 4.8 million people had been forcibly displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict in Sudan – 3.8 million internally and around 1 million into neighbouring countries.
- During the 2023 October-December (OND) rainfall season, wetter than usual conditions are forecast across most eastern parts of the region, largely owing to an El Niño and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD). While this presents positive prospects for agricultural production, it could also trigger widespread flooding in flood-prone areas, causing population displacements, damage to farmlands, shelters and other infrastructures, disruption of livelihoods, and increased human and livestock disease outbreaks.

### Food insecure population estimates, as of August 2023

IPC analyses	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	401,722	185,312	100,102		285,414
Kenya	6,406,950	2,287,350	499,200		2,786,550
Somalia	5,602,710	2,813,980	919,030		3,733,010
South Sudan	3,080,000	4,822,000	2,899,000	43,000	7,764,000
Sudan	17,092,334	14,037,556	6,255,796		20,293,352
Uganda	435,965	480,270	101,705		581,975
<b>IGAD Total</b>	<b>33,019,681</b>	<b>24,626,468</b>	<b>10,774,833</b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>35,444,301</b>
Burundi	5,086,741	1,156,054	0		1,156,054
CAR	2,181,483	1,766,459	621,627		2,388,086
DRC	46,841,996	22,459,941	3,380,803		25,840,744
Tanzania	3,759,399	990,097	0		990,097
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,889,300</b>	<b>50,999,019</b>	<b>14,777,263</b>	<b>43,000</b>	<b>65,819,282</b>

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

### Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) – Population targeted for food assistance

Ethiopia	20,100,000
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Source: 2023 Ethiopia HRP

<sup>1</sup> 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 on food security and nutrition to relevant stakeholders for improved decision making

<sup>2</sup> 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)

## Sector updates

### Food security

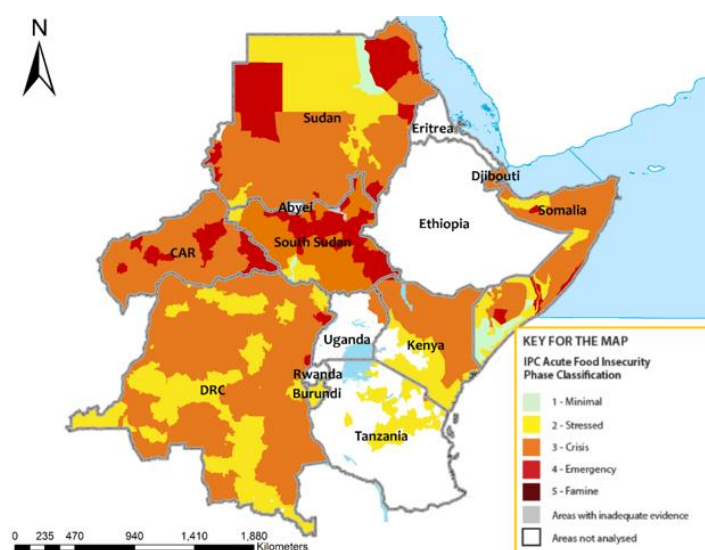
The compounding effects of multiple shocks, including the historic 2020-2023 drought, conflict and insecurity, macroeconomic challenges, and displacement, continue to drive unprecedented levels of acute food insecurity in the region.

According to the IPC, an estimated 65.8 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) in August 2023. Of these, 35.4 million were from six of the eight IGAD member states – Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. The other about 30.4 million people were from Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Tanzania.

An additional 20.1 million people were targeted for food assistance in Ethiopia, according to the 2023 Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). If this figure is added on, an estimated 85.9 million people were in need of immediate food assistance during the month in 11 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG, 55.5 million of them in seven of the eight IGAD member states.

Across the countries covered by the IPC, an additional 90.9 million people were Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and in need of livelihood support and resilience building, including 33 million from the IGAD region.

### Regional food security situation, as of August 2023<sup>3</sup>



Source: IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa

## Drivers

Improved rainfall during the 2023 March-May (MAM) season benefited cropping activities and supported improved livestock body conditions and production, thus bringing some relief from the impacts of the five-season drought in southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Kenya, and Somalia. However, dry spells and an erratic rainfall distribution in some areas affected crops in critical growth stages, leading to localised poor production. In addition, enhanced rainfall, particularly in parts of Ethiopia and Somalia, caused river overflows and flash floods, resulting in the destruction of farmlands, homes and productive assets, as well as population displacements.

Generally, while the 2023 MAM seasonal harvests are estimated to be average to above-average<sup>4</sup>, food security needs in the areas affected by the drought remain elevated as many households continue to face severe constraints in accessing food, following significant losses of livelihoods, depletion of assets (including livestock) and widespread population displacements. In Kenya's ASALs, for instance, while the food security situation has improved as a result of the favourable season, a significant part of the population – 2.8 million people – remains highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), in part due to a slow recovery from the effects of the drought<sup>5</sup>.

Going by evidence from previous droughts, the most drought-impacted households across the region will struggle to rebuild their typical livelihoods, and those displaced are unlikely to return to their areas of origin, indicating a slow-paced recovery.

Forecast above-average rains in the eastern parts of the region during the 2023 October-December (OND) rainfall season, largely due to an El Niño and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), are expected to have a positive impact on food security as water availability for crop production and livestock, in addition to forage, improve. However, they are also likely to cause massive flooding in localised areas, risking damage to crops and infrastructure, population displacements, and increased incidents of human and livestock diseases. They could also contribute to post-harvest losses and the proliferation of desert locusts, of which a few swarms have been observed in northern Ethiopia.

<sup>3</sup> Somalia's map has not been updated to include the recent analysis reflected in the food insecure population estimates' table on page 1

<sup>4</sup> FEWS NET. Key Message Update - East Africa. June 2023

<sup>5</sup> IPC. Kenya Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis. September 2023

Conflict and insecurity, both political and resource-based, continued to compromise food security across parts of the region, including northern Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.

In the Tigray region of Ethiopia, conflict episodes have become more sporadic since the November 2022 peace agreement. However, many households still face large food consumption gaps as a result of eroded livelihoods, loss of assets and limited access to income earning opportunities. The current halt in all USAID and WFP-supported food assistance in the region (which has, since June 2023, been expanded to the rest of the country) is exacerbating the situation. The recent hostilities in Amhara, which broke out even before households had recovered from the aftermath of the 2020-2022 conflict, have further negatively impacted lives and livelihoods, and consequently food security. This is amidst limited humanitarian operations due to security concerns. Internally displaced persons (IDP), returnee and refugee households are among populations of highest concern.

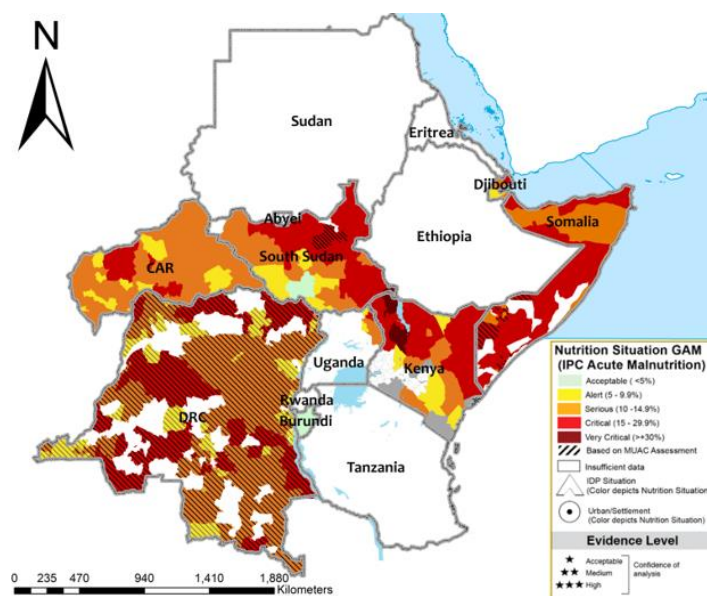
In Sudan, violent armed clashes between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have plunged the country into a dire humanitarian crisis, pushing many into high levels of acute food insecurity. The IPC estimates that 20.3 million people across the country (over 42% of Sudan’s population) are highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+), largely from the impacts of the conflict. Notably, the states with active conflict have the highest share of their population classified as highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) – West Darfur (62%), Khartoum and South Kordofan (56%), Central Darfur, East Darfur, South Darfur and West Kordofan (53%). Even though the 2023 June-September (JJAS) seasonal rains across the country have so far been near normal, breakdowns in critical supply chains, disruptions of trade routes, insecurity and population displacement due to the clashes, constrained planting activities at the start of the season, risking a below-average crop production.

Exceptionally high food prices, linked to high global food and fuel prices, and macroeconomic challenges, including high rates of inflation, local currency depreciation, and low foreign currency reserves, continued to limit food access across almost all the countries in the region. While food prices have been declining since the 2022 surge, they still are particularly high in comparison to the recent five-year average<sup>6</sup>.

## Nutrition

The nutrition situation across the region remains concerning as many countries continue to grapple with multiple drivers, including food insecurity, poor feeding practices, limited access to health and nutrition services, poor water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) practices, a high prevalence of infectious diseases, and conflict and insecurity, among others.

### Regional acute malnutrition situation, as of August 2023



Source: IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa

### Country updates

High levels of acute malnutrition (AMN) continued to be recorded in Ethiopia’s northern region, particularly among IDP populations. In the Tigray region, a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) screening of 396 under-five children in several IDP sites in Hintalo woreda indicated a proxy global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate of 28.8% and severe acute malnutrition (SAM) rate of 5.3%. A similar screening in Afar revealed a proxy GAM rate of 23.6% and SAM rate of 1.6%. Malnutrition emergencies persisted in Amhara, even as recent insecurity in the region resulted in a pause in humanitarian operations during the first half of August 2023.

In Kenya, 946,000 under-five children were estimated to be acutely malnourished, 217,000 of them severely so. Close to 145,000 pregnant and lactating women (PLW) also required urgent acute malnutrition treatment. Compared to the first half of the year, when 970,000 under-five

<sup>6</sup> WFP. Food Security and Nutrition Situation in Eastern Africa Q1 & Q2 2023. July 2023

children were estimated to be acutely malnourished, this represents a slight improvement in the country's nutrition situation. A scale-up in humanitarian response during the drought period and an improvement in the food security situation, following a relatively favourable 2023 MAM rainfall season, are largely responsible for this improvement.

Due to the cumulative impact of the prolonged drought, however, Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) to Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) levels of acute malnutrition continued to be recorded in most ASALs counties of Kenya, with Extremely Critical (IPC AMN Phase 5) levels recorded in Turkana South. Looking at month-on-month admission trends, a higher number of under-five children were admitted for MAM (221,510) and SAM (105,965) treatments between January and July 2023, compared to the same period in 2022. The forecast enhanced rains during the 2023 OND rainfall season could lead to an improvement in the situation, but they also risk worsening the situation in flood-prone areas due to damaged health and WASH infrastructures, population displacements, and disease outbreaks.

The nutrition situation in Somalia remained critical, with close to 1.5 million under-five children estimated to be acutely malnourished, about 331,000 of them severely so<sup>7</sup>. Cumulatively, between January and July 2023, 363,914 under-five children were admitted for SAM treatment, representing an 89% increase compared to the same period in 2022.

In South Sudan, an estimated 1.4 million under-five children were acutely malnourished. Of these, 345,893 were severely malnourished. In addition, SMART nutrition surveys conducted in six counties of concern, between March and April 2023, revealed acute malnutrition levels above the 15% Emergency threshold in all but one county – Aweil North (24.8%), Mayendit (20.5%), Aweil South (19.2%), Fangak (18.8%), Canal Piji (17.8%) and Yirol West (14.3%). Looking at month-on-month admission trends, a total of 149,119 under-five children were admitted for SAM treatment between January and June 2023, representing a 4% increase compared to the same period in 2022. The highest admissions were recorded in Jonglei (20%), Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal (16%) and Unity (14%) states.

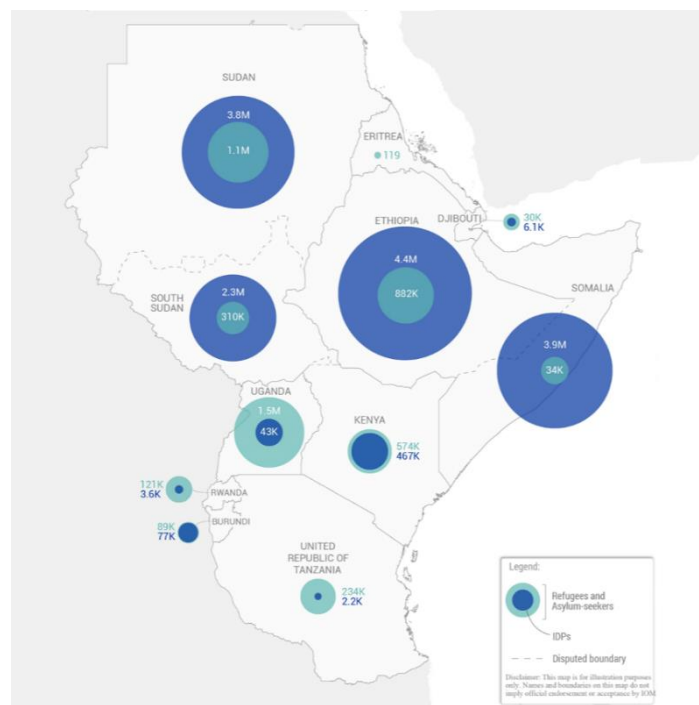
Of additional concern were the refugees and returnees arriving from Sudan, mainly through Renk county. This is as an alarming rise in cases of acute malnutrition and measles continued to be recorded among them<sup>8</sup>.

Meanwhile, in Uganda, a total of 43,673 under-five children were admitted for SAM treatment across the country between January and July 2023, representing a 3% increase compared to the same period in 2022. While admissions in refugee hosting districts remained relatively stable in comparison to 2022, they declined by 8.6% in the Karamoja sub-region, potentially due to timely identification, referral and treatment. However, Kaabong and Nakapiripirit districts were estimated to be in Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3), and Abim and Napak in Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) levels of acute malnutrition.

### Displacement

The number of forcibly displaced people in the region has been on an increasing trend, driven largely by conflict and insecurity, and climatic shocks. At the time of reporting, the region hosted an estimated 4.97 million refugees and asylum seekers<sup>9</sup> and about 15 million IDPs<sup>10</sup>.

### Refugees, asylum seekers, and IDPs in the region, as of August 2023



Source: IOM

<sup>7</sup> IPC. [IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis - August-December 2023, September 2023](#)

<sup>8</sup> MSF. [South Sudan - People Returning from Sudan are Arriving in Alarming Health Conditions. September 2023](#)

<sup>9</sup> UNHRC. [RB EHAGL - Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Returnees and IDPs. August 2023](#)

<sup>10</sup> IOM ([Burundi, May 2023](#); [Djibouti, Sep 2022](#); [Ethiopia, Jun 2023](#); [Kenya, Jan 2023](#); [South Sudan, Aug 2022](#); [Sudan, Mar 2022](#)), IDMC ([Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Dec 2022](#)), IDP Working Group ([Somalia, Feb 2023](#)), UNHCR ([Dec, 2022](#))

Concerning the situation in Sudan, as of 26 August 2023, around 4.8 million people had been forcibly displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict in the country – 3.8 million internally and about 1 million into neighbouring countries, including CAR, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Notably, UNHCR estimates that about half of those arriving in these neighbouring countries are children, some of whom arrive unaccompanied<sup>11</sup>, highlighting the need for protection and care interventions, in addition to critical life-saving assistance.

Regarding climate-induced disaster displacement, as of June 2023, an estimated 3 million people remained displaced in Djibouti (6,086), Ethiopia (781,300), Kenya (465,700), and Somalia (1.8 million) from the impacts of the past five-season drought<sup>12</sup>. Meanwhile, 1.4 million others remained internally displaced in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania as a result of heavy rains earlier in the year that caused flash and riverine flooding, affecting a large number of people across the region. South Sudan had the highest number of flood-induced IDPs (665,000) followed by Somalia (418,000) and Ethiopia (235,000)<sup>13</sup>.

## Climate

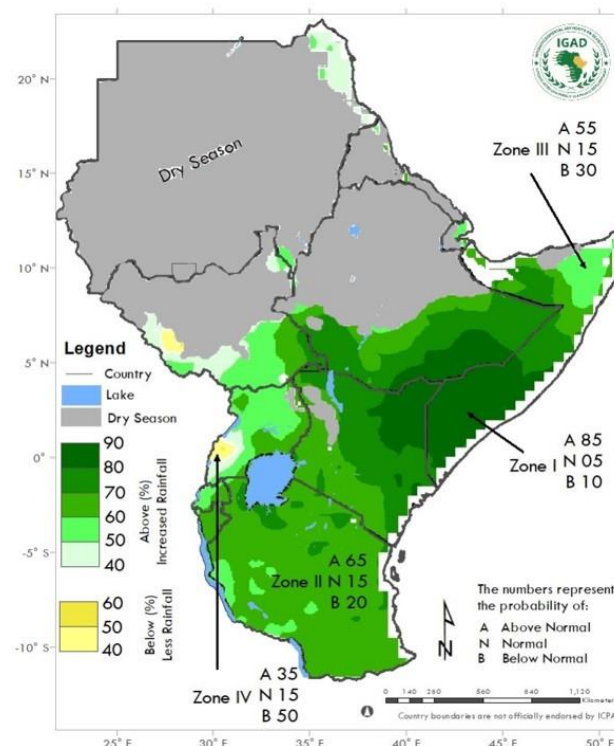
Looking at the performance of the 2023 June-September (JJAS) rainfall season, as at the end of August 2023, wetter than usual conditions had been observed in a few areas in western, central and eastern Sudan. Meanwhile, drier than usual conditions had been observed in much of Djibouti, central and southern Eritrea, parts of central, north-eastern and south-western Ethiopia, several parts of western Kenya, coastal and parts of northern Somalia, southern-eastern South Sudan, parts of northern Sudan, south-western Uganda, and much of Burundi and Rwanda, according to ICPAC.

During the 2023 OND rainfall season – which is particularly important in the equatorial parts of the region, where it contributes 20-70% of the total annual rainfall – wetter than usual conditions are forecast across much of this part of the region. Specifically, there is a high probability (more than 80%) of above-average rainfall in the eastern parts of the region, including southern Ethiopia, eastern Kenya and southern Somalia. On the other hand, drier than usual

conditions are forecast over isolated parts of south-western South Sudan and Uganda.

The forecast wetter than usual conditions are linked to the El Niño phenomenon, which is underway and is expected to persist during the season and into early 2024. Additionally, global climate models indicate the development of a positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which is also synonymous to above-normal rainfall in the equatorial parts of the region during the OND season.

## Rainfall probabilistic forecast for October-December (OND) 2023



Source: ICPAC

Expected enhanced rains as a result of these phenomena present positive prospects for agricultural production, potentially providing some relief to areas affected by the recent drought. They do, however, also risk triggering flash floods, riverine overflows and landslides, which could result in population displacement, increased human and livestock disease outbreaks, and damage to farmlands, shelters and critical infrastructure, including roads.

More information on the forecast can be found [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR. Sudan Emergency – Population Movement from Sudan. August 2023

<sup>12</sup> IOM. Horn of Africa Drought - Human Mobility Snapshot (January-June 2023). July 2023

<sup>13</sup> IOM. East and Horn of Africa Flood Snapshot (January-June 2023). August 2023

## Health

Multiple disease outbreaks, including cholera and measles, continued to plague the region, risking an increase in morbidity and mortality.

As of 28 August 2023, 19,314 cholera cases and 252 related deaths, indicative of a case fatality rate (CFR) of 1.3%, had been reported in Ethiopia since August 2022. Close to 99% of the cases occurred in Oromia, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), Amhara, Somali and Sidama regions. Meanwhile in Kenya, a total of 12,036 cases and 199 deaths (CFR of 1.7%) occurred between October 2022 and 23 August 2023. Though at the time of reporting, the outbreak had been contained in 25 of the 27 affected counties, it was still active in Migori and Nairobi counties. In Somalia, 12,142 cases and 30 associated deaths were recorded between January and 13 August 2023. Close to 54% of all cases were among children under the age of five. Banadir region, and Belet Xaawo, Kismayo, Afgoye, Baidoa and Afmadow districts were reportedly the worst affected.

Regarding measles, as of 20 August 2023, 12,510 cases and 117 deaths (CFR of 0.94%) had been reported in Ethiopia since the start of the year, particularly in the Afar, Oromia, Somali, Amhara, SNNPR, Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella regions. More than 47% of the cases were among children under the age of five. During the same period, a total of 1,054 cases, with a CFR of 1.8%, occurred in Kenya. At the time of reporting, Isiolo, Mandera and Turkana counties had active cases. Meanwhile, in Somalia, a total of 8,158 cases were recorded between the start of the year and 06 August 2023, the majority in Banadir (2,178), Bay (1,713) and Lower Juba (1,075) regions. In South Sudan, 5,581 cases and 128 deaths, indicative of a CFR of 2.3%, occurred between the beginning of the year and 13 August 2023. The majority (65%) of the cases were among children under the age of five.

Forecast wetter than usual conditions during the upcoming 2023 OND rainfall season risk an upsurge of vector and water borne diseases, including cholera, dengue fever and malaria, especially in the flood-prone areas.

## Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Immediate, coordinated and multi-sectoral life-saving assistance in areas with populations in Crisis

or worse levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+).

- 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), such as in Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan.
- 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.
- 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.
- Increased multi-sectoral assistance, including food, water, sanitation, shelter, health and nutrition interventions, in conflict-affected areas in Sudan, in addition to areas that have received displaced populations, including neighbouring countries. Mechanisms to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, as well as to care and protect unaccompanied displaced children should also be put in place.
- Effective anticipatory actions in the context of El Niño to safeguard lives and livelihoods. These could include risk mapping, risk communication| dissemination of early warning and sector-based advisories, establishment of soil erosion control structures and reinforcement of river embankments, and livestock health interventions to reduce the risk of flood-induced diseases. They could also entail the prepositioning of emergency response supplies, such as food, emergency shelters, nutrition and medical supplies, in addition to seeds to facilitate rapid replanting in affected areas once flood waters recede.
- Strengthening of disease surveillance, monitoring and early warning, coupled with treatment and prevention interventions.

- Supporting and strengthening initiatives that seek to address and mitigate conflict and insecurity in the region.

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