

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

### Key messages

- In April 2024, an estimated 74.9 million people in the region were highly food insecure and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. This included 59.1 million people, as per an IPC analysis of 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG, in addition to 15.8 million people in Ethiopia, based on the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Of these, 46.8 million were in seven of the eight IGAD member states.
- If ongoing conflict in Sudan continues to escalate, further impeding households' access to the already scarce food and income sources, parts of West Darfur, Khartoum, and areas of Greater Darfur with high concentrations of displaced persons such as El Fasher in North Darfur may meet the criteria for Famine (IPC Phase 5).
- Heavy rains from late March through April have led to severe flooding, especially in Kenya, Somalia, Burundi and Tanzania, causing loss of lives and livestock, displacing hundreds of thousands of people, and destroying farmlands and critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and dams. Despite increased agricultural performance in some parts of the region as a result of the enhanced rains, increased levels of acute food insecurity are probable in the severely affected areas.
- The nutrition situation across the region remained concerning, largely driven by conflict, displacement, food insecurity, infectious diseases, and poor water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) conditions. Extensive flooding observed in parts of the region poses a risk of increased malnutrition levels in the affected areas.
- Maize and sorghum prices in most markets across the region, including in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and in Tanzania, followed seasonal trends in the first quarter of 2024, as increased supply from previous above-average harvests kept them below last year's and near average levels.
- The region has seen a rise in disease outbreaks, including cholera, malaria, measles, dengue, yellow fever, and polio, as wetter than normal conditions observed over most parts of the region heightened the risk of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, particularly in the areas affected by flooding.

### Food insecure population estimates, as of April 2024

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	5,356,750	1,197,750	25,750		1,223,500
Somalia	6,005,450	2,695,880	714,360		3,410,240
South Sudan	3,501,000	4,684,000	2,336,000	79,000	7,099,000
Sudan <sup>2</sup>	17,982,640	12,828,395	4,898,486		17,726,881
Uganda	2,149,005	1,150,470	153,765		1,304,235
<b>IGAD Total</b>	<b>35,396,567</b>	<b>22,741,807</b>	<b>8,228,463</b>	<b>79,000</b>	<b>31,049,270</b>
Burundi	5,556,296	1,129,656	104,982		1,234,638
CAR	2,350,523	1,996,258	520,668		2,516,926
DRC	52,343,793	20,465,066	2,945,282		23,410,348
Tanzania (partial)	2,210,965	900,001	0		900,001
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,858,144</b>	<b>47,232,788</b>	<b>11,799,395</b>	<b>79,000</b>	<b>59,111,183</b>

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

### Other food security estimates

Ethiopia	15,800,000 (Humanitarian Response Plan 2024)
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<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> Valid up to 29 February 2024

## Sector updates

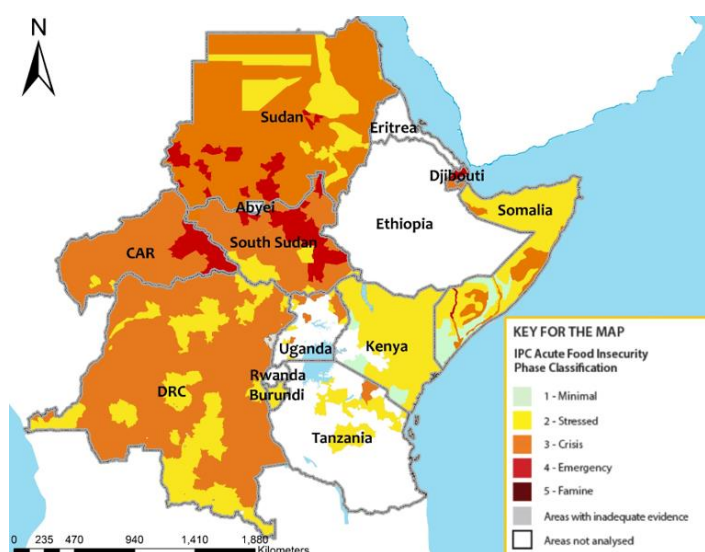
### Food security

Despite improvements in the food security situation, particularly in Kenya and Somalia due to improved performance of the past two rainfall seasons, the region continued to grapple with high levels of acute food insecurity, driven by extreme weather events, ongoing conflicts, persistent macroeconomic challenges, and displacement. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes remained especially prevalent in the northern and western parts of the region.

More than 74.9 million people in 11 of the 13 countries covered by FSNWG were highly food insecure and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in April 2024. This included 59.1 million people according to an IPC analysis of 10 countries, in addition to 15.8 million people in Ethiopia, based on the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). Of these, 46.8 million were in seven of the eight IGAD member states – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. In South Sudan, 79,000 people are estimated to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) through July 2024.

The region also had a large caseload of people in Stressed (IPC Phase 2), at 97.8 million across the countries covered by the IPC, including about 35.4 million in the IGAD region. This population requires livelihood support and resilience strengthening.

### Regional food security situation, as of April 2024



Source: IPC-GSU for East and Central Africa

Heavy rains and severe flooding in parts of the region, including vast sections of croplands, raise concerns for increased levels of acute food insecurity in localised areas.

### Drivers

The ongoing March-May rainfall season marks the second consecutive season of wetter than normal conditions in the eastern equatorial parts of the region, presenting positive prospects for livestock and crop production, and pointing to further recovery from the impacts of the 2020-23 drought.

Even so, localised parts of Kenya, Somalia, Burundi and Tanzania face the imminent threat of food shortages. This follows heavy rains, especially in April, that led to severe flooding events, causing loss of lives and livestock, displacing hundreds of thousands of people, disrupting livelihoods, and destroying farmlands and critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges and dams. FEWS NET estimates that overall, most parts of Kenya, southern Somalia and Tanzania received 110-200% of average rainfall between late March through April<sup>3</sup>.

As of 21 May, 1.6 million people had been affected by persistent heavy rains across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania<sup>4</sup>. In Kenya, 278,380 people had been displaced as of 16 May<sup>5</sup>, with more than 9,973 livestock lost and 41,562 acres of croplands damaged as of 10 May<sup>6</sup>. In Somalia, at least 225,760 people had been affected, including 38,730 displaced as of 14 May, with Hirshabelle, Jubaland and South West states being the worst affected<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile in Tanzania, more than 210,000 people had been affected and over 200,000 acres of farmland damaged as of 09 May<sup>8</sup>. Tropical Cyclone Hidaya's landfall on 04 May exacerbated the situation, destroying houses and infrastructure, including roads and bridges, particularly in the southern regions of the country.

Conflict on the other hand, continued to undermine acute food security in parts of Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

In Sudan, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are already prevalent, with Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes expected to spread significantly across Greater Darfur, Greater Kordofan and parts of eastern Sudan as the lean season intensifies through September. In areas most impacted by conflict, such as parts of West Darfur,

<sup>3</sup> FEWS NET. [Extensive Flooding across Parts of East Africa. April 2024](#)

<sup>4</sup> OCHA. [Eastern Africa - Heavy Rains and Flooding Flash Update #3. May 2024](#)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> OCHA. [Eastern Africa - Heavy Rains and Flooding Flash Update #2. May 2024](#)

<sup>7</sup> OCHA. [Eastern Africa - Heavy Rains and Flooding Flash Update #3. May 2024](#)

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF. [Almost 1 million People Affected as Unprecedented Heavy Rains Continue to Wreak Havoc in Eastern Africa. May 2024.](#)

Khartoum and among displaced populations in hard-to-reach areas of Greater Darfur, some households are expected to face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) outcomes<sup>9</sup>. This is as national food availability declines, import flows remain constrained, and domestic trade flows from the more productive southeast areas to the rest of the country are disrupted by conflict. Furthermore, high food prices combined with considerable income reductions are sharply diminishing households' purchasing power.

As the lean season progresses, rising levels of acute food insecurity and malnutrition are likely to lead to a rise in hunger-related mortality, particularly among displaced populations. If the conflict continues to escalate, further impeding households' access to the already scarce sources of food and income, then parts of West Darfur, Khartoum, and areas of Greater Darfur with high concentrations of displaced persons such as El Fasher in North Darfur, could meet the criteria for Famine (IPC Phase 5)<sup>10</sup>.

In South Sudan, localised intercommunal conflict (largely characterised by cattle raids) persisted, particularly in Greater Bahr el Ghazal, Greater Equatoria, Jonglei, the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA), and Warrap states, disrupting livelihoods, limiting the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and displacing households<sup>11</sup>.

Furthermore, the arrival of refugees and South Sudanese returnees from Sudan, most of whom are in urgent need of food and other essentials, has strained critical services and resources. This is worsening the already dire humanitarian situation in the country, and intensifying competition for resources, raising potential for tensions between displaced and host communities. Already, 7.1 million South Sudanese, representing 56% of the analysed population, face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity, including 79,000 people in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5), 35% of whom are returnees<sup>12</sup>.

Though not the most likely scenario, FEWS NET assesses that as the lean season (June-September) progresses, there is a probable risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5), especially in parts of north-central Unity and Upper Nile with a large number of returnees, more so if severe flooding occurs during the upcoming rainfall season and conflict escalates, impeding households' access to assistance<sup>13</sup>.

Poor macroeconomic conditions, mostly due to local currency depreciation, low foreign currency reserves and a high debt burden, continued to limit food access across almost all countries in the region through high food prices.

## Nutrition

The nutrition situation across the region remained concerning, largely driven by conflict, displacement, food insecurity, infectious diseases, and poor water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH) conditions. Extensive flooding, particularly in parts of Kenya, Somalia, Burundi and Tanzania poses a risk of increased malnutrition levels due to inadequate diets, disruption of critical services, and potential disease outbreaks in the affected areas.

## Country updates

The nutrition situation in Ethiopia remained dire, with over 970,000 under-five children estimated to suffer severe acute malnutrition (SAM). In the Amhara region, SMART surveys conducted in January revealed a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence of 11.9% among under-five children in Waghimra zone. Additionally, a rapid nutrition assessment conducted in the three zones of South Wollo's Argoba woreda showed a proxy GAM prevalence of 22.9%. Metema woreda in the West Gonda zone reported a proxy GAM prevalence of 10.2%. In the Tigray region, preliminary results from a Find and Treat campaign conducted in 14 priority woredas<sup>14</sup> in March indicated a proxy SAM prevalence of 2.04% and a proxy GAM prevalence of 19.2%.

In Kenya, the nutrition situation across most counties improved, following a good performance of the 2023 short rains season alongside sustained humanitarian response. In most arid counties, however, acute malnutrition remained prevalent, with Extremely Critical (IPC AMN Phase 5) levels of acute malnutrition recorded in Turkana South, and Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) levels observed in Turkana Central, Turkana West and Turkana North, in North Horr and Laisamis sub counties in Marsabit county, Mandera county, and in East Pokot in Baringo county. Overall, 847,932 under-five children face acute malnutrition through September 2024, 124,359 of them in its severe form<sup>15</sup>. Looking at month-on-month admissions, 78,896 under-five children were admitted for Moderate Acute

<sup>9</sup> FEWS NET. [Sudan Faces a Risk of Famine as Conflict Threatens Access to Food for Millions. May 2024](#)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> FEWS NET. [South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update. April 2024](#)

<sup>12</sup> IPC. [IPC South Sudan Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Analysis. November 2023](#)

<sup>13</sup> FEWS NET. [South Sudan Food Security Outlook Update. April 2024](#)

<sup>14</sup> Endaba Tshama, Atsbi, Raya Azebo, Neadar, Subhasasie, Tsaeda Emba, Keyihteki, Kolatemben, Embaseneiti, Maykinatel, Seharti, GuloMekeda, Gantafeshum, Enderta

<sup>15</sup> IPC. [Kenya IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis. March 2024](#)

Malnutrition (MAM) management while 36,725 others were admitted for SAM treatment between January and March.

Meanwhile in Somalia, 123,179 under-five children were treated for MAM between January and February while 91,170 others were treated for SAM. Recent flooding, especially in the Juba and Shabelle riverine areas, carries a risk of an exponential rise in Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) cases.

In South Sudan, proxy malnutrition prevalence among refugees and returnees from Sudan, particularly at the transit centres in Renk were reportedly alarmingly high. Combined with disease outbreaks such as measles, this may result in increased mortality rates. Between January and February, 46,220 SAM admissions – the highest compared to the same period over the last five years – were recorded across the country, the majority (8,440) in Jonglei state. About 74,610 MAM admissions were also recorded, 27.4% more in February (41,807) compared to January (32,803).

The nutrition situation in Sudan is rapidly deteriorating, marked by an alarming increase in acute malnutrition cases, even as parts of the country face a progressively increasing risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5). Mass Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) screenings conducted in 47 localities in March indicated Critical proxy GAM prevalence (above the 15% Emergency threshold) in 18 localities, and Serious proxy GAM prevalence (10-14.9%) in 11 localities. MUAC screening campaigns conducted in Kassala and River Nile states in March also showed high levels of acute malnutrition among under-five children. Of the 11 localities assessed in Kassala state, five had proxy GAM prevalences ranging between 15% to over 20%. Meanwhile in River Nile state, two localities, Abu Hamad and Al Buhaira, had proxy GAM prevalences of 17.3% and 14.2% respectively. Overall, 4.86 million people in the country are estimated to be acutely malnourished, including 3.66 million under-five children (730,000 severely so) and 1.2 pregnant and lactating women (PLW)<sup>16</sup>.

## Markets

Maize and sorghum prices in most markets across the region, including in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and in Tanzania, followed seasonal trends

in the first quarter of 2024, as increased supply from previous above-average harvests kept them below last year's and near average levels. However, persistent currency depreciation, and high production and transportation costs pushed prices above last year's and well above the average in most markets in Ethiopia and South Sudan. In Ethiopia, El Niño-related below-average harvests in Meher growing areas further contributed to the elevated food prices. Bean prices were above average across the region, attributed to low initial stocks, despite a favourable harvest<sup>17</sup>.

Increased regional trade, characterised by exports from Ethiopia to Somalia for re-export to the Middle East for the March-June religious festivities, and high demand in Kenya and South Sudan, kept livestock prices above average (64% above the recent five-year average)<sup>18</sup>.

Internationally, crude oil prices increased for the third consecutive month in March, largely driven by geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. Within the region, while prices either declined or remained relatively stable in most countries compared to the previous month, they showed significant year-on-year (YoY) increases, especially in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan. In Ethiopia, they were up 26.7% YoY following elimination of subsidies, while in South Sudan and Sudan, they rose by 109.1% and 178.1% YoY respectively, due to supply shortages and weak currencies.

Looking at the cost of living in March, double-digit overall and food inflation rates were recorded in Ethiopia, at 26.2% and 29% respectively. Though no official inflation figures have been issued for Sudan since February 2023, both overall and food inflation rates in the country are estimated at around 500%, given the significant increases in the prices of goods and services. For example, the price of the local food basket was 107.3% higher in March 2024 compared to the same time in 2023, according to WFP.

## Displacement

The number of forcibly displaced persons in the region remained high, driven largely by conflict and insecurity, and climatic shocks. As of 30 April 2024, the region hosted [5.4 million refugees and asylum seekers](#) and 18.69 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Sudan remained the largest displacement crisis globally with close to 8.9 million people forcibly displaced due to

<sup>16</sup> [IPC. Sudan Alert. March 2024](#)

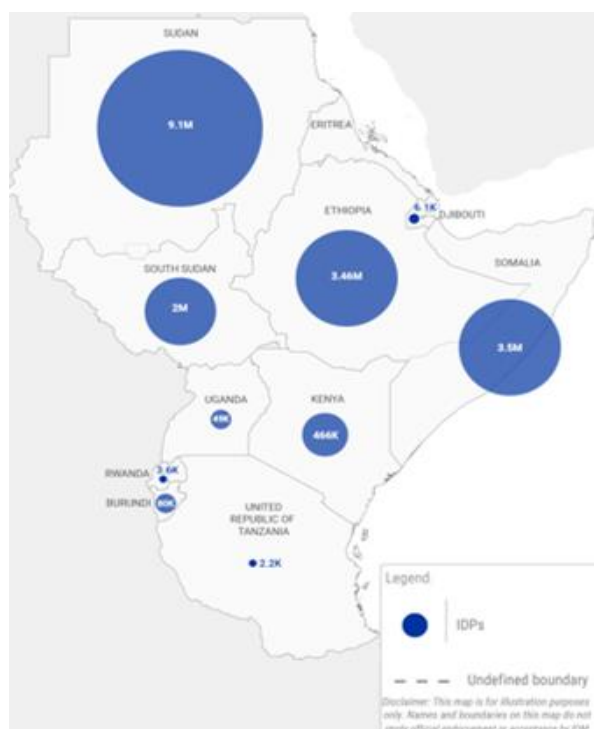
<sup>17</sup> [Market Analysis Subgroup \(MAS\). East Africa Cross-Border Trade Bulletin. April 2024](#)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

the ongoing conflict – 6.8 million internally and 2.1 million into neighbouring countries<sup>19</sup>.

Alarming rates of acute malnutrition continued to be recorded among new arrival under-five children even as nutrition screening exercises conducted in February at border points in Ethiopia revealed proxy SAM prevalence of 2.8% and proxy GAM prevalence of 11.1%. Congestion in transition sites such as Renk in South Sudan, IDP and refugee camps, raises concerns for increased risks of malnutrition and disease outbreaks, including cholera and measles.

### IDPs in the region, as of April 2024



Source: IOM

Heavy rainfall from late March through end of April exacerbated the region’s escalating displacement trends, with about 350,155 people displaced across Kenya, Somalia, Burundi and Tanzania as of 10 May, following severe flooding and mudslides<sup>20</sup>.

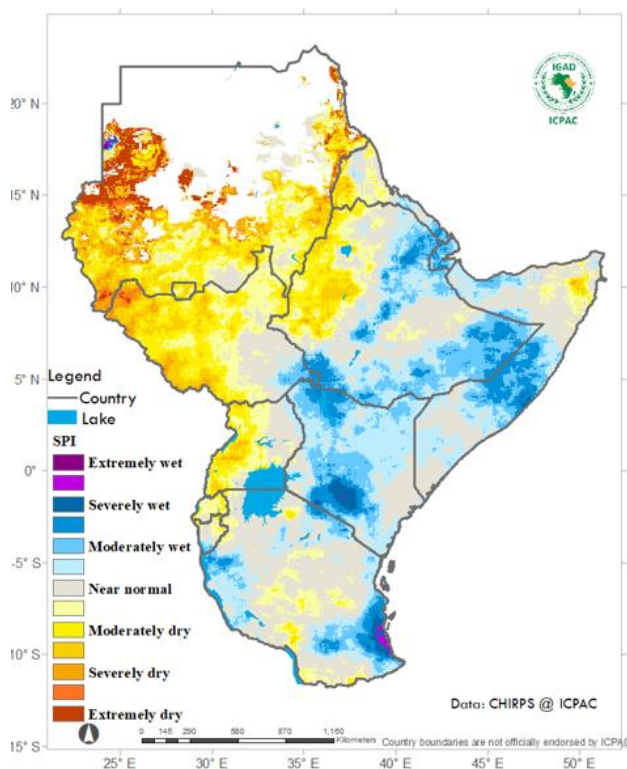
Insufficient funding continued to limit the capacity of various actors to provide essential services to displaced populations.

### Climate

Looking at rainfall performance since the start of the season (March-May) to the first dekad (10 days) of May,

moderate to severely wet conditions were observed in Djibouti, north-eastern, central and southern parts of Ethiopia, most parts of Kenya, central and southern Somalia, and in western and coastal parts of Tanzania. Moderate to extremely dry conditions were observed in a few areas in north eastern Somalia, western Uganda, parts of Burundi, Rwanda and central Tanzania, according to the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC).

### Standardised precipitation index (SPI) for 01 March-10 May 2024



Source: ICPAC

A review of the state of climate drivers shows a transition from El Niño to El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO)-neutral conditions by April-June, with ENSO-neutral conditions persisting through May-July. La Niña is favoured in June-August, with increasing chances through October-December. It is important to note that La Niña conditions are typically associated with enhanced rains over the northern parts of the region during the June-September (JJAS) rainfall season and depressed rains over the eastern parts during the October-December (OND) rainfall season. The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is currently neutral, and the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) is weak.

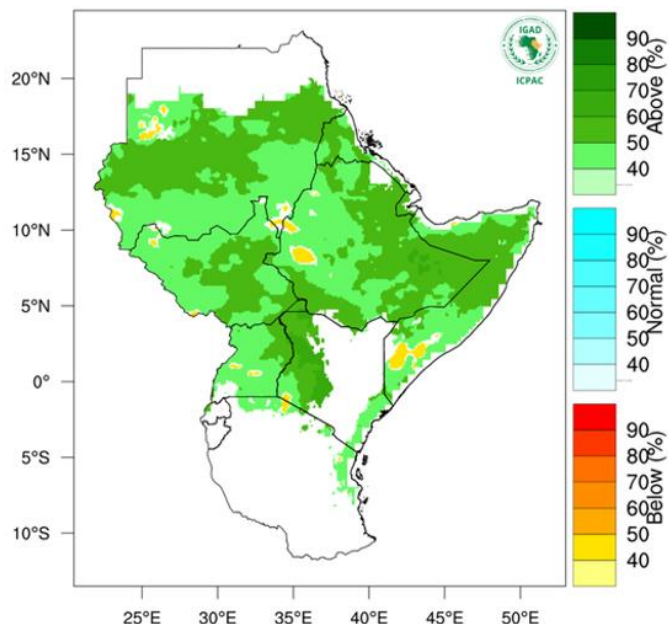
Between May and July 2024, wetter than usual conditions are forecast over most parts of the northern sectors,

<sup>19</sup> IOM DTM. Monthly Displacement Overview 08. April 2024

<sup>20</sup> OCHA. Eastern Africa - Heavy Rains and Flooding Flash Update 2. May 2024

specifically in much of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, western and coastal Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Drier than usual conditions are expected over isolated areas of western Ethiopia, southern Somalia, western Sudan and central Uganda.

### Rainfall probabilistic forecast for May-July 2024



Source: ICPAC

Warmer than usual temperatures are forecast throughout the region, with highest probabilities in Eritrea, parts of central and southeastern Ethiopia, eastern to coastal Kenya, parts of central and coastal Somalia, Sudan and coastal Tanzania.

### Health

The region recorded a surge in disease outbreaks, including cholera, malaria, measles, dengue, yellow fever, polio and anthrax, which are directly linked to extreme climate events and conflict. The ongoing wetter than normal conditions have heightened the risk of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, particularly in areas affected by flooding.

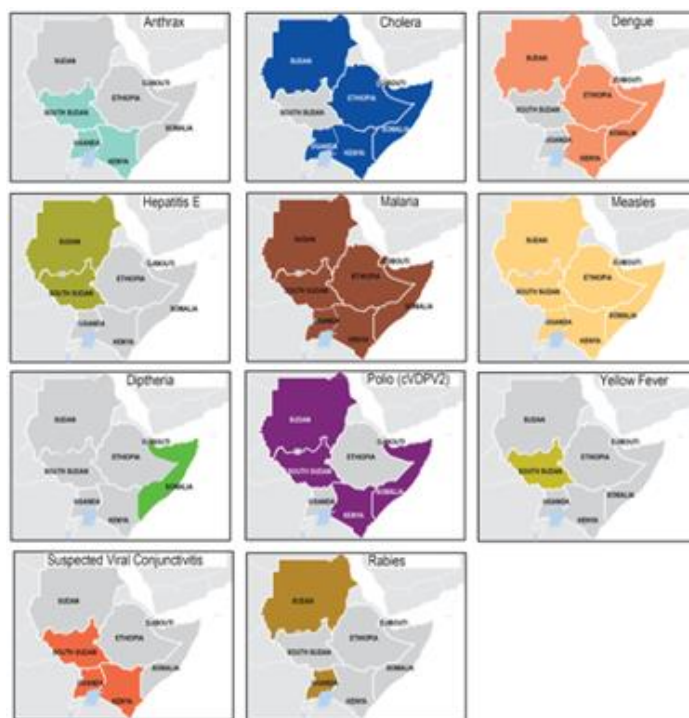
Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda are responding to cholera outbreaks, exacerbated by recent floods. In Ethiopia, 14,632 cases and 114 related deaths were reported from 90 woredas across 11 regions between 01 January and 28 April. In Kenya 44 cases were reported between 19 and 30 April, notably in Tana River county.

All the seven WHO Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) countries<sup>21</sup> are grappling with malaria. In Ethiopia, 1.5 million cases were reported as of 28 April, doubling last year's figure for the same period, while in Somalia, 206 new cases were reported in week 17.

Measles outbreaks were also active across the seven countries, with Ethiopia recording 20,580 cases and 162 related deaths as of 30 April, and with Somalia reporting 360 suspected cases in week 17. Meanwhile in Kenya, infection doubling time<sup>22</sup> reduced from 8.16 days (before the start of the March-May season) to 5.23 days from the onset of the season to date. In South Sudan, a steady decline after a peak in week 10 was observed, following several reactive vaccination campaigns.

Meanwhile, four countries are responding to dengue, with a surge in cases observed, following the floods witnessed during the October-December (OND) rainfall season. Currently, the outbreak is active in Dagahaley camp in Garissa county, Kenya, with a total of 88 cases reported as of 30 April 2024. Yellow fever remains active in South Sudan, with a total of 120 cases and 6 related deaths reported between December 2023 and 28 April.

### Ongoing disease outbreaks in the region, as of 30 April 2024



Source: WHO

<sup>21</sup> Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda

<sup>22</sup> refers to the time it takes for the number of cases or infections to double; a shorter doubling time indicates rapid growth

## 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 at risk of further deterioration, including in parts of Sudan where the risk of Famine is probable. Additionally, continuous monitoring of the drivers of food insecurity to provide timely early warning information for early action.
- Scale-up of 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, protection, 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 sexual and gender-based violence, as well as to care for and protect unaccompanied displaced children should also be put in place and scaled up.
- Scaling up of multi-sectoral response in light of the widespread flooding in various parts of the region to mitigate further negative impacts on lives and livelihoods. Additionally, continued monitoring and dissemination of flood-related early warning information.
- Strengthening of disease surveillance, particularly in flood-affected areas due to the increased risk of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, coupled with robust treatment and prevention measures.
- Scaling up the provision of essential health services, including routine immunization, considering the multiple outbreaks of vaccine

preventable diseases, as well as increased population displacement and damage to health facilities caused by flooding.

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

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