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HIGHLIGHTS

- New desert locust swarms expected in coming weeks
- Average to above average *Gu* rains expected in most parts of Somalia
- Preparedness necessary to minimize AWD/cholera risk in the upcoming *Gu* rainy season
- Access constraints persist in 2020

FIGURES

# of food insecure people (FSNAU: Feb. 2020)	4.1m
# of people in food insecure at emergency and crisis levels (IPC Phases 3 and 4, Feb. 2020)	1.3m
# of people in stress (IPC Phase 2, Feb. 2020)	2.8m
# of children projected to be malnourished	1.0m
# of internally displaced persons	2.6m

FUNDING

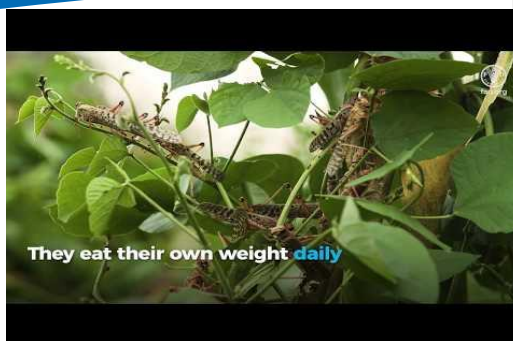
\$1.03 BILLION

requested in the 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)

\$17.5 MILLION

Funding received for the 2020 HRP

Source <http://fts.unocha.org>, 1 March 2020

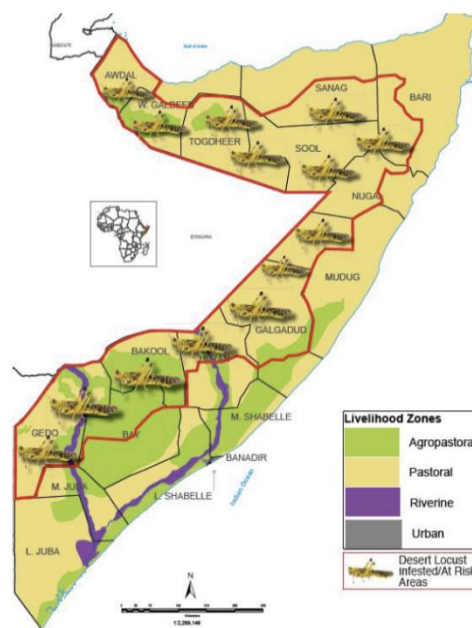


Desert locusts in the Horn of Africa. Video: FAO

Response to locust damage 15 times more expensive than prevention

The desert locust infestation in Somalia, like in several Horn of Africa countries, remains alarming. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the locusts are continuing to breed in the northeast of Somalia and new swarms are expected to form in coming weeks as the hoppers become immature adults, start flying and becoming voracious. In northeast Somalia, several generations of hopper bands are already present and will be laying eggs soon as the *Gu*' (April-June) rains approach.

While the locust upsurge is rapidly developing, its current impact on food security has been limited and localised so far. In the case of agricultural areas, most crops had already been harvested or the harvests were in later stages of maturity when the locust swarms passed through, thereby limiting losses. In pastoral areas, rangeland resources were well above average following abundant October–December seasonal rains, which has helped to offset the effects of locust damages thus far by replenishing pasture though as the dry season takes hold, pasture regeneration will diminish significantly.



Areas infested/ likely to be infested by desert locust in Somalia. Photo: FAO

Average to above average rains expected in April to June

Rainfall forecasts for the *Gu*' 2020 period indicate a strong possibility of average to above-average precipitation in most parts of Somalia. These *Gu*' rains are expected to maintain rangelands and support planting activities. However, they could enable a new wave of breeding and further spread of the locust pests. Pasture losses are expected in areas where swarms land, although rainfall in coming months is likely to partially continue offsetting the impact. Nonetheless, if the desert locusts continue to multiply, pasture regeneration will not be able to keep pace.

Analysis by FAO shows that the most significant food security impact will be felt by households in areas where swarms pass through and cause damage, especially those that are reliant on cropping activities and are already facing acute food insecurity (IPC

Phase 2+) due to existing high vulnerability and the effects of expected crop losses. On 27 February, FAO and the Somali Government released the “Desert Locust Crisis - Somalia Action Plan” which requires US\$32.2 million to implement through July 2020, though the requirement is expected to rise considerably if more livelihood support is required to help farmers impacted by the pests.

Regional response to locust infestation

FAO has adopted a regional response plan to the locust infestation and urgently needs \$138 million to respond in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. Like Somalia, these seven countries have experienced widespread infestation. The FAO appeal is aimed at helping governments to scale up control operations to mitigate the devastating impact of the pests as soon as possible and assisting those impacted.

FAO has adopted a regional response plan to the locust infestation and urgently needs US\$138 million to respond.

The required funding will ensure that activities to control the locusts can take to minimize damage to crops and pasture. It will also provide help for people whose crops or pastures are already affected, to protect their families and their livelihoods. As of 25 February, FAO had received commitments totalling \$33 million. WFP has estimated the cost of responding to the impact of locusts on food security alone to be at least 15 times higher than the cost of preventing the spread now.

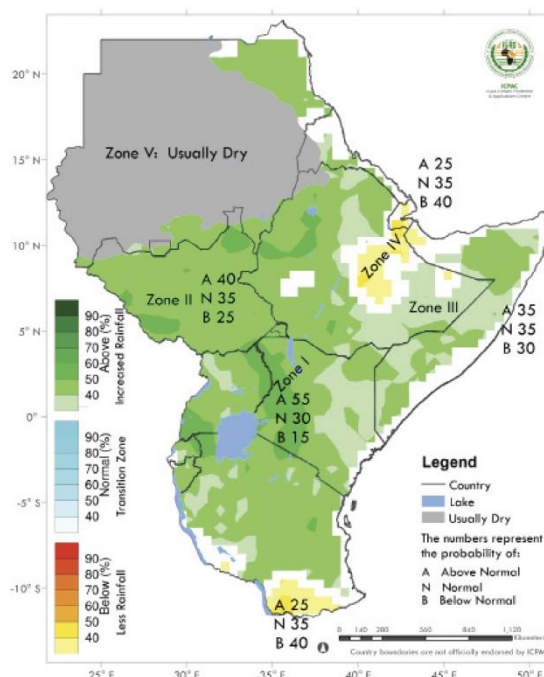
The desert locust is considered the world’s most dangerous migratory pest. A swarm of one square kilometer can consume the equivalent of crops that could feed 35,000 people for a year. The current infestation in Somalia is the worst in 25 years. On 2 February, the Somalia Government declared a national emergency over the locust infestation.

Average to above average Gu’ rains expected in most parts of Somalia

An earlier than usual start of rains is expected across most parts of Somalia, especially the southern regions. Delayed rainfall onset is expected over portions of northern Somalia. These areas are also likely to have prolonged dry periods a few weeks after the typical start of the season.

There is a strong possibility of the upcoming Gu’ rainfall being average and above average in most parts of Somalia with likely warmer than usual temperatures across the whole

According to the [January climate outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa](#) issued by FAO, there is a strong possibility of the Gu’ 2020 rainfall being average (35 per cent) or above average (35-40 per cent) in most parts of Somalia with temperatures likely to be warmer than usual across the country. This forecast applies as well to the Ethiopian highlands, which contribute significantly to the Juba and Shabelle river flows inside Somalia. Some areas in Somaliland have higher chances of below normal (40 per cent) to normal (35 per cent) rains.



Seasonal forecast March to May 2020. Source: IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Center (ICPAC)

Most annual rain in Somalia is recorded during the Gu’ season

The expected average to above average rains will boost crop production prospects and replenish pasture and water sources in most parts of Somalia. This comes after a largely

favorable rainy season during the October-December 2019 *Deyr* season that will contribute to continued recovery among pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods that have previously been adversely affected by recurrent drought conditions. According to FAO-managed Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM), riverine flooding along the Juba and Shabelle rivers is likely to occur. This will exacerbate the devastation that populations along the rivers experienced during the 2019 *Deyr* season without the benefit of a season in between to recover fully. Currently, there are many open river breakages along the two rivers, and this could worsen given the expected increase in river levels and consequent flooding during the forthcoming *Gu* season.

The *Gu* rains historically start in March/April and end at June across Somalia, depending on the north-south movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) which is the leading factor for the timing of rainfall in most parts of Africa. Most of the annual rainfall in Somalia - 75 per cent - is recorded during the *Gu* season. Therefore, the performance of *Gu* rains is critical for crop and livestock-dependent livelihoods across Somalia.

Preparedness key to limiting AWD/cholera risk

Since January 2020, at least 1,505 AWD/cholera cases have been reported across Somalia.

Since January 2020, at least 1,505 AWD/cholera cases have been reported across Somalia. This is similar to the situation at the same time in 2019. The most affected regions currently are Hiraan, Banadir, Bay and Lower Shabelle. Belet Weyne district of Hiran region has recorded most cases- 247 cases and four deaths, accounting for a case fatality rate (CFR) of 1.6 per cent which exceeds the emergency threshold of >1 per cent. WASH partners have scaled up response and no additional cases were reported since the second week of February

Belet Weyne was inundated by floods during the *Deyr* rains in November 2019, displacing most of the town residents. According to the WASH Cluster, 80 per cent of latrines in the town and surrounding villages either collapsed or were damaged. The floods also contaminated water sources. Partners believe advance preparedness in form of hygiene awareness-raising and rehabilitation of damaged water sources is necessary because there could be another AWD/cholera outbreak during the upcoming *Gu* rains.



An AWD/cholera patient recovering after treatment at Belet Weyne regional hospital. Photo: OCHA/ Ayub

A total of 6,709 cases of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD/cholera) were reported across Somalia in 2019, according the Early Warning, Alert and Response Network (eWARN) system of WHO. Most of the cases (86 per cent) were reported in the regions of Banadir (3,931), Gedo (1,012), Bay (453) and Bari (400). The peak periods in 2019 were during February and March, and again in April to July 2019. At least 31 per cent of cases were reported in children under 5 years of age, and 69 per cent in people above the age of 5.

Active surveillance measures are in-place along with the collection and transportation of stool samples to the federal laboratory in Mogadishu for testing and case confirmation.

In 2020, access constraints are still a key challenge with over 10 violent incidents against humanitarian operations recorded in January and February

Response activities scaled up in Belet Weyne

Activities to control the further spread of AWD/cholera have been scaled up. The state Ministry of Health has established a new Cholera Treatment Center (CTC) in Ceel Jaale neighborhood of Belet Weyne, which is where IDP population remain, to provide case management. Active surveillance measures are in-place along with the collection and transportation of stool samples to the Federal Reference Laboratory in Mogadishu for testing and case confirmation.

In addition, rapid response teams from the federal health ministry, local health authorities, WHO and partners remain vigilant; closely monitoring the situation, strengthening surveillance, verification and providing decentralized treatment. Health and WASH Cluster partners are working in close coordination on contact tracing and scale-up of community awareness on hygiene and sanitation in affected areas. Health workers have been updated on detection and reporting standards, case management protocols including early-treatment, use of oral rehydration salts for home and clinic-based care and infection prevention control in health care facilities. Actions to increase community and clinical care are being backed-up by the provision of medical supplies.

Prospects for humanitarian access remain limited

Somalia's unpredictable security context creates a challenging operational environment for humanitarian partners, hampering their ability to deliver assistance and restricting the ability of affected people to access services and assistance. In 2019, OCHA documented 151 violent incidents against humanitarian operations.

The incidents varied in nature, including directly targeted and incidental events ranging from physical violence leading to killings, kidnap for ransom, hijacks and ambush, looting and deliberate destruction of assets and facilities, arrest and detentions; and occupation of humanitarian facilities. The violent incidents resulted in the death of 12 staff, injury of 24, abduction of 21, arrest or temporary detention of 18, and the expulsion of two by authorities for alleged infractions.

In 2020, over 10 violent incidents against humanitarian operations were recorded in January and February. One third of the country is hard-to-reach by humanitarians, including 23 districts and 16 district capitals where around 1.3 million people in need reside. The indicators used to measure humanitarian access include road movements of humanitarian organisations, access by air, security incidents affecting aid agencies, stability of an area, bureaucratic or administrative impediments, checkpoints hindering movement of aid or personnel, security risk assessments and presence of international staff.



Humanitarian partners in Somalia face enormous challenges reaching people in need. Photo: OCHA

Federal NGO act in final stages

Reaching populations in areas controlled by armed non-state actors is extremely hard due to concerns for the safety of staff, opposition from other parties to the conflict and reported unwillingness of non-state actors to accept principled humanitarian operations in areas under their control, mainly in areas of Jubaland, South West, Hirshabelle and Galmudug states. Interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities is the second most

pronounced access constraints. Humanitarian organisations have to deal with multiple requests such as arbitrary taxation, involvement of authorities in contracting suppliers and service providers and interference in staff recruitment.

In 2020, restriction of movements for organizations, personnel or goods and violence have been reported. Three different directives addressed to humanitarian NGOs in Hirshabelle demanding registration of NGOs and projects were issued by three different state ministries. In January 2020, violence incidents against humanitarian staff were reported in Hirshabelle and Jubaland. It is hoped that a federal NGO act now under consideration can resolve a number of these issues, which relate to ill-defined operational procedures among authorities.

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