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MILLIONS ALREADY FACE STARVATION IN EASTERN HORN OF AFRICA, FIFTH CONSECUTIVE SEASON OF DROUGHT NOW FORECAST

Washington, D.C. – An exceptional four-season drought – compounded by the effects of ongoing conflict, COVID-19, price spikes, and desert locusts – has left millions of people facing the threat of starvation in the eastern Horn of Africa. Multiple agencies are sounding the alarm that food assistance must be immediately scaled up and sustained to prevent loss of life, loss of livelihoods, and the risk of famine. Furthermore, forecasts indicate a strong likelihood of a fifth failed rainy season later this year.

“There are already alarming levels of food insecurity being reported in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, and FEWS NET recently issued alerts for all three countries,” FEWS NET Team Leader Kiersten Johnson said. “Millions of people in the eastern Horn of Africa are experiencing intensifying hunger, and another failed rainy season this year could make an already dire situation catastrophic.”

Global and regional meteorological groups have described this year’s failed March-April-May (MAM) rainy season as unprecedented and likely to be the driest on record due to the combination of persistence, intensity, extent, and heat. The drought has driven sharp increases in livestock deaths, and according to the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG), [16.7 million people in the region](#) currently face high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+), and that number could increase to 20 million by September.

“From a climatic perspective alone, this drought has been exceptionally intense,” Johnson said. “But factoring in all of the other concurrent shocks – including regional conflicts and the rising global costs of food, fuel, and fertilizer as a result of the war in Ukraine – the impacts are devastating.”

In a recent [joint statement](#) by the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Center (ICPAC), the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), and the World Food Program (WFP), experts warned that a fifth consecutive season of drought during this year’s October-November-December (OND) rainy season could exacerbate already critical levels of food insecurity and acute malnutrition in the region.

The new joint statement outlines how meteorological agencies came to a consensus on the likelihood of a fifth consecutive season of drought later this year. The statement also calls on governments and humanitarian actors to sustain assistance to the eastern Horn of Africa through at least mid-2023 to prevent a protracted, worsening humanitarian emergency.

“People in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia are already facing the threat of starvation, and that threat only becomes more significant the longer we wait to address it,” Johnson said.

The joint statement and additional reports on the eastern Horn of Africa can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

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About FEWS NET: FEWS NET, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, is a leading provider of early warning and analysis on acute food insecurity around the world. Created in 1985 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in response to devastating famines in East and West Africa, FEWS NET provides unbiased, evidence-based analysis to governments and relief agencies who plan for and respond to humanitarian crises. FEWS NET analysts and specialists work with scientists, government ministries, international agencies, and NGOs to track and publicly report on conditions in the world's most food-insecure countries. The content of this press release does not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government. *For more information, visit: www.fews.net.*