

## *Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5)*

**What is a *risk of Famine*?** An area faces a *risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5)* when Famine (IPC Phase 5) is not the most likely scenario, but there is a credible alternative scenario in which Famine would likely occur.

**What are the degrees of risk and what is FEWS NET’s threshold for stating an area faces a *risk of Famine*?** A *risk of Famine* is a statement calling attention to the potential for an alternate, non-most-likely scenario to occur in which Famine would become likely. The risk is therefore dependent on the likelihood of that alternate, non-most-likely scenario occurring. All countries face some degree of risk that a scenario could happen where Famine would become likely. However, FEWS NET communicates that an area is facing a *risk of Famine* when the likelihood of the alternative scenario – under which Famine would likely occur – is considered moderate.

Likelihood a scenario - in which Famine is the likely outcome - occurs	Summary	Communication approach
<b>Very low</b>	Although the scenario is possible, the likelihood that the scenario comes to fruition is very low; FEWS NET does not consider it a <i>credible</i> alternative scenario.	FEWS NET does not communicate a <i>risk of Famine</i>
<b>Low</b>	The risk of this scenario is on our radar. Although the likelihood of the scenario coming to fruition is increasing, it is still low enough that FEWS NET does not consider it a <i>credible</i> alternative scenario.	
<b>Moderate</b>	There is a credible alternative scenario under which Famine would become likely. The scenario is not the most likely scenario but has a moderate likelihood of occurrence.	FEWS NET communicates a <i>risk of Famine</i>
<b>High</b>	A scenario with a high or very high likelihood of occurring would be the most likely scenario.	Famine (or Famine Likely or Famine possible) would be classified
<b>Very high</b>		

**How does FEWS NET determine the difference between a low and moderate likelihood of occurrence?** As is done to determine the most likely scenario, FEWS NET relies on a convergence of evidence, informed by ground information, forecasts, and historical experience to understand the likelihood of a scenario’s occurrence.

- **Example:** Severe drought over the Horn of Africa often leads to concerns that Famine could occur. While drought is always possible, there are some years in which there is a *low* likelihood of severe drought and other years in which there is a *moderate* likelihood of severe drought. FEWS NET does not seek to include a long-standing *risk of Famine* statement in the Horn of Africa because there is always the potential for severe drought at some point in the future. Rather, FEWS NET would indicate there is a *risk of Famine* when there is a *moderate* likelihood of severe drought, and there is a credible alternative scenario in which the impacts of that drought would result in Famine in the projection period.

**What are the steps to determining if there is a *risk of Famine* in a given area?** In Step 8 of the [Scenario Development](#) process, FEWS NET describes events that could change the most-likely scenario. These events are not considered most likely but are determined to have a credible (*moderate*) chance of occurring in the projection period. If the likely outcome of the credible alternative scenario is Famine, it is determined that area is facing a *risk of Famine*.

**What is the validity period of a *risk of Famine*?** As the *risk of Famine* is assessed as a part of FEWS NET’s projection period, it is typically valid for up to an 8-month projection period. The *risk of Famine* is reassessed - at a minimum- every four months with each Outlook cycle, but it may be evaluated more frequently if needed. As such, a *risk of Famine* statement may be removed or added to any zone at any time, as conditions evolve.