

KENYA Food Security Outlook Update

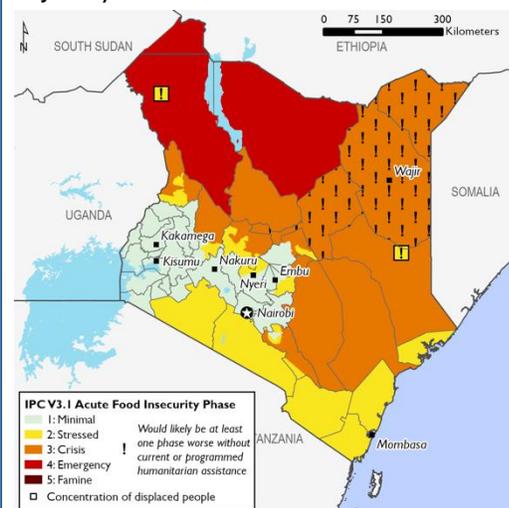
December 2022

High levels of acute food insecurity prevail following fifth consecutive below-average rainy season

KEY MESSAGES

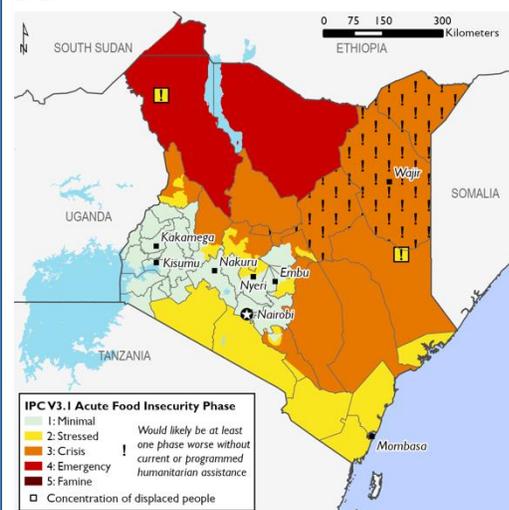
- Acute food insecurity remains elevated across Kenya due to the impacts of the five-season drought on multiple below-average crop and livestock production seasons and the impacts of high inflation on household purchasing power. Since October, humanitarians have secured additional funding for emergency food assistance distributions, and at least 25 percent of the population in predominantly pastoral counties are expected to receive an in-kind or cash ration equivalent to at least 25 percent of their monthly kilocalorie needs through at least June. However, the scale of need is expected to outpace the impact of food assistance in Turkana and Marsabit counties, where drought impacts are most severe.
- In the pastoral areas, Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes will likely remain widespread as households continue to have limited access to food and income and rely on government and humanitarian assistance. Although below-average rainfall amounts were minimally sufficient to stabilize the availability of forage and water resources, these resources remain well below normal, driving atypical livestock migration in search of pasture, browse, and water. With livestock body conditions ranging from fair to very poor, milk production ranges from around 15 to 80 percent below average in most pastoral areas and is negligible in Turkana. Low household income from livestock production and high maize prices have driven a 30-70 decline in household purchasing power – measured by the goat-to-maize terms of trade – compared to the five-year average.
- In the marginal agricultural areas, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will likely persist as delayed and cumulatively below-average rainfall from October to December is expected to result in a 10-50 percent below-average harvest in February. Many households are relying on off-farm income sources, but these are also limited by the impacts of inflation and increased competition for work opportunities. As a result of reduced income and high food prices, households are expected to either face food consumption gaps or forego non-food expenditures to purchase sufficient food.
- FEWS NET continues to closely monitor the potential for the **risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5)** in northern and eastern pastoral areas. At this time, the delivery of emergency assistance and safety nets is expected to continue beyond FEWS NET's December 2022-May 2023 scenario period, and the credibility of a scenario in which no assistance or safety nets reaches populations of high concern remains low. Consequently, FEWS NET assesses the risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) remains low. However, significant delays or interruptions in assistance would likely lead to an increase in the population facing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and some households in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in Turkana and Marsabit.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2022 to January 2023



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2023



Source: FEWS NET

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners.

CURRENT SITUATION

Rainfall performance: Following a late onset to the October to December short rains, cumulative rainfall through December 20 was less than 55 percent to 85 percent of the 30-year average across most of Kenya (Figure 1). The rainfall deficit areas are more pronounced in the northwestern, northern, and northeastern pastoral livelihood zones, along with the southeastern marginal agricultural livelihood zone. In western Kenya and in some localized areas across the country, cumulative rainfall is 105 to 145 percent of the 30-year average, with localized areas receiving over 145 percent of the 30-year average.

Crop production: Reports from the Ministry of Agriculture indicate that in the high and medium rainfall areas of western Kenya and the Rift Valley, harvesting of the long rains crops is ongoing. In the warmer regions of western Kenya, the green maize harvest for the short rains crops is taking place. National maize production is estimated to be around 3 million tons, around 15 percent below the five-year average, due to poor temporal distribution of rainfall during the long rains and pest damage. However, a more conclusive maize production estimate is expected by February 2023 following the bi-annual national assessment.

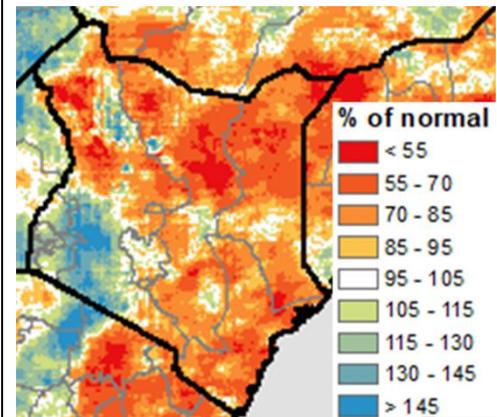
In Kenya, around 80 percent of Kenya's wheat production occurs during the long rains, with the harvest typically occurring in October and November. Wheat is primarily grown in Narok, Nakuru, and Uasin Gishu, in southwestern and western Kenya. [National production of wheat](#) is expected to be around 300,000 tons, slightly lower than the five-year average of 305,000 tons. Although fusarium head blight is a risk to wheat production, key informants indicate that it is considered endemic and there is no widespread concern about its impact on wheat production this year.

In the marginal agricultural areas, the 2022 October to December short rains have been unfavorable for crop production, due to delayed onsets, poor temporal distribution, and below-average cumulative rainfall. According to NDMA field reports, land preparation and planting were delayed from October, the typical start of planting, to mid to late November. Consequently, crops are currently at the early vegetative stages in most areas rather than at the flowering and pod-filling stages for legumes and late vegetative to tasseling stages for cereals. Additionally, the areas planted with food crops by poor households are below average as constrained incomes following consecutive below-average harvest seasons is limiting access to seeds and other inputs. Consequently, ongoing agricultural activities, such as weeding, are providing below-average incomes due to limited labor opportunities and an oversupply of labor. This has resulted in households maintaining an unusually high dependence on income from off-farm activities, such as petty trade.

Livestock production: Although the short rains are providing short-term stabilization to rangeland resources, pasture and water availability remain well-below average. This is continuing to drive atypical livestock migration within pastoral livelihood zones and to neighboring agropastoral and marginal agricultural areas, with cross-border migrations also being reported into southern Somalia, southern Ethiopia, and eastern Uganda. According to the satellite-derived Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), vegetation greenness across much of northern Kenya and isolated parts of southern Kenya is less than 60 percent of the 10-year mean (Figure 2). However, in western, central, and eastern Kenya, vegetation greenness ranges from normal to above average, 95 to over 110 percent of the average, supported by the regeneration of vegetation during the short rains and the green-up short rain crops.

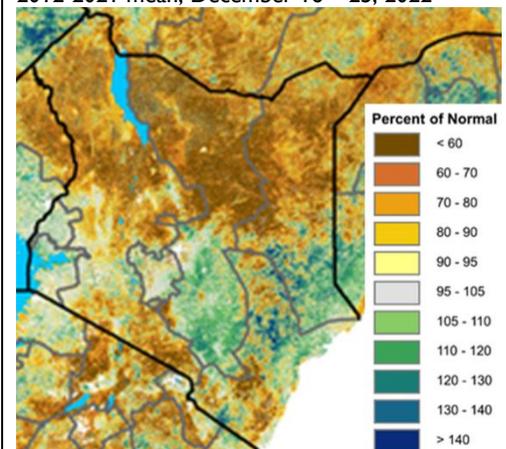
Livestock body conditions and productivity remain poor overall due to below-average forage and water availability and long trekking distances. According to NDMA monthly bulletins, livestock, including camels, are weak and emaciated, and livestock deaths are being reported. NDMA sentinel sites also report that although return trekking distances for livestock from grazing areas to water sources have declined, most livestock are still traveling 12 to 18 kilometers, around 40 to 70 percent above the

Figure 1. CHIRPS rainfall accumulation anomaly (mm) percent of normal compared to 1981-2010 mean, October 1 – December 20, 2022



Source: FEWS NET

Figure 2. eVIIRS NDVI as a percent of the 2012-2021 mean, December 16 – 25, 2022



Source: FEWS NET/USGS

three-year average. In Marsabit, one of the most drought-affected areas, trekking distances are still around 30.5 kilometers, more than twice the three-year average. However, in Garissa, trekking distances declined to 20 percent below the three-year average following regeneration during the short rains.

Livestock milk production was largely stable in Isiolo, Wajir, and Marsabit, ranging between 0.25 to 0.5 liters per day per household, around 70 to 90 percent below normal production. In Turkana and Samburu, milk production remains negligible, marking almost a year without milk. However, in Mandera and Garissa, milk production increased slightly to 1 and 1.9 liters, respectively, per household per day, around 15 and 60 percent lower than the three-year averages, respectively.

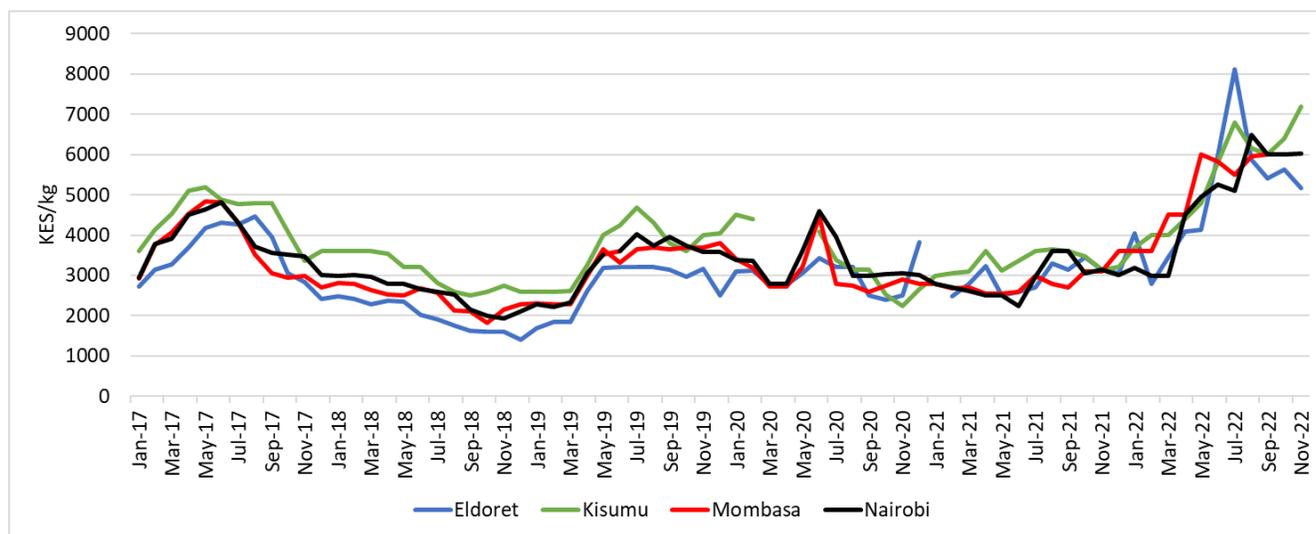
Domestic water availability: In the pastoral and marginal agricultural areas, household water availability remains low; although, there has been some replenishment of open water sources and increased opportunities to collect water from roof-catchments. In pastoral areas, the below-average rainfall has slightly reduced return trekking distances for household water access, although it remains largely 40 to 70 percent above the three-year average and double the average in Wajir. While return trekking distances to water sources in pastoral areas range from 10 to 14 kilometers, in Garissa and Isiolo, households are trekking roughly 3 to 6 kilometers for water due to improved recharge of water resources and better access to boreholes. In the marginal agricultural areas, the return trekking distances to watering points for households were 3 to 8 km in November, compared to the 1 to 5 kilometer average. Additionally, waiting times are 20 to 120 minutes compared to 10 to 45 minutes normally, further limiting household engagement in income-earning opportunities or other essential household activities, such as child care and food preparation.

Markets and trade: Staple food prices remain significantly above average due to high fuel and transportation costs, high inflation rates, and high global maize prices. In Nairobi, Kisumu, Eldoret, and Mombasa, the major urban consumption markets, wholesale maize prices are around 95 to 130 percent above the five-year average, with mixed stability between October and November. The stability is driven by slightly improved availability of maize harvests from the unimodal areas of western Kenya and the Rift Valley, along with increased demand in Kisumu due to depleted household stocks before the short harvest period (Figure 3).

Meanwhile, wholesale dry bean prices were around 30 to 45 percent above the five-year averages across the monitored urban markets, except for Kisumu market where bean prices were 90 percent above average due to higher-priced imports from Uganda, depletion of the local stocks, and increased demand. Maize flour, a staple in the urban areas, remains at a five-year high of 200 KES (1.62 USD) per 2 kg packet compared to a normal of between 100-115 KES (0.81-0.93 USD), which has contributed to the reduction in household purchasing power in urban areas.

Across the marginal agricultural areas, high market demand following successive below-average production seasons, increased transportation costs from high fuel prices, and declining cross-border imports from Tanzania and Uganda are keeping retail staple food prices elevated and constraining household food access. In November, retail maize prices were 70 to around 115

Figure 3. Wholesale white maize prices in select markets, January 2017-November 2022



Source: FEWS NET using Ministry of Agriculture data

percent above the five-year average in most monitored markets, except in Kilifi and Lamu where prices were around 40 to 45 percent above average. Similarly, dry bean prices were 60 to 90 percent above the five-year average. In the pastoral areas, maize retail prices are around 30 to 90 percent above the five-year averages, constraining household purchasing power. In most pastoral monitored markets, maize is retailing at 100 to 118 KES/kg (0.81 to 0.96 USD/kg) due to high demand and transport costs, but in Marsabit, maize is retailing at 85 KES/kg (0.69 USD/kg), moderated by imports from Ethiopia through Moyale.

Livestock prices have remained fairly stable but remain below-average due to reduced demand and poor livestock body conditions. In November, the price of a medium-sized goat was 19 to 43 percent lower than the five-year average, except in Samburu and Garissa, where goat prices are similar to the five-year average due to relatively better forage and water conditions. As a result of the high maize prices and below-average goat prices, the goat-to-maize terms of trade is 33 to 67 percent below the five-year average, and indicative of significantly below-average household food access.

Pastoral area outcomes: According to [November NDMA sentinel site data](#), food consumption remains insufficient despite ongoing levels of assistance. While food assistance is mitigating worse outcomes, particularly in Wajir, Isiolo, and Mandera, the severity of need is outpacing food assistance in the highly drought-affected areas of Turkana and Marsabit. An increasing number of households are recording a borderline or poor FCS in Wajir, Turkana, and Marsabit due to below-average food consumption. In other pastoral counties, the proportion of pastoral households reporting a borderline or poor FCS remained stable or improved marginally due to stable and improving milk consumption. Poor households in these areas are also engaging in consumption coping strategies such as sending household members to eat elsewhere, eating less preferred or less expensive foods, and reducing meal frequency and food portions.

The reduction in food consumption is exacerbating already chronically high levels of acute malnutrition in pastoral areas of Kenya. Nutrition surveillance data from the NDMA indicates that the prevalence of acute malnutrition is increasing in Turkana, Isiolo and Wajir, evidenced by an above-average and increasing proportion of children recording a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of less than 135mm in most pastoral areas. The deterioration in nutrition outcomes is being driven by a severe reduction in the quantity and quality of food consumed, particularly low to no milk consumption. Consistently high morbidity levels are also aggravating the prevalence of acute malnutrition, with Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Turkana West, and Turkana Central likely facing Critical (global acute malnutrition (GAM) weight-for-height z-score (WHZ) of 15 to 29.9 percent) acute malnutrition. In Marsabit and in Turkana North and Turkana South sub-counties, the prevalence of Extremely Critical (GAM WHZ > 30 percent) acute malnutrition is likely to continue.

Humanitarian assistance, including WFP's *Lisha Jamii* Programme, is providing an equivalent of 50 percent of a full monthly ration to food-insecure households across the pastoral areas, is mitigating worse food security outcomes in Mandera, Isiolo, and Wajir counties, driving area-level Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes. However, generally, the protracted low access to income from livestock and milk and high food prices continue to drive widespread Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) area-level outcomes across pastoral areas.

Marginal agricultural area outcomes: Due to depleted household stocks and below-average incomes, poor households in marginal agricultural areas continue to face constrained purchasing power and access to food. Over 20 percent of households across all counties in marginal agricultural areas of Kenya are reporting a borderline FCS, while in some counties, over 20 percent of households are experiencing a poor FCS and households are eating one to two meals per day consisting of one to two food groups. To cope, households are consuming less preferred or less expensive foods, reducing portion sizes, and reducing the number of meals consumed per day. However, in Lamu, Meru (Meru North), Tharaka Nithi (Tharaka), and Embu (Mbeere), poor households are also restricting consumption by adults so that small children can eat, indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes.

The proportion of children at risk of malnutrition, measured by MUAC <135mm, is increasing and remains largely above the five-year average, particularly in Tharaka Nithi (Tharaka) where the proportion of children with a MUAC <135 mm is double the average. With significantly below-average household food stocks, unseasonably low household incomes, and above-average staple food prices, most poor households are minimally meeting their food needs but are unable to afford non-food expenditures without engaging in coping strategies, indicative of Stressed (IPC phase 2) acute food insecurity. However, in Meru (Meru North), Tharaka Nithi (Tharaka), Kitui, and Makueni counties, at least one in five households are engaging in coping strategies indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity to fill food consumption gaps.

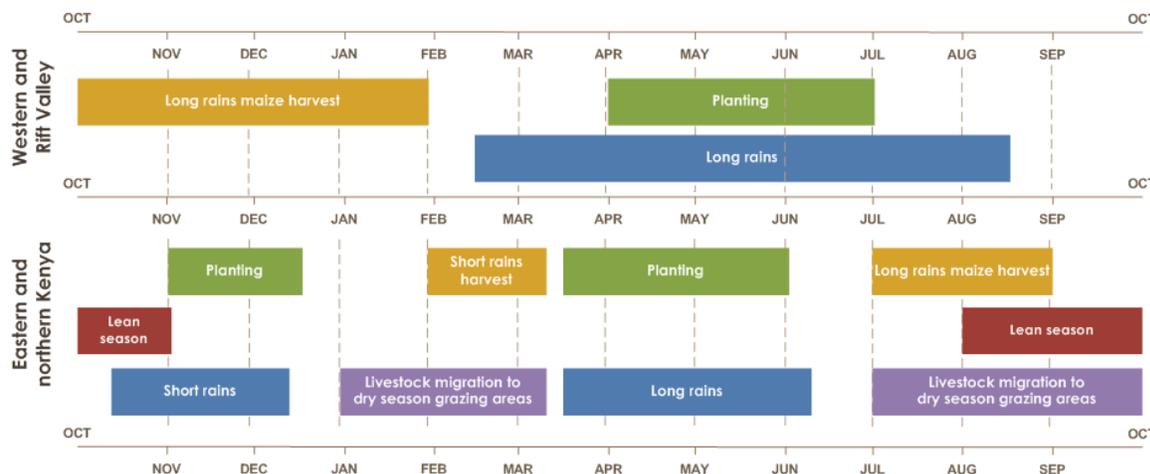
UPDATED ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET's most likely scenario for the [Kenya Food Security Outlook for October 2022 to](#)

May 2023 remain unchanged apart from the following:

WFP has secured additional funding for the already ongoing *Lisha Jamii* Programme, which is expected to continue for an additional six months, targeting at least 79,280 food insecure households, approximately 10 percent of the population in Turkana, Garissa, Isiolo, Samburu, Wajir, Mandera, and Marsabit (Priority 1), with Tana River, Baringo, Kitui, Kwale, and Kilifi considered Priority 2 counties. Household will receive an in-kind or cash ration equivalent to 50 percent of their monthly kilocalorie needs. The humanitarian assistance will primarily target households facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels of acute food insecurity. Other ongoing assistance programs are expected to continue through the outlook period, cumulatively reaching at least 25 percent of pastoral households.

SEASONAL CALENDAR FOR A TYPICAL YEAR



Source: FEWS NET

PROJECTED OUTLOOK THROUGH MAY 2023

In pastoral areas, the below-average October to December short rains are likely to result in limited forage regeneration, livestock remaining away from homesteads in the dry-season grazing areas, and continued limited milk availability for households. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will prevail across several pastoral areas, while humanitarian assistance is expected to prevent worse outcomes in Mandera, Wajir, and Isiolo, where Crisis! (IPC Phase 3!) outcomes are expected. In Turkana and Marsabit, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) acute food insecurity will continue, driven by low livestock productivity and low household income and purchasing power. High levels of acute malnutrition are expected to continue across Turkana, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, and Samburu. High staple food prices and low livestock prices will continue to reduce household food access and income, causing households to seek additional income from non-livestock-related sources that are constrained by increased competition and inflation. The January to February dry period is expected to erode the limited improvements in rangeland resources, further reducing livestock productivity and household access to food and income. Faced with below average purchasing power, households will be forced to apply both consumption and livelihood coping strategies to access food and income.

From late March onward, the likely below-average March to May long rains will only alleviate shortages in rangeland resources in the short-term, keeping livestock in dry-season grazing areas. Slight improvements to livestock body conditions will only improve livestock prices marginally. High staple food prices will keep goat-to-maize terms of trade below the five-year averages and keep household food access and consumption below average through May. Continued humanitarian assistance and ongoing distribution of government safety nets will mitigate severe reductions in household food and income sources for beneficiary households, most likely preventing worse outcomes in the counties of Mandera, Wajir, and Isiolo, where Crisis! (IPC Phase 3) is anticipated through May. However, due to the greater severity of need in Turkana and Marsabit, poor households will depend on more severe, unsustainable coping strategies and be unable to minimize food gaps, indicative of Emergency (IPC Phase 4) despite planned assistance. Elsewhere, widespread area-level Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected.

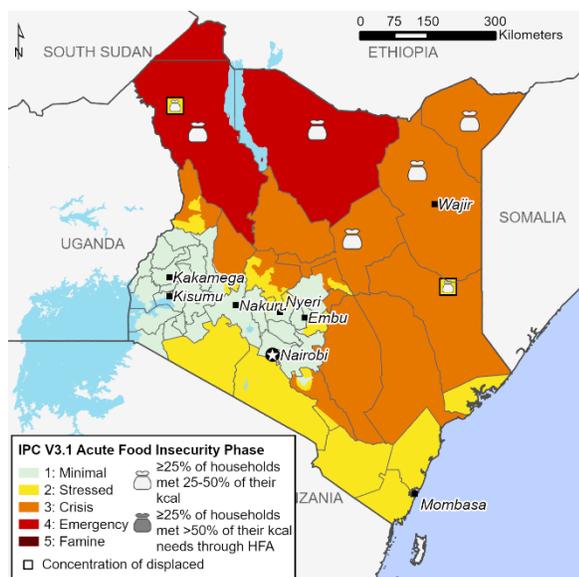
In the marginal agricultural areas, the anticipated below-average short rains harvest will temporarily lower household dependency on market purchases in February and March 2023, and produce transient price declines. However, staple food prices are expected to remain above average through May 2023. Household income from crop sales will remain below average,

as will agricultural wage labor for the March to May long rains season, due to reduced access to seeds and other inputs and lower liquidity among better-off households following successive below-average production seasons. Although households are likely to increase their reliance on other sources of income, such as the sale and production of charcoal and other off-farm income, this is unlikely to bridge income deficits nor improve food access. As a result, poor households will continue to employ consumption-based coping strategies indicative of Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity, such as reducing meal frequency and food portions, eating less preferred foods, and relying on help from friends and relatives. Households are also likely to engage in livelihood-coping strategies indicative of Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels of acute food insecurity, such as borrowing money, purchasing food on credit, and reducing expenses on health and veterinary services. Consequently, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are likely.

MOST LIKELY FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES AND AREAS RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE*

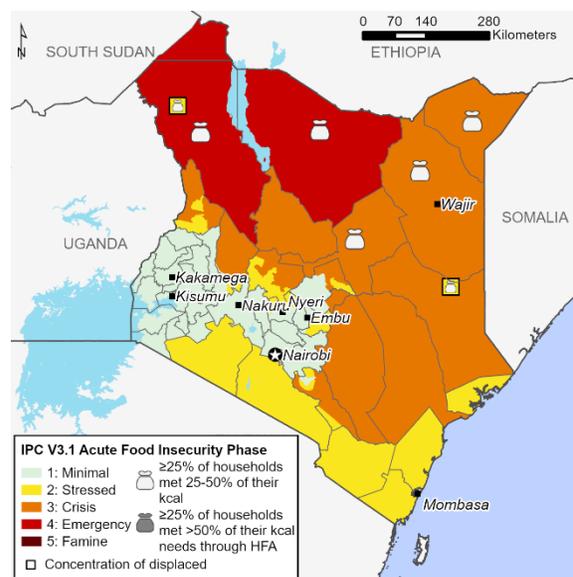
Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.1 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. ☹️ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25–50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). ☹️ indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in the absence of current or programmed humanitarian assistance.

Projected food security outcomes, December 2022 to January 2023



Source: FEWS NET

Projected food security outcomes, February to May 2023



Source: FEWS NET

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Recommended Citation: FEWS NET. Kenya Food Security Outlook Update December 2022: High levels of acute food insecurity prevail following fifth consecutive below-average rainy season, 2022.

ABOUT THIS UPDATE

This report covers current conditions as well as changes to the projected outlook for food insecurity in this country. It updates the FEWS NET’s Food Security Outlook, which is published three times per year. Learn more about our work [here](#).