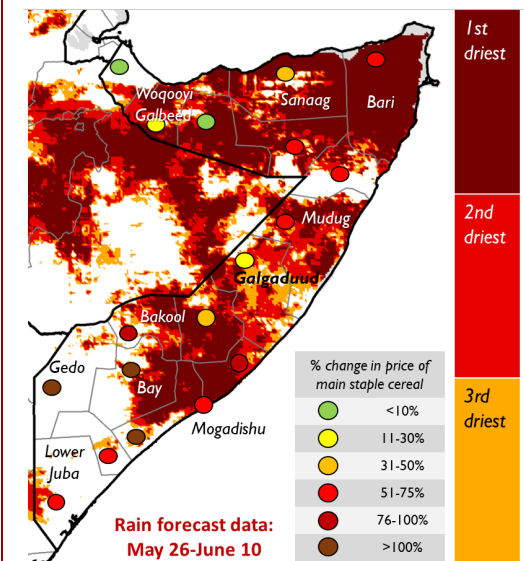


Somalia faces Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) as acute malnutrition and mortality levels rise

Multiple areas of Somalia face a **Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5)** amid an exceptionally severe drought, soaring staple food prices, and heightened conflict and insecurity. The April to June *gu* rains are performing very poorly, and millions of people are experiencing intensifying hunger due to widespread livestock emaciation and death, low cropping levels, and extreme declines in household purchasing power. Representative survey data collected by FSNAU and WFP in late April/early May also indicate an alarming increase in child acute malnutrition and child and adult mortality levels in southern Somalia, despite the delivery of food assistance and community support during *Ramadan* and *Eid*. While Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes – with some households in **Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)** – are projected in the worst-affected areas through September, there is high concern that more extreme acute food insecurity could occur if crop and livestock production fails, food prices rise even further, and food aid does not reach populations in need. Little to no rainfall is forecast through early June, and the chances of crop and livestock production failure are rising. Furthermore, **weather forecast models** are signaling an elevated likelihood that the October to December 2022 *deyr* rains will also be below average, setting the stage for a record-breaking five-season drought. These events would only increase the severity and magnitude of food insecurity, with over seven million people likely to need food aid into 2023. A sustained scale-up of humanitarian aid is needed to save lives and livelihoods and avert the Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5).

Figure 1. Base map shows the ranking of observed plus forecast rainfall for April 1 - June 10, 2022, on the 1981-2020 record. Circles show the change in the price of the main staple cereal (rice, maize, or sorghum) in each regional reference market in April 2022 compared to the five-year (2017-2021) average.



Source: FEWS NET, FSNAU, and Climate Hazards Center

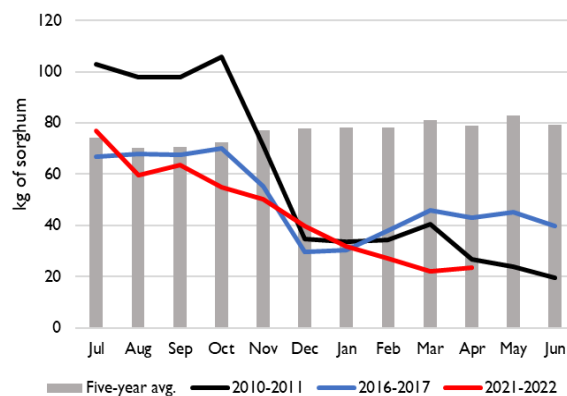
Much of Somalia has received minimal rainfall during the peak of the *gu* rainfall season, with current deficits amounting to 40-70 percent below average. The season ranks among the top three driest on record across northern, central, and parts of southern Somalia (Figure 1), where the severity of drought conditions mirrors 2010/2011 and 2016/2017. The availability of vegetation at this point in the *gu* season is among the lowest recorded in at least 10 years across most of the country, and water scarcity is widespread. In several regions, the price of purchasing potable water from water trucks has surged by 30-65 percent compared to April of last year, while water prices have doubled in parts of Bakool and Galgaduud regions.

The drought, exacerbated by an uptick in conflict and insecurity in south-central Somalia since late 2021, has exacted a severe toll on household income from livestock production while limiting household capacity to plant cereal or cash crops for the *gu* harvest in July. Pasture and fodder are scarce, and most households can no longer afford to purchase grains to hand-feed weak livestock. As a result, livestock emaciation and excess livestock deaths are widely reported, especially in Bakool, Gedo, central Somalia, and parts of northern Somalia, where livestock mortality rates will likely reach at least 10-30 percent by September. Many **displaced rural households** have lost or sold most or all their livestock. In agropastoral and riverine areas, area planted and crop growth are far below normal due to the poor rains, the displacement of households away from their farms, and farmers' reduced ability to afford seeds, irrigation, and other inputs. Reduced demand for agricultural labor has also driven down wages by as much as 25-35 percent for poor households who typically rely on this income source. Overall, the *gu* cereal harvest will likely be 40-60 percent below average, making it the fifth consecutive below-average harvest. In 2011 and 2017, the *gu* cereal harvest was only the second and third consecutive below-average harvest, respectively.

Record-high global food prices have also had an outsized impact on Somalia, which typically imports over half of its national food supply. In April, staple cereal and cooking oil prices were 25-160 percent above normal levels in most areas (Figure 1),

rendering the cost of sufficient food out of reach for most rural households and low-income urban households. Food prices have risen most sharply in the south, such as in Bay Region, where sorghum and maize prices are only marginally superseded by the records set in 2011. Prices are highest in the conflict-affected town of Xudur, Bakool Region, where the price of a kilogram of maize or sorghum is at record-high levels (24,000-27,000 SOS). In instances where a poor household in southern Somalia may still have a goat that is healthy enough to sell, the amount of cereal they can purchase with that income has dropped by 50-75 percent. As a result, household purchasing power is near the lows last observed in 2011 (Figure 2), particularly in Bakool, Gedo, Bay, and Middle Juba. While purchasing power has fallen less sharply in north-central Somalia, many households have low livestock holdings and lack healthy livestock to sell. Moreover, below-average local and regional harvest prospects and the global food price outlook suggest staple food prices in Somalia will remain atypically high or rise even further in the coming months.

Figure 2. Amount of red sorghum that can be purchased with the income earned from the sale of one goat in Xudur, Bakool Region, during the current drought compared to the recent average and the past two drought emergencies.



Source: FEWS NET and FSNAU

With many drivers of acute food insecurity tracking the trends observed during the 2010/2011 and 2016/2017 droughts, it is clear humanitarian assistance has played a significant role in moderating the severity of food insecurity so far this year. On average, 2.4 million people have received food assistance monthly since January 2022. However, the scale of need far outstrips funded food assistance plans through the remainder of the year, and pipeline breaks to food aid are expected after June. The Somalia 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan for food security is only twenty percent funded as of late May, compared to 30 percent of requested funding received by April 2017. Nutrition programming is also underfunded, compelling WFP to [suspend all preventive nutrition interventions](#) in Somalia and reduce services for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition.

Given anticipated pipeline breaks, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected to be widespread through the remainder of 2022, with more than 200,000 people likely to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). There is also a risk that levels of extreme hunger, acute malnutrition, and mortality could reach the [Famine \(IPC Phase 5\)](#) thresholds if crop and livestock production for the current *gu* season fails amid high and rising food prices and if food assistance does not reach the populations most in need. The areas of highest concern for a Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) include several agropastoral areas in Bay and Bakool regions, the livelihood zones of *Addun Pastoral* and central and southern *Hawd Pastoral*, and sites hosting drought-displaced populations in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Dhusamareb, and Galkacyo. Acute malnutrition and mortality levels have already reached atypically high levels in much of southern and central Somalia, and acute malnutrition case admissions among children under age five rose by over 40 percent in January-April 2022 compared to the same period of last year. In Bay Region, adult and child mortality have risen above the Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) levels, respectively, since December. The forecast of below-average 2022 *deyr* rains further suggests food security conditions will not improve until mid-2023 at the earliest. Immediate action is required to scale-up and sustain humanitarian assistance through at least the end of 2022 to prevent rising levels of acute food insecurity, mitigate the loss of life, and avert the Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5).

FEWS NET and FSNAU: Somalia Food Security Alert: Somalia faces increased Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) as acute malnutrition and mortality levels rise, May 31, 2021.