

## Somalia faces Risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) as multi-season drought and soaring food prices lead to worsening acute food insecurity and malnutrition

**April 8, 2022, Mogadishu** – Worsening drought is putting some areas across Somalia at risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) through June 2022 if the current April to June Gu season rains fail, food prices continue to rise sharply and humanitarian assistance is not scaled up to reach the country's most vulnerable populations. These areas include Hawd Pastoral of Central and Hiran, Addun Pastoral of Northeast and Central, Bay Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral and IDP settlements in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Dhusamareb.

Acute food insecurity in Somalia has drastically worsened since the beginning of 2022, with an estimated 4.8 million people (or 31% of the total population) already experiencing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) outcomes. Further and faster deterioration of the food security and nutrition situation is expected during the April to June 2022 projection period, when more than 6 million people (or 38% of the total population) are expected to face Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or higher) outcomes, including 1.7 million people likely in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and over 81,000 people likely in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). In addition to the six population groups that face the risk of Famine, other areas of humanitarian concern include Southern Agropastoral, Southern Rain-fed Agropastoral of Middle and Lower Juba, and Togdheer Agropastoral livelihood zones as well as IDP settlements in Burao, Garoowe, Belet Weyne, Doolow and Kismaayo, all of which face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between April and June 2022.

Current levels of humanitarian food assistance, which reached 1.3 million people in January and 2 million people in February, are quickly being outpaced by the rapid increase in the size of the food insecure population, influx of newly displaced people, widening of household food consumption gaps, loss of livelihood assets, and worsening acute malnutrition. Past trends demonstrate the potential for multi-season droughts to lead to famine in Somalia, as observed in 2010-2011 when an estimated 260,000 people died of hunger-related causes. Timely humanitarian action prevented more extreme outcomes during the severe drought of 2016-2017. Urgent and timely scaling up of humanitarian assistance is required to prevent extreme food security and nutrition outcomes, including the risk of Famine between now and June 2022. Moreover, humanitarian needs are expected to remain high through late 2022.

The conclusions above are based on updated IPC and Famine Risk Analyses conducted in late March/early April 2022 by food security and nutrition experts drawn from the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management (MOHADM) of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU/FAO), Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET), World Food Programme (WFP VAM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Somalia Food Security and Nutrition Clusters, with the technical support of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Global Support Unit (IPC GSU).

The deteriorating food security and nutrition situation across many parts of Somalia is driven by worsening, multi-season drought that has gripped the country since late 2020. Persistent insecurity, conflict and unresolved political tensions – particularly in central and southern Somalia – as well as global supply and price shocks are further exacerbating the food security situation. The impacts are widespread, including but not limited to severe water scarcity, excess livestock deaths due to starvation and disease, consecutive poor or failed harvests, escalating local and imported food prices, and drought and conflict-induced population displacement, all of which are leading to a decline in the coping capacity of the poor and vulnerable population.

The dry and harsh January to March 2022 Jillaal season intensified the severity of drought conditions after the poor Deyr rains in late 2021. Households currently face water shortages, limited milk availability, and a lack of saleable animals as animals die from starvation and the body condition of remaining livestock deteriorates. The rising costs of water and feed for livestock, as well as migration to distant areas in search of pasture and water, have led to very high debt burdens among pastoral households. Agropastoral and riverine livelihood zones have had several consecutive failed cereal harvests, with further disruption to cash crop and off-season cereal production in riverine areas due to low water levels in the Juba and Shabelle Rivers. Poor harvests have also adversely affected poor households who rely on income from agricultural employment opportunities. Deficit domestic cereal supplies, diminished regional staple food supplies due to concurrent drought in neighboring countries, and the record increase in global food prices have driven staple food prices out of the reach of most poor rural, urban and displaced families who must purchase most of their food.

Current seasonal rainfall forecasts indicate an increased likelihood of below-average rainfall during the 2022 Gu season in most of central and southern Somalia. Weekly rainfall forecasts suggest a delayed start of season, with little to no rainfall forecast through at least April 13. Although the Gu rains are forecast to be near average in Somalia's northern regions, the rains will be insufficient to drive timely recovery from the drought due to the cumulative severity of livestock and crop losses, and adverse impacts will likely persist through at least mid-2022.

In the coming months, the production and supply chain impact of the conflict in Ukraine is expected to put further upward pressure on food prices, thereby threatening the food security of millions across Somalia. Rising food prices are also affecting IDPs and the urban poor, who already spend a disproportionately large amount of their income on food (60-80%), have few opportunities to expand their incomes, and have an extremely limited scope to absorb the impact of further increases in food prices.

As a result, many rural households face widening food consumption gaps and the erosion of their livelihoods limits their coping capacity. Social support systems are increasingly overstretched in many parts of the country. These factors have driven a surge in population displacement from rural areas to IDP settlements and towns and cities. Data obtained from UNHCR indicates that up to 646,000 people have displaced due to drought since October 2021.

Acute malnutrition is already at Critical levels in many areas of central and southern Somalia, and the number of acutely malnourished children being admitted to treatment centers is rapidly increasing, with two to four-fold increases reported in some districts. Worsening food security conditions and declining water availability and quality have led to outbreaks of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) in many parts of the country. Coupled with an increase in measles cases, disease incidence is contributing to rising levels of acute malnutrition, reflected in the increasing number of moderately and severely malnourished children being admitted to treatment centers.

In pastoral areas, water and pasture shortages have forced pastoralists to migrate to distant grazing areas. Poor pastoralists in many areas are unable to cope with the rising costs of water and food, especially when they are already experiencing a significant decline in saleable animals due to distressed sales, weak/emaciated body conditions, and excess deaths. With fewer livestock births expected, reduced income from livestock sales, and low availability of milk for both adults and children, poor pastoral households face moderate to large food consumption gaps through June 2022. Accordingly, most pastoral livelihoods across Somalia are classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between April and June 2022, with Hawd Pastoral of Northwest, Northeast and Central, and Addun Pastoral of Northeast and Central classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

In agropastoral and riverine livelihood zones that experienced consecutive seasons of substantially below average or failed harvests, poor households who sustained substantial crop losses and low income from agricultural employment face moderate to large food consumption gaps through mid-2022. Most agropastoral and riverine livelihoods across Somalia are classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between April and June 2022, with Toghdeer Agropastoral, Sorghum High Potential Agropastoral of Bay, Gedo and Juba, Bay-Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral, Southern Agropastoral, and Southern Rain-fed Agropastoral classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

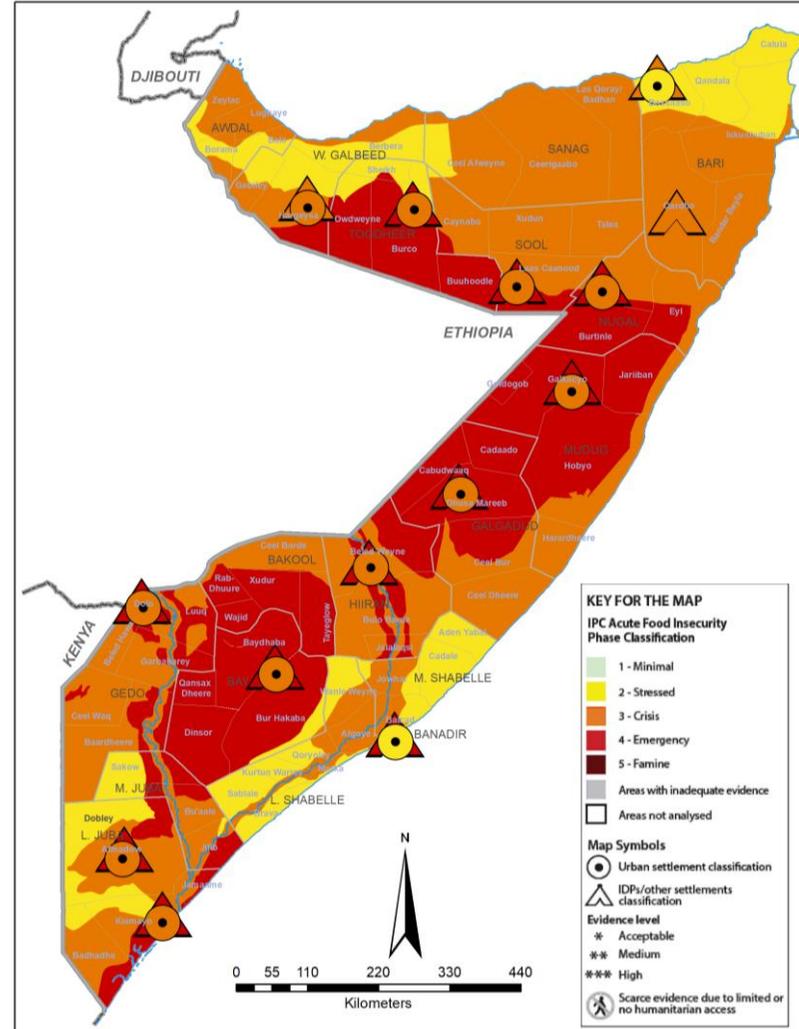
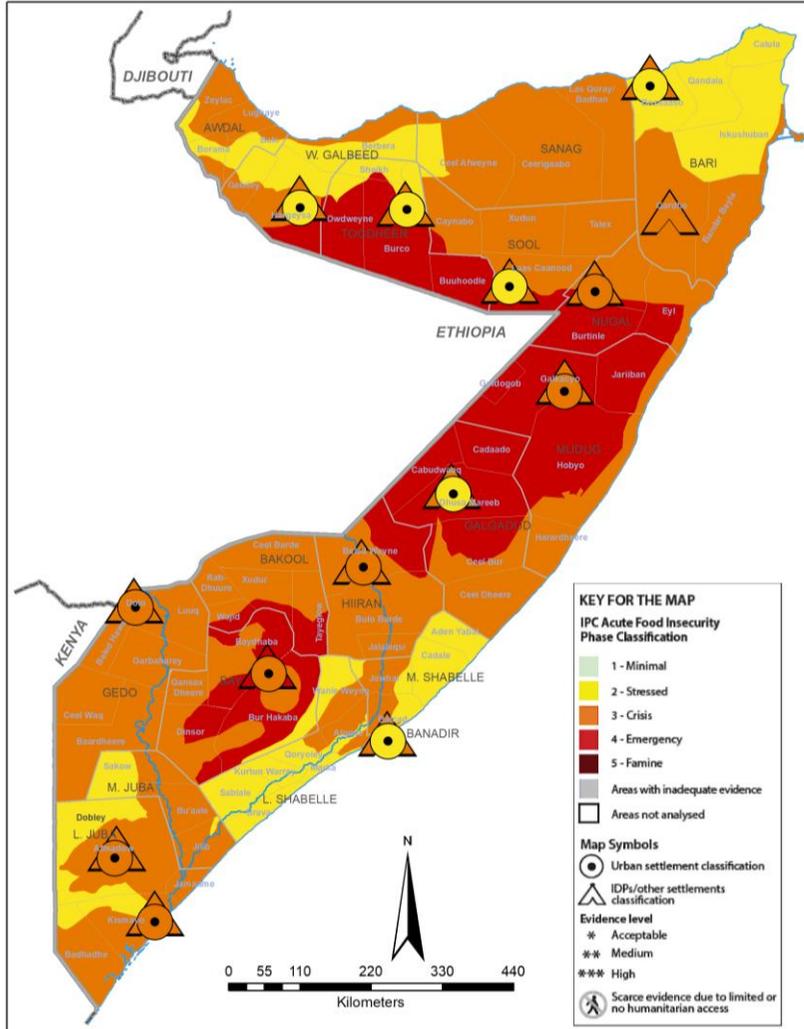
With limited livelihood assets, few income-earning opportunities, rising food prices, low access to communal support and high reliance on external humanitarian assistance, a majority of the estimated 2.9 million IDPs across Somalia are poor. Population displacement due to the ongoing drought and conflict has increased sharply since late 2021. As a result, IDP populations in existing settlements are increasing and more IDP settlements are popping up in the most affected areas, with new IDPs arriving in desperate conditions and often facing numerous challenges to access humanitarian assistance after their arrival. Due to anticipated worsening drought conditions and persistent insecurity, increased population displacement from rural to urban areas and IDP settlements is likely through mid-2022, especially if humanitarian assistance is not urgently scaled up and able to reach the most affected areas. As a result, a significant proportion of IDPs face moderate to large food consumption gaps through mid-2022. Most of the main IDP settlements across Somalia are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) between April and June 2022. These include IDP settlements in Burco, Laasaanod, Garowe, Galkacyo, Dhusamareb, Beletweyne, Mogadishu, Baidoa, Dollow, Dholebey and Kismayo.

Rising food prices since 2021 have posed a major challenge for food security in most urban areas across Somalia, especially among the urban poor who already spend a disproportionately large amount of their income on food (60-80%) with extremely limited scope to absorb the impact of further increases in food prices and limited opportunities to expand their incomes. Declining labor wages and rising food prices have led to sharp declines in the terms of trade between wage labor and cereals, in some cases, by as much as 50 percent. As a result, the urban poor face moderate to large food consumption gaps through mid-2022. Most of the urban area across Somalia are classified in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) between April and June 2022. This includes Hargeisa city that has recently sustained a major fire that destroyed most of the businesses in the main market, which typically provided employment and sustenance for a majority of the urban poor.

Region	Population (2020/21)	Number of Acutely Food Insecure People (Rural, IDP, and Urban Combined)						
		Updated Estimates (Mar 2022)			Updated Projection (Apr-Jun 2022)			
		Stressed (IPC 2)	Crisis (IPC 3)	Emergency (IPC 4)	Stressed (IPC 2)	Crisis (IPC 3)	Emergency (IPC 4)	Catastrophe (IPC 5)
Awdal	538,209	142,540	89,980	18,100	147,500	115,580	19,010	-
W. Galbeed	1,224,715	330,250	213,540	53,500	335,930	314,040	65,500	-
Togdheer	728,224	173,680	172,140	48,610	169,540	202,150	67,090	-
Sool	464,487	97,090	140,870	54,220	96,810	161,600	68,160	-
Sanaag	362,723	62,080	97,330	38,640	78,480	112,480	39,890	-
Bari	1,042,591	239,570	143,070	55,710	279,880	163,290	67,100	-
Nugaal	534,573	155,790	141,740	57,450	130,590	170,850	85,370	2,030
Mudug	1,243,526	405,290	375,490	114,410	348,600	430,960	189,210	23,260
Galgaduud	687,573	165,930	188,160	68,640	133,390	213,370	95,130	19,190
Hiraan	427,124	105,190	104,390	40,790	103,910	116,550	67,450	1,910
M. Shabelle	855,895	209,210	175,780	51,960	227,100	194,500	83,090	-
L. Shabelle	1,347,934	293,820	244,910	42,950	339,750	247,700	83,930	-
Bakool	459,747	103,120	122,180	57,080	97,370	147,750	81,580	10,200
Bay	1,055,913	250,140	305,300	168,790	195,720	385,280	233,090	24,510
Gedo	736,704	224,010	204,870	81,020	226,880	226,730	109,790	-
M. Juba	363,930	93,740	106,010	43,750	99,130	120,460	54,040	-
L. Juba	979,998	250,140	281,870	114,220	258,800	313,720	149,940	-
Banadir	2,683,312	538,100	538,100	90,400	627,060	583,300	180,800	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,737,178</b>	<b>3,839,690</b>	<b>3,645,730</b>	<b>1,200,240</b>	<b>3,896,440</b>	<b>4,220,310</b>	<b>1,740,170</b>	<b>81,100</b>

### Updated Estimates (Mar 2022)

### Updated Projection (Apr-Jun 2022)



## Annex: Somalia Risk of Famine, April–June 2022

In the most likely scenario, approximately 81 000 people across the most affected areas face Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) between April and June 2022, representing 5 to 10 percent of the total population in these areas. However, Famine (IPC Phase 5), which is an area level outcome representing at least 20 percent of the population, is not expected in these areas over the same period. Nevertheless, there is a risk (reasonable chance) of a Famine (IPC Phase 5) occurring in Hawd Pastoral of Central, Addun Pastoral of Northeast and Central, Bay Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral and IDP settlements in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Dhusamareb between April to June 2022 under the following conditions:

(i) April to June 2022 Gu season rainfall performs poorly, with rainfall below 40-60 percent of average. This would imply not only a fourth consecutive season of below average rainfall, but also the prospect of more severe drought conditions. This is a major concern in central and southern parts of the country, where rainfall totals were below 40-60 percent of average in late 2021. This would lead to increased livestock deaths and the accompanying loss of value of animals in poor physical condition, resulting in fewer saleable animals, increased destitution and displacement among poor pastoralists. In the most affected livelihoods, livestock deaths would likely exceed current expectations and reach as high as 15-30 percent. Poor Gu season rainfall will also severely limit crop cultivation, lead to crop failure in some locations, and significantly diminish seasonal agricultural employment, which is a main income source among poor agropastoral and riverine households. The combination of limited saleable animals and lack of agricultural employment opportunities would subject poor pastoral, agropastoral and riverine households to face widening food consumption gaps as they lack alternative income sources.

(ii) Further and substantial food price increases (50% or more above the average for the previous five years) driven by the following factors: failed local harvests; continuing regional drought in neighboring countries that reduces cross-border supplies; record-high global food prices and further impacts of the war in Ukraine on global food and fuel prices; and other locally significant factors, including insecurity and high inflation and depreciation of the local currency in some regions. This would adversely affect the purchasing power of poor households in rural and urban areas as well as IDPs. In the worst-affected areas, this would contribute to widening food consumption gaps among poor and vulnerable households.

(iii) Worsening drought conditions lead to influx of newly displaced people to IDP settlements and urban areas where opportunities remain limited, thereby further exacerbating their food insecurity. Furthermore, overcrowded IDP settlements with poor water and sanitation conditions would likely result in further outbreak of measles and acute watery diarrhea (AWD), affecting mostly under-five children. Under this scenario, levels of acute malnutrition could rapidly increase to 30 percent or more Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) which is one of the thresholds for Famine (IPC Phase 5) classification.

(iv) Increased conflict, insecurity and unresolved political tensions lead to further increases in population displacement, disrupt market access and functionality, impede household access to livelihood opportunities and restricts access to humanitarian assistance, with a risk of potential exclusion of vulnerable groups, especially in central and southern Somalia.

(v) Humanitarian assistance does not keep pace with the rapidly increasing level of needs and does not reach the most affected areas.

The following risk factors need to be closely monitored throughout the projection period:

- Food prices, livestock prices, wage rates and terms of trade
- 2022 Gu season rainfall performance and river levels and their impact on pasture and water availability and seasonal food and cash crop cultivation
- Livestock body condition, births and deaths
- Population displacement
- Admission of acutely malnourished children to treatment and feeding centers
- Acute malnutrition and mortality levels (GAM, CDR and U5DR)
- Humanitarian food assistance (coverage and access)

Risk of Famine refers to the reasonable probability of an area going into Famine in the projected period. While this is not perceived necessarily as the most likely scenario, it is a scenario that generally has a realistic chance of occurring. It complements the Famine and Famine Likely projections of the most likely scenario by providing insights of potential Famine if prospects evolve in a manner worse than anticipated. For additional information, see the [IPC Famine Fact Sheet](#).

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