

FACT SHEET

HORN OF AFRICA FOOD CRISIS

BACKGROUND

Urgent action is needed now to avert a perilous and disruptive humanitarian disaster. We can't afford to wait. Children are already dying from hunger. There shouldn't be any further delay.

The Horn of Africa is experiencing one of its worst droughts in 40 years, following back-to-back poor rainy seasons. Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia are facing severe water shortages, rising food prices, reduced food availability, livestock deaths, and rapidly increasing food insecurity. The Governments of Kenya (September 2021) and Somalia (November 2021) declared national emergencies.

Since late 2016, there have been multiple exceptionally dry seasons interspersed with exceptionally wet seasons. Such wet seasons also generated devastating impacts: flooding, displacement, and a damaging locust outbreak that together caused crop and livestock losses affecting approximately 3.4 million people.¹

These multi-year, compounding shocks without recovery have been exacerbated by unending conflict and COVID-19, which created massive economic upheaval, pushed millions into extreme poverty, alongside direct health impacts.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

13 MILLION

PEOPLE EXPERIENCING ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY AND SEVERE WATER SHORTAGES IN ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND SOMALIA, IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2022

5.7 MILLION

CHILDREN ARE ANTICIPATED TO BE ACUTELY MALNOURISHED IN THESE THREE COUNTRIES

1.4 MILLION

(IN A FEW MONTHS)
DISPLACED IN SEARCH OF WATER, FOOD AND PASTURE IN SOMALIA

¹ <https://bit.ly/3lQmfSz>

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

500,000

PEOPLE WERE FORCIBLY DISPLACED BY THE CONFLICT IN SOMALIA

175,000

DISPLACED BY DROUGHT INDUCED DISPLACEMENTS IN SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

70% DROP

IN CROP PRODUCTION IN PARTS OF KENYA

1.5 MILLION

ANIMALS HAVE DIED IN KENYA

1.5 MILLION

LIVESTOCK HAVE ALSO DIED IN SOMALI, OROMIA AND SNNP REGIONS OF ETHIOPIA WORST DROUGHT IN 40 YEARS

WHEAT PRICES

HAVE SOARED **80%**

SINCE THE RUSSIA – UKRAINE WAR

US\$4.4 BILLION

IS NEEDED TO PROVIDE LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION TO ABOUT 29.1 MILLION PEOPLE IN ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND SOMALIA IN 2022.

Now, loss of life on a devastating scale is a real risk. Already, with weakened safety nets families are resorting to desperate measures to survive, with children and girls hardest hit. Thousands have already left their homes in search of food, water and pasture.

Climate change and La Niña are working together to produce prolonged and persistent dryness. a. Current climate forecasts indicate a 90 percent chance of a La Niña-like climate in March-May 2022 and the most recent ICPAC weather assessment anticipates cumulative dry conditions through May 2022. This assessment indicates that even if MAM rains are normal, the region will experience lingering long-term rainfall deficits.²

IMPLICATIONS OF UKRAINE CONFLICT ON FOOD ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY IN THE EASTERN AFRICA REGION

The war in Ukraine is further worsening this food insecurity-compromising wheat, corn, sunflower oil and fertilizer supplies - sending fuel prices soaring and driving inflation. This is a fertile ground for serious political tensions across countries.³

East Africa is particularly concerning as it relies on these two countries for 90 per cent of their wheat supply. Wheat accounts for a third of the average national cereal consumption in East Africa, 84% of which is met by imports. Wheat prices have soared 80% since the invasion and further disruption is expected.⁴

Wheat and wheat products account for one third of the average cereal consumption in the Eastern Africa Region

Due to higher reliance on market purchase and lower cereal substitution capacity, the urban poor in the East Africa who are already facing skyrocketing food prices and COVID-19 impacts on incomes will likely be the hardest hit by food price inflation.⁵

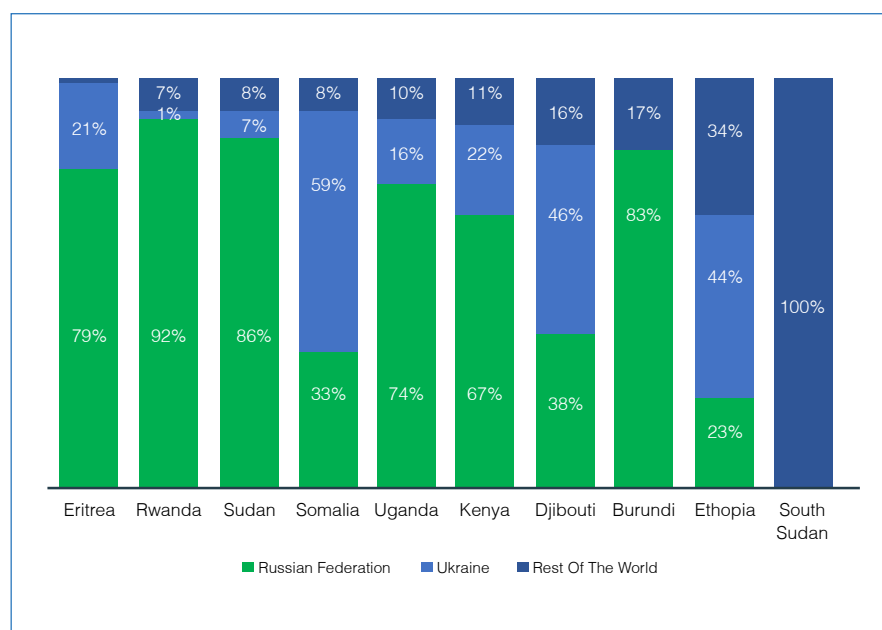
2 https://www.icpac.net/documents/493/Multi_Agency_East_Africa_Drought_Alert_v7_f.pdf

3 <https://bit.ly/3Dlz99P>

4 <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2022/03/22/war-in-ukraine-is-compounding-a-hunger-crisis-in-east-africa-charities-warn/>

5 <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000137369/download/>

FIG 1: SHARE OF WHEAT EXPORTS TO EAST AFRICA⁶



Up to 30 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia will need water and food assistance through mid-2022.

According to African Development Bank, the price of maize has gone up by 36 per cent. The price of soya beans by 29 per cent. Now the price of fertilisers, which are very critical for food productions, has gone up by 300 per cent – that's three times. Disruptions in the supply chain will likely push more people to the brink of hunger.

IMPACT OF FOOD CRISIS

- On Children** -The crisis is depriving children of having a home, a meal, a classroom, and access to lifesaving health services.
About 5.5 million children are expected to be acutely malnourished in these three countries in 2022, including more than 1.6 million severely acutely malnourished.
- On Women and girls** - Gender norms and entrenched gender inequalities result in girls and young women often eating less and last when food is scarce, and their nutritional needs may take a back seat to those of boys and men.⁷ Due to existing gender disparities caused by illiteracy, poverty and traditional customs and beliefs, pastoralist women and girls tend to experience higher food insecurity and malnutrition.

As families face mounting food insecurity, girls are increasingly called upon to care for younger siblings so parents can work or seek food, forcing them to miss or drop out of school. As a result, girls' education is likely to be further deprioritised, exacerbating the gender gap in education.

The food crisis is heightening the risk of gender-based violence (GBV), sexual exploitation and abuse and hampering children's access to education . Women and girls are having to walk longer distances to access water, exacerbating their potential exposure to gender-based violence. Many water points have dried up or diminished in quality, heightening the risk of water-borne diseases and increasing the risk of skin and eye infections as families are forced to ration their water use and prioritise drinking and cooking over hygiene.

Water shortages could also impact infection prevention and control in health facilities and schools, leading to poor treatment outcomes for children, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups.

⁶ Refinitive Wheat Front Month Futures: <https://markets.ft.com/data/commodities/tearsheet/summary?c=Whea>

⁷ UN Women, Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, October 2015, Chapter 4- Protection, available at: <http://wps.unwomen.org/>

- **On pastoralists** - The severity and persistence of droughts over several seasons have left pastoralists with limited grass and water for their herds; a problem further exacerbated by fragmentation of rangeland and restricted access to key resources. Many cattle have died for lack of water or food, and in desperation, many herders have been forced to sell cattle at very low prices.

SOMALIA

“Some days, I miss going to school because I have to wait for the water trucks to get water for my family. It’s two days now that the trucks haven’t arrived and we are not sure when they will be coming. I feel so worried and angry. When the water truck doesn’t come, we have to resort to using salty water from the ground which is bad for our health,”

WHY?

- This is the third consecutive below-average rainfall season since late 2020.
- The 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan is only 3.8 percent funded..
- 1 in 4 acutely malnourished in southern regions, which remain the most inaccessible for humanitarian agencies due to insecurity.⁸

IMPLICATIONS

- 4.6 million Somalis will face crisis-to emergency-level food insecurity (IPC 3 or worse) from February to May 2022
- Food insecurity is projected to worsen significantly through May 2022, with many households experiencing widening food consumption gaps and erosion of their coping capacity.
- Reduced food and milk intake, low access to clean water, and systemic non-food factors are also likely to elevate acute malnutrition and mortality levels.
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- Urgent large scale efforts aimed at saving lives and protecting livelihoods are needed throughout Somalia to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and prevent loss of life

KENYA

"I have a class with not one single girl. These girls are either married or at home. The girls are the ones who do all the household chores, so it becomes difficult for these girls to do all this work then come to class, so they opt to drop out of school so that they can keep up with their chores"
Teacher in Tana River County.



WHY?

The main cause is the ongoing and cumulative drought and negative forecast for the next short rain season, compounded by consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, pests and inter-communal conflict

IMPLICATIONS

- Poverty, food insecurity, undernutrition, and income inequality remain high in Kenya, particularly in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).
- An estimated population of 3.1 million people are facing acute food insecurity and are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance across all the 23 ASAL counties.
- Global Acute Malnutrition surveys, conducted in January 2022, have also shown a 25% increase in caseload requiring targeted interventions, bringing the total number of children in need of assistance to over 800,000.
- In addition, at least 103,000 pregnant and lactating women are in need of nutrition treatment. Water shortages and consumption of unsafe water are increasing the number of cases of upper respiratory tract infections, diarrhea and other diseases.⁹
- More than 1.5 million animals have died, according to the Government of Kenya's National Drought Management Agency's mid-season assessment.
- The households [distances in search of water also distance increased](#) to an average 12 Kms which is above the long-term average of 4.7 km in many pastoral livelihood zones.
- Harvests have failed and millions of livestock—which pastoralist families rely upon for sustenance and livelihoods—are emaciated or dead.
- Nearly 14 percent of the country's population (seven million) people in Kenya lacked sufficient food for consumption as of June 2021.
- Declared as a national disaster in 2021, drought puts persistent strain on pastoral livelihoods, undermining household resilience, income and food security, and access to water.

PLAN INTERNATIONAL'S RESPONSE

Plan is responding and will target 650,000 (Direct) in Ethiopia, 107,000 in Kenya and 110,000 in Somalia. In Kenya, the projects will be implemented in Kilifi and Tana River. In Somalia, the targeted camps will be in Togdheer, Woqooyi Galbeed, and Sool regions and in Ethiopia, the target will be Oromia, Somalia, Afar and SNNP regions.

We are working in the sectors of Food Security and Nutrition, Education (including school meals), WASH and protection. **We aim to:**

Deliver immediate, life-saving assistance to those in the most urgent need in line with outlined priorities for response at the country level. Address specific negative coping strategies affecting girls during the food insecurity crisis and other protection risks to advance gender equality and children and girls rights. Protect the community means of livelihood and build community resilience.

We are scaling up protection mechanisms at the community level to respond to the increase in protection and child protection concerns and where we are distributing food directly, we are ensuring a protective environment for women and girls.

KEY MESSAGES

- Unless humanitarian support is quickly scaled up, there is a real risk that we will witness large-scale loss of life in the Horn of Africa over the coming months.
- It is critical that both government and humanitarian agencies urgently scale up operations to bring food, nutrition, clean water and health services to communities.
- While forecasts for the next rainy season remain mixed, certain forecasts are suggesting an increased probability of below-average rains. We have a brief window in which to scale-up our response before communities experience the worst effects of this menacing food crisis.
- An extensive coordinated humanitarian responses by governments and donors to save lives and protect livelihoods, especially the provision of food, water, nutrition assistance, and livelihood protection programs, including water trucking, feed supply, and cash transfers.
- In the long-term, governments must support the development of sustainable, resilient and local food systems, based on small-scale production and family farming that would form the very foundation of people's food security
- We welcome the emergency declarations issued by the Governments of Kenya and Somalia and call on Governments across the region to prioritize the drought emergency by allocating the necessary funds to provide comprehensive support to their communities.

FUNDING STATUS

