

FSN WG¹ Food Security and Nutrition Update

Key messages

- About 56 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by the FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC² Phase 3+) and in need of urgent assistance in October 2021. Of these, about 27 million were from seven of the eight IGAD member states.
- Malnutrition remains of concern as Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) admissions increased over the first half of 2021 compared to last year, driven mainly by Ethiopia and South Sudan.
- Staple food prices are up significantly compared to the five-year average in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, and parts of southern Somalia, and are up moderately in Uganda. Of particular concern are areas worst affected by drought in Somalia which have experienced sharp increases, larger than those observed during the 2011 and 2017 drought emergencies.
- There are 4.79 million refugees and asylum-seekers and 10.59 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the region. Currently, food ration cuts have affected over 3.4 million (75%) refugees and are driving deteriorations in food security and nutritional outcomes
- The start of the October-December 2021 rainy season has been delayed with little to no rainfall observed across much of eastern and northern Kenya, southern and central Somalia, southern and south-eastern Ethiopia, bimodal areas of northern Tanzania, and localized areas of Uganda. Given forecasts of continued below-average rains, there is an increased likelihood that the magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition will grow significantly during the first half of 2022.

Food insecure population estimates, as of October 2021

Country	Stressed (IPC Phase 2)	Crisis (IPC Phase 3)	Emergency (IPC Phase 4)	Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)	Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+)
Djibouti	389,000	167,000	27,000		194,000
Ethiopia ³	5,998,068	4,550,479	2,434,519	401,313	7,386,311
Kenya	5,214,351	1,793,206	354,633		2,147,839
Somalia	3,712,900	2,824,960	640,730		3,465,690
South Sudan ⁴	3,138,000	4,668,000	2,413,000	108,000	7,189,000
Sudan	15,007,696	4,631,480	1,324,529		5,956,009
Uganda	470,610	159,930	27,725		187,655
IGAD Total	33,930,625	18,795,055	7,222,136	509,313	26,526,504
Burundi	4,200,579	988,419	56,365		1,044,784
CAR	1,591,200	1,657,212	632,524		2,289,736
DRC	42,201,977	20,560,601	5,618,034		26,178,635
Total	81,924,381	42,001,287	13,529,059	509,313	56,039,659

Source: IPC Global Support Unit (GSU) for East and Central Africa

¹ The East and Central Africa Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSN WG) is a multi-stakeholder regional forum, chaired by IGAD and FAO, mandated to provide adequate and timely information of food security and nutrition to relevant stakeholders for improved decision making

² The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a set of standardised tools used to classify the severity of food insecurity using a five-phase scale, that is, Minimal (IPC Phase 1), Stressed (IPC Phase 2), Crisis (IPC Phase 3), Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and Catastrophe or Famine (IPC Phase 5).

³ Figure represents estimates from September 2021, and includes findings from an IPC update on Tigray and neighbouring zones of Afar and Amhara, which have not been endorsed by the Government of Ethiopia

⁴ Figure represents estimates from July 2021 and is based on IPC Global Support Unit's consolidated findings from the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group and two external reviews (Famine Review and Quality Review), following a breakdown in technical consensus in the estimation of populations in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5) in six counties. According to the South Sudan IPC Technical Working Group, 3,144,000 people were in Stress (IPC Phase 2), 4,743,000 in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), 2,467,000 in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 31,000 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5)

Sector updates

Food security

Multiple shocks, including conflict and insecurity, economic difficulties (macro-economic challenges and the long-running impacts of COVID-19), population displacements, and consecutive seasons of below-average rains, continue to sustain large populations in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity across the region.

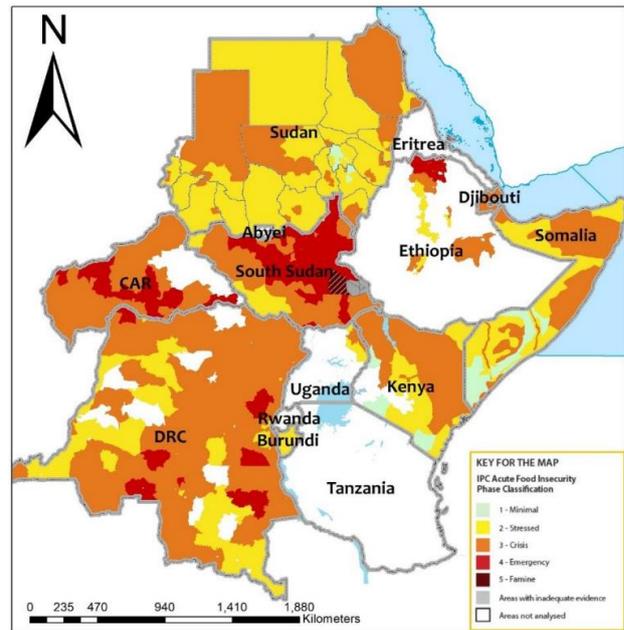
According to the IPC Global Support Unit (IPC-GSU) for East and Central Africa, about 56 million people in 10 of the 13 countries covered by FSNWG were highly food insecure (IPC Phase 3+) and in need of urgent food assistance in October 2021. Of these, an estimated 27 million were from seven of the eight IGAD member states – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. The remaining nearly 30 million were from Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

An additional 82 million people were Stressed (IPC Phase 2); 34 million of them from the IGAD region. In the absence of livelihood support, they risk sliding into worse off levels of acute food insecurity in the event of a shock or stressor.

Despite an increase in the number of food insecure people in drought-affected areas, the overall number of people facing high levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+) across countries covered by FSNWG fell by 4 percent (2.5 million people) compared to September 2021 levels. This decline was driven by significant improvements in food security in Sudan, as the country moved from its lean season to the harvest period.

Considering the poor start of the October-December 2021 rainfall season, there is an increased likelihood that the magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia will grow significantly during the first half of 2022. More information can be found [here](#).

Regional food security situation, October 2021⁵



Source: IPC GSU for East and Central Africa

Nutrition

The nutrition situation in the region remained a major source of concern as Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) admissions increased by 16 percent over the first half of 2021 compared to the previous year. These increases were driven mainly by Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Country updates

In Burundi, the nutrition situation remains stable with a global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence at 6.1% nationally and a decrease in both moderate and severe acute malnutrition admissions. So far 37,644 new moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) admissions and 41,686 new SAM admissions have been reported in 2021.

In Ethiopia, a total of 27,925 children with SAM have been admitted for treatment since February 2021. Of these, 27,269 are in out-patient therapeutic programme (OTP). In Tigray, the screening and treatment of children has been undertaken in additional 13 woredas, with 13.1% of children under five and 46.6% of pregnant and lactating women identified as acutely malnourished. In Amhara, a

⁵ Includes out-of-date analyses for Ethiopia (representing September 2021) and South Sudan (representing July 2021).

total of 7,487 children 6-59 months were screened in 74 IDP sites, of which 63 (0.8%) SAM and 488 (6.5%) MAM children were identified. In Afar, reported SAM rates in children under five have been very high, with a peak of 12.2% in the first week of October in Chifra. This estimate was confirmed by UNICEF staff on the ground and by a rapid nutrition assessment conducted in September, which showed GAM rates of 49% in Chifra (based on MUAC).

In Kenya, a total of 48,241 and 89,241 malnourished children were admitted for treatment of SAM and MAM, respectively, between January and September 2021 in arid, semi-arid and urban areas. According to IPC acute malnutrition analysis conducted in August 2021, malnutrition levels remain unacceptably high and are projected to worsen. The Kenya National Drought Management Authority's (NDMA) early warning system is also indicating deteriorating trends for nutrition (assessed based on MUAC) and milk production in several counties.

In Somalia, a total of 180,982 children between the ages of 6 to 59 months with SAM were treated between January to September 2021, of which 18,334 children were admitted in September 2021.

In South Sudan, a total of 172,911 children with SAM were admitted into therapeutic nutrition services from January to September 2021. Compared to the same period of 2020, this represents an increase in admissions of about 13%. The highest admission was recorded from Jonglei (23.4%) followed by Unity (15.6%) and Northern el Bahr Ghazal (10.04%). Seven SMART surveys have been conducted and validated since January 2021 in South Sudan. Of these, five found a GAM prevalence exceeding the emergency threshold (Aweil South: 23.1%, Pibor: 21.6%, Akobo West: 19.0%, Tonj North: 18.4%, and Tonj South: 16.9%).

In Rwanda, the nutrition situation remained relatively stable. This is as an estimated 9,254 SAM in and outpatient children were admitted for

treatment between January and August 2021 compared to 9,379 admitted for treatment in 2020.

In Uganda, 16,127 SAM admissions were recorded between January to September 2021 in the Karamoja region. January, February, March, April, June and July, had the highest number of SAM admissions compared to the same period in the last three years. Key drivers of acute malnutrition in Uganda include: high food insecurity and very poor diet quality and quantity (among both refugees and host communities); poor sanitation/latrines coverage in Karamoja; high incidence of diarrhea and malaria; and high mother workload and alcoholism leading to reduced childcare and inadequate breastfeeding in the Karamoja region.

Markets and trade

Staple food prices are up significantly compared to the five-year average in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, and parts of southern Somalia, are up moderately in Uganda, are stable in Kenya and Djibouti, and are down in Rwanda. For instance, staple cereal prices were 500-600% above average in Sudan and 190% above average in Juba, South Sudan according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)⁶. Key drivers of current price trends vary from area to area within the region but includes seasonal trends, macro-economic challenges, and natural hazard impacts (e.g., drought and floods).

Of particular concern, a drought impact analysis conducted by the FSNWG markets and trade sub-working group found that in the worst-affected areas of Somalia, such as Hudur and Belet Weyne, below-average harvests from the previous season have already driven sharp food price increases, larger than those observed during Somalia's 2011 and 2017 drought emergencies, as well as the 2008 global economic crisis.

Prices of sorghum are expected to follow seasonal patterns through June 2021. However, they will likely be above recent five-year average levels in

⁶ [FEWS NET. East Africa - Severe to extreme food insecurity persists due to conflict, drought, and other shocks. October 2021](#)

Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia because of high and increasing inflation, and in Uganda and Somalia because of expectations of below-average June-to-July Harvest.

Maize prices are also expected to follow seasonal trends but remain near or below average in most markets in Tanzania and Rwanda, due to average-to-near average May-to-August harvest exerting downward pressure on prices in the second half of 2021 and early 2022. In Kenya, prices may likely move above the average in 2022 due to an expected below-average harvest. Projected prices are expected to be significantly higher than average in Somalia due to consecutive below-average harvests, and in both Ethiopia and South Sudan because of high inflation. In Burundi, maize prices are projected to be slightly above average because of currency challenges and ban on imports

Displacement

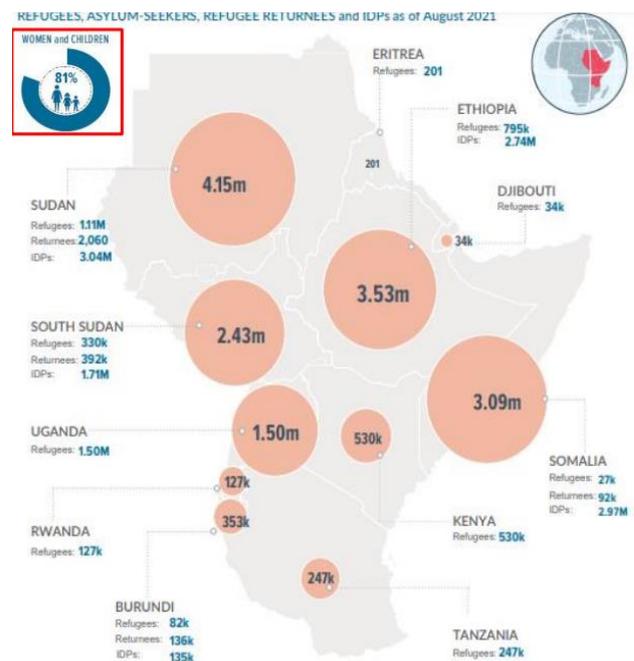
As of 31 August 2021, there were an estimated 4.79 million refugees and asylum-seekers and 10.59 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region.

Current food ration cuts (in-kind and cash-based transfers) have affected over 3.4 million (75%) refugees in the region and are driving deteriorations in food security and nutritional outcomes. It is also likely that these ration cuts and shortfalls in assistance could contribute to increased tensions with host communities as competition for scarce resources escalates.

Country updates

Preliminary results from the UNHCR Standardized Expanded Nutrition Surveys (SENS) conducted in Tanzania are showing stable/improving trends compared to the last SENS in 2019 with GAM rates below 5%. Stunting among children aged 6-59 months have also fallen (average of 38.2% in 2021 vs. 48.6% in 2019) but is still above the 30% "Critical/Very High" threshold.

Refugees, asylum-seekers, refugee returnees, and IDPs, as of August 2021



Source: UNHCR

Similarly, the preliminary results from the SENS conducted in Rwanda of DRC and Burundian refugees, also found a stable nutrition situation compared to 2019. More specifically, the assessment found GAM rates of less than 5% and stunting among children aged 6-59 months ranging between 13 – 24.4% (Medium/High level).

In Ethiopia, the 2021 SENS of Eritrean refugees at the Aysaita camp in Afar region found a GAM rate of 19.8% (Critical or Very High >15%) with critical levels of SAM at 4.3% (the same as in 2019). Stunting was reported at 32.7% (Critical or Very High >30%) though down compared to 2019 when it was 44.7%.

In Dollo Ado in Ethiopia, a SENS of Somali refugees found GAM and SAM rates had decreased significantly in Buramino, Helaweyn, and Melkadida refugee camps, while in Kobe and Bokolmanyo refugee camps, they had increased compared to 2019. Notably, the GAM prevalence is Critical or Very High (>15%) in Bokolmanyo and Kobe camps. Stunting ranges between 30-46% (Critical or Very High), indicating an increase compared to the 2019 levels.

Finally, a SENS of South Sudanese refugees in Gambella in Ethiopia found a GAM prevalence of 10% across the camps vs. 11.7% in 2019. Stunting among children aged 6-59 months ranges between 1.7 – 16.2%, which is stable compared to 2019.

Climate

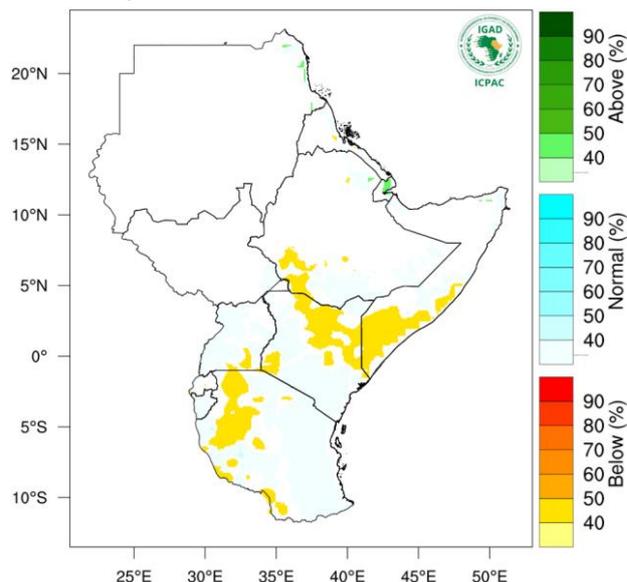
The October-December rainfall season is an important one for southern Ethiopia, Kenya, southern and central Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda, and northern Tanzania.

As forecasted, the start of the 2021 October – December rainy season has been significantly delayed with little to no rainfall observed to date across much of eastern and northern Kenya, southern and central Somalia, southern Ethiopia, bimodal areas of northern Tanzania, and localized areas of Uganda.

According to the November 2021 to January 2022 rainfall forecast by the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), drier than usual conditions are expected over northern and eastern Kenya, southern Somalia, and western Tanzania. Average conditions, meanwhile, are expected over the rest of the central and southern areas though the skill level of this forecast is low.

Given the poor start of the rainy season and forecasts of continued below-average rains, there is an increased likelihood that the magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition across Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia will grow significantly during the first half of 2022, during the peak of the affected areas' pastoral and agropastoral lean seasons (February to March and April to June, respectively).

Rainfall probabilistic forecast for November 2021 to January 2022



Source: ICPAC

Humanitarian snapshot

Despite a steady increase in humanitarian funding across the region since the beginning of the year, the humanitarian response in the region remains underfunded.

Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs)⁷ funding by country (million USD), as of October 2021

Country	Required	Funded	Funded (%)
Somalia	1,090	548.2	50.2%
South Sudan	1,680	1,030	61.6%
Sudan	1,940	576.6	29.7%

Source: OCHA

Countries also received funding outside the HRP as follows: Ethiopia (USD. 589 million under the Northern Response Plan), Somalia (USD. 353.3 million), South Sudan (USD. 160.4 million) and Sudan (USD. 150.8 million).

In view of drought conditions that have caused a rapid increase in humanitarian needs in the ASALs of Kenya and have led to the declaration of a national

⁷ Ethiopia HRP not listed as it has not been approved by the Government.

disaster by the government, the country launched a Drought Flash Appeal on 30 September 2021. With a funding requirement of USD. 139.5 million, the appeal targets 1.3 million people out of the 2.4 million expected to need humanitarian assistance between October and December 2021. At the time of reporting, USD. 28.5 million had been received for this flash appeal.

Contacts

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Recommendations

The FSNWG recommends:

- Coordinated and multi-sectoral life-saving assistance, especially in areas with populations categorised in Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+) levels of acute food insecurity, including Ethiopia and South Sudan, where there are populations classified in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5).
- Scale-up of livelihood programmes for recovery in emergency contexts, improved self-reliance, resilience building and social protection for households facing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) or worse outcomes.
- Sustained nutrition interventions to treat and prevent acute malnutrition. Nutrition services should also be expanded to areas with low coverage.
- Significant scale-up of contributions to existing and future HRPs, and the Kenya Drought Flash Appeal. Contingency planning is also needed in view of the likely deterioration in the food security situation in the region.
- Close monitoring of seasonal progress for the remainder of the October-December 2021 rainfall season, as well as food security outcomes during the upcoming 2022 lean season.