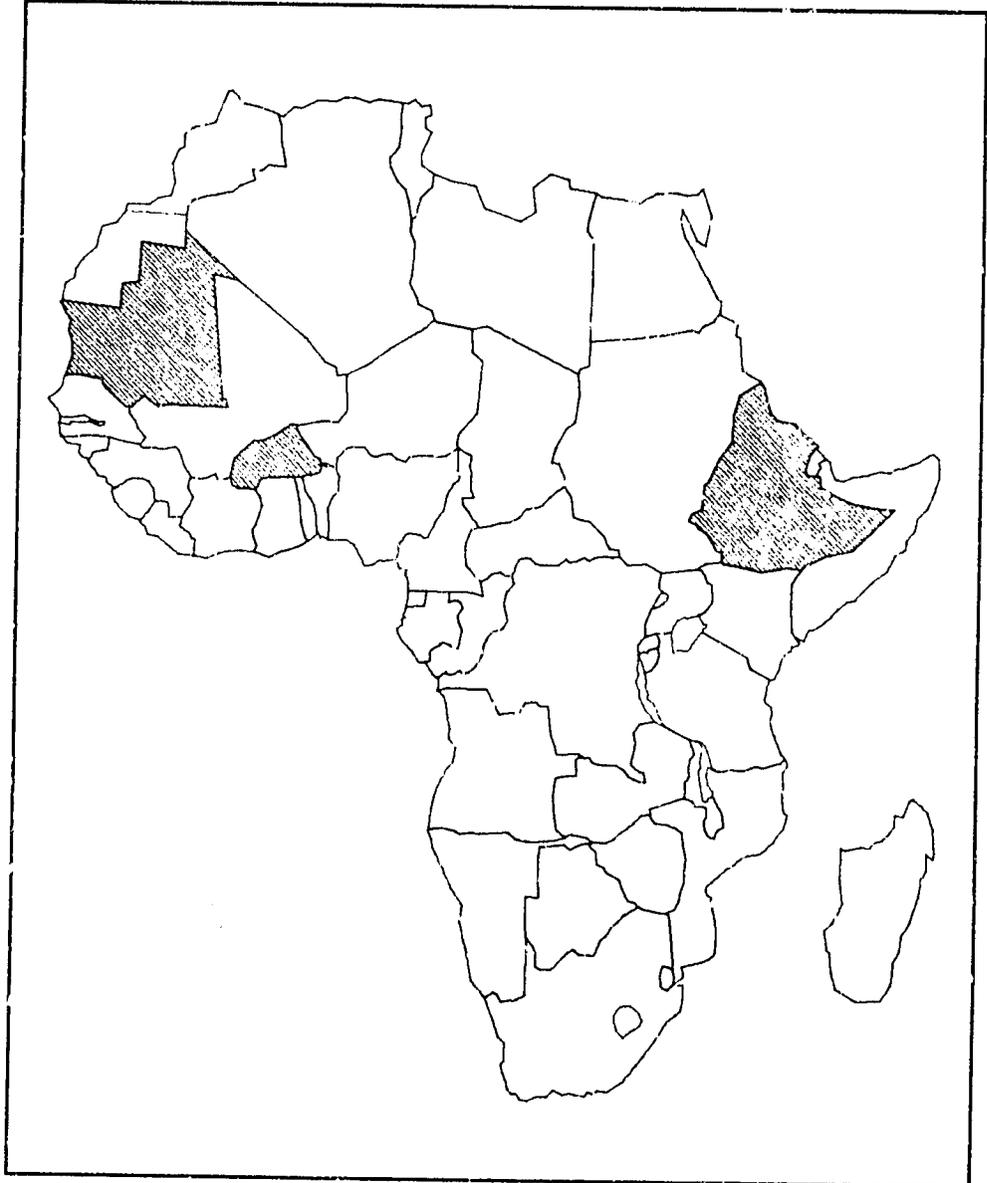


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Report 23
June 1988

FEWS Country Report

BURKINA, ETHIOPIA and MAURITANIA



Famine Early Warning System
Africa Bureau
U.S. Agency for International Development

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Note: The next FEWS report will be a special Vulnerability Assessment edition. Separate reports (under a yellow cover, rather than the normal blue) will be issued for each FEWS-monitored country except Mozambique. In these reports FEWS will identify the specific areas judged to be particularly vulnerable to food emergencies this year, along with some of the contributing factors. This special edition has been timed to coincide with the beginning of the growing season in most of these countries. It is intended to familiarize our readership with the context in which FEWS will be evaluating the significance of indicators over the course of the season.

Acknowledgements

FEWS depends on a variety of U.S. Government agencies, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), international relief agencies, foreign press and host government reports as sources of information used in the country reports. In particular, a debt of gratitude is owed to many individuals within various offices of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) who routinely provide valuable information, including the offices of Food For Peace and Voluntary Assistance (FFP/FVA) and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). Additional useful information is also provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NOAA/NESDIS) and Climate Analysis Center (NOAA/CAC), the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS), the World Food Program (WFP), and other U.N. agencies.

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BURKINA, ETHIOPIA and MAURITANIA

Report 23, June 1988



Prepared for the
Africa Bureau of the
U.S. Agency for International Development

Prepared by
Price, Williams & Associates, Inc.

Overview

The government of *Burkina* (GOB) is moving deliberately to lower grain prices and make food available in the northern provinces. Toward this end, the GOB is releasing food aid and National Cereal Control Board (CNACER) stocks at reduced prices. In *Ethiopia*, continuing conflict has prevented the distribution of emergency food to over half of the people for whom it was intended. Fortunately, no mass movements of people searching for food have yet been reported. In *Mauritania*, most of the areas identified as being vulnerable to food shortages in 1988 will receive food aid by June. It is not clear that all the needy people will receive aid, however, as the distribution lists have not been updated since 1984.

Burkina



	National Capital
	Regional Capitals
	International Boundaries
	National & Regional Boundaries
	Areas where OFNACER stocks and food aid are to be sold below market price

0 25 50 75 Miles
0 50 100 Kilometers

BURKINA

Cereal Subsidies



Food Distribution

West Germany has agreed to subsidize the sale of 7,000 metric tons (MT) of National Cereal Control Board (OFNACER) grain. The grain will be sold at a reduced price in the northern provinces where there is a scarcity of grain on the market. The government of Burkina (GOB) is currently selling an additional 2,000 MT of food aid at below market price in the north (Earlier reports that this food aid had been distributed were premature.). These measures taken by OFNACER should combine to lower the price and increase the availability of grains in the north.

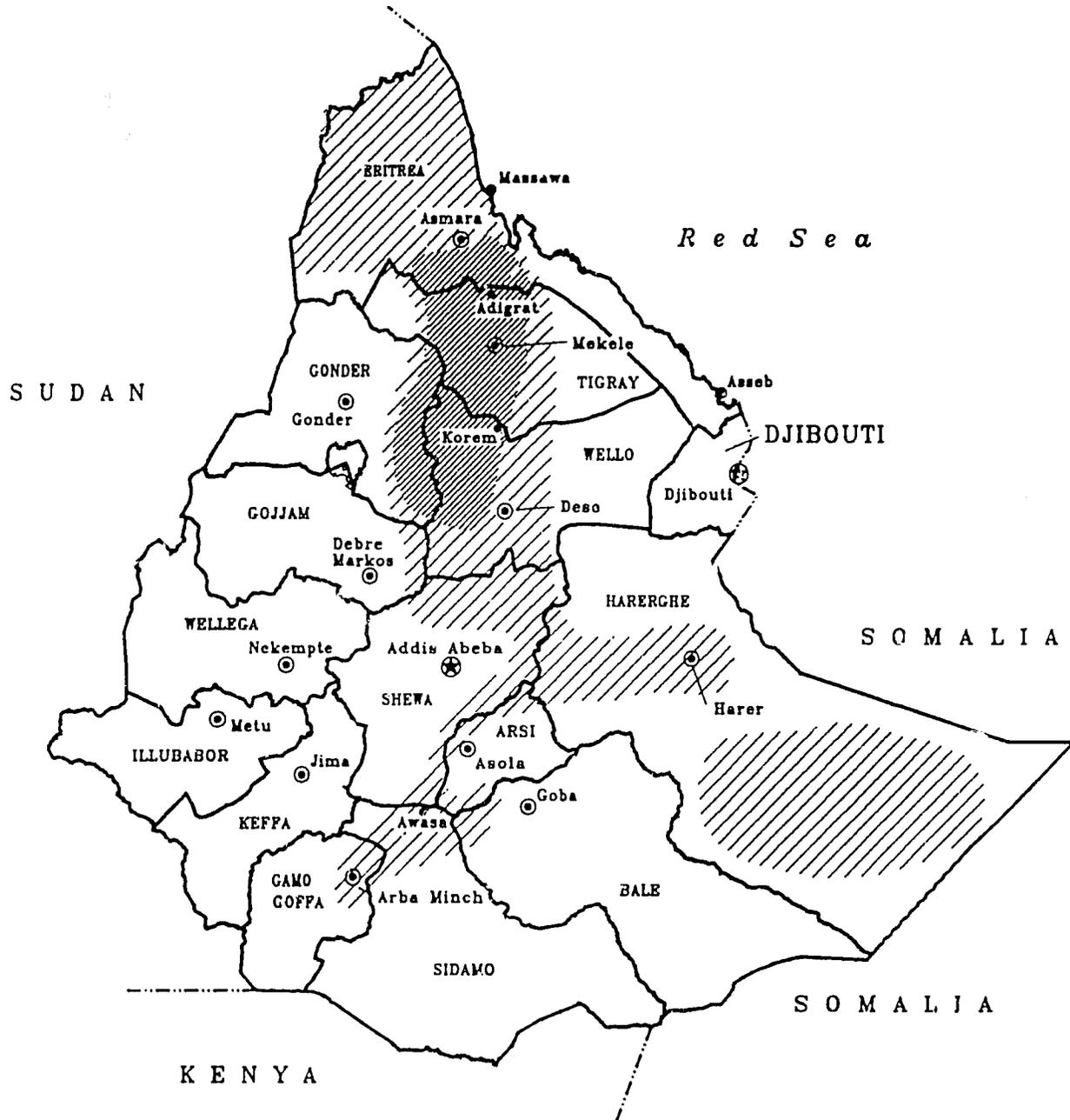
USAID/Washington has approved a request by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) for 3,268.5 tons of cornmeal and oil for Food for Work Programs. This food is also targeted for the northern provinces. In addition, USAID/Washington has approved 6,000 MT¹ of sorghum for Burkina.

Locusts Reported in Burkina

Reports of Desert locust sightings in northeastern Burkina are increasing concern among officials in the GOB. The beginning of the growing season in May has heightened the government's awareness of the potential problem.

¹ Under section 416(b), an amendment to the 1949 Agriculture Act..

Ethiopia



	National Capital
	Regional Capitals
	International Boundaries
	National & Regional Boundaries
	Immediate and serious food shortages
	Food shortages late in 1988

0 50 100 150 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers

ETHIOPIA

Too Much Food, Yet Too Many Hungry



Summary

Emergency food distributions continue at levels well below requirements, due to the ongoing conflict. Less than half of all people judged to require assistance are actually receiving it. The absence of mass movements of people in search of food, however, raises the possibility that the emergency food requirement may be somewhat lower than estimated in the December FAO assessment. The low rate of distribution poses the serious problem of either finding storage for the pledged assistance, figuring out how to delay it, or redirecting it to other needs. At current low rates of delivery and distribution, end of year emergency stocks may rise to more than 800,000 metric tons (MT).

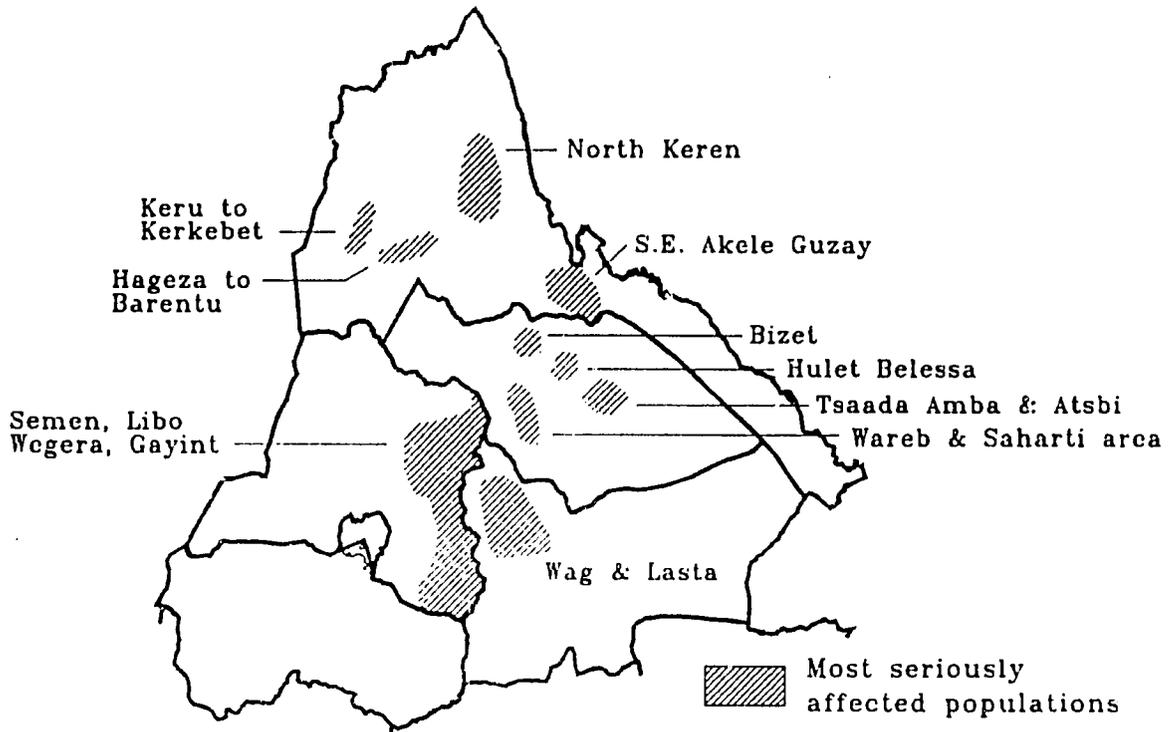
At-Risk Populations

Large numbers of people in northern Ethiopia remain outside the reach of government, private voluntary organization (PVO)/non-government organization (NGO), or known rebel emergency food distribution centers. Of the 1,700,000 people judged at-risk in Eritrea, only some 520,000 received any emergency food at all during the month of April. Similar situations are found in Tigray (266,000 of 1,500,000), Gonder (345,000 of 530,000), and Wello (709,000 of 1,017,000). Map 2 identifies general areas in which conditions are believed to be particularly acute, due either to drought and non-access to distributions, and/or apparently serious health or malnutrition problems. It should be noted, however, that other areas (for which there is even less information available) may also suffer from acute food shortages and malnutrition. Map 3 locates areas in which distributions of any size and/or frequency occurred during April. The recent government expulsion of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) may have critical importance in Gonder Region, where the ICRC has heretofore played the major role in food distributions (233,000 beneficiaries in April).

Through the third week of May, no large movements of people in search of food had been recorded. Over 70,000 people, many of whom are government officials and their families, have been evacuated to Mekele. Small camps around Asmera may contain 30,000 to 40,000 people. Nevertheless, given the apparent poor coverage of expected food needs by emergency distributions, the absence of mass movements raises questions. It is possible that the USAID food needs estimate made in December, substantially less than the FAO assessment, more closely reflects the actual gap in food supplies.

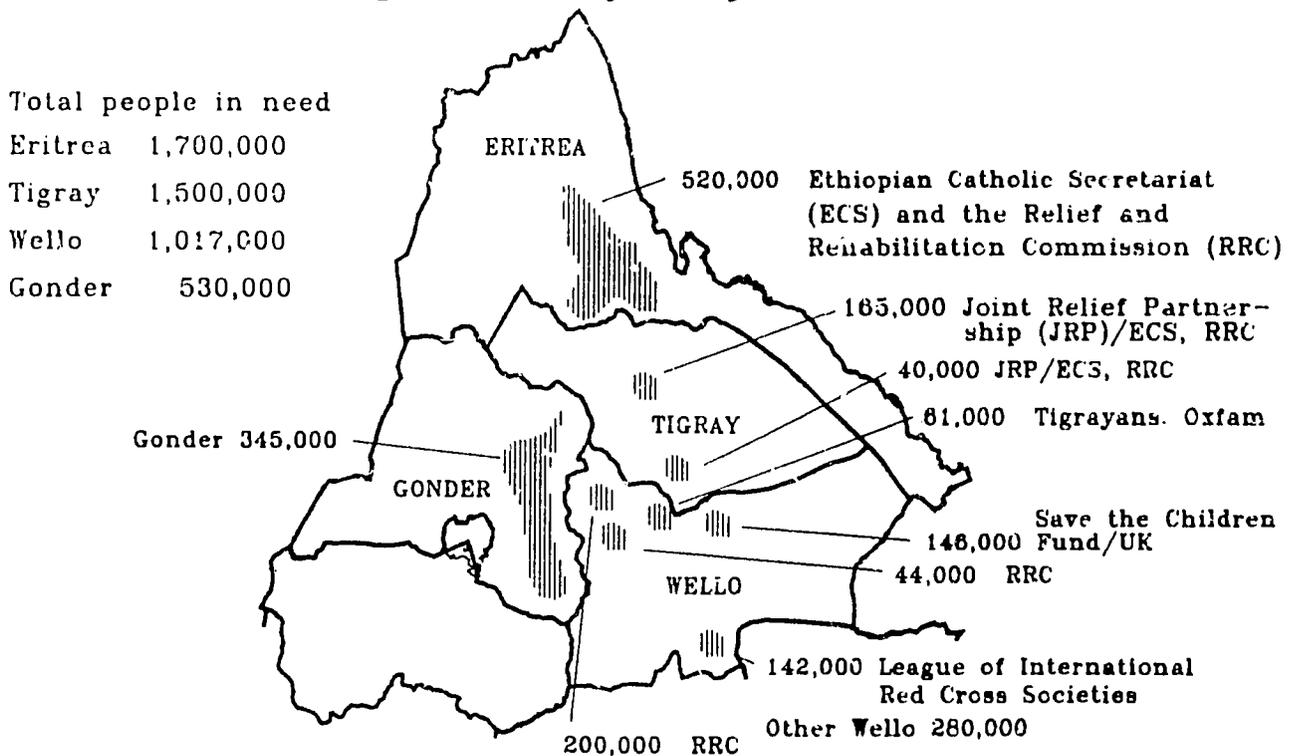
In the western part of Ethiopia, the influx of Southern Sudanese refugees continues to grow. During 1987, over 120,000 Sudanese, many of whom are young Dinka males fleeing from warfare, arrived in the four United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) refugee camps near Gambela in Iiubabor. Through April and early May, approximately 8,000 people were arriving per month, many in very poor health. This increased flow into the camps has stretched resources very thin, and the

Location of At-Risk Populations



Source: USAID/Addis

Beneficiaries of Emergency Food Assistance April, early May 1988



FEWS/PWA, June 1988

Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Ethiopia (GDPRE), the UNHCR, and donors are working out plans to supply the camps after the main season rains (expected from June through September) make access difficult.

Emergency Food Distributions

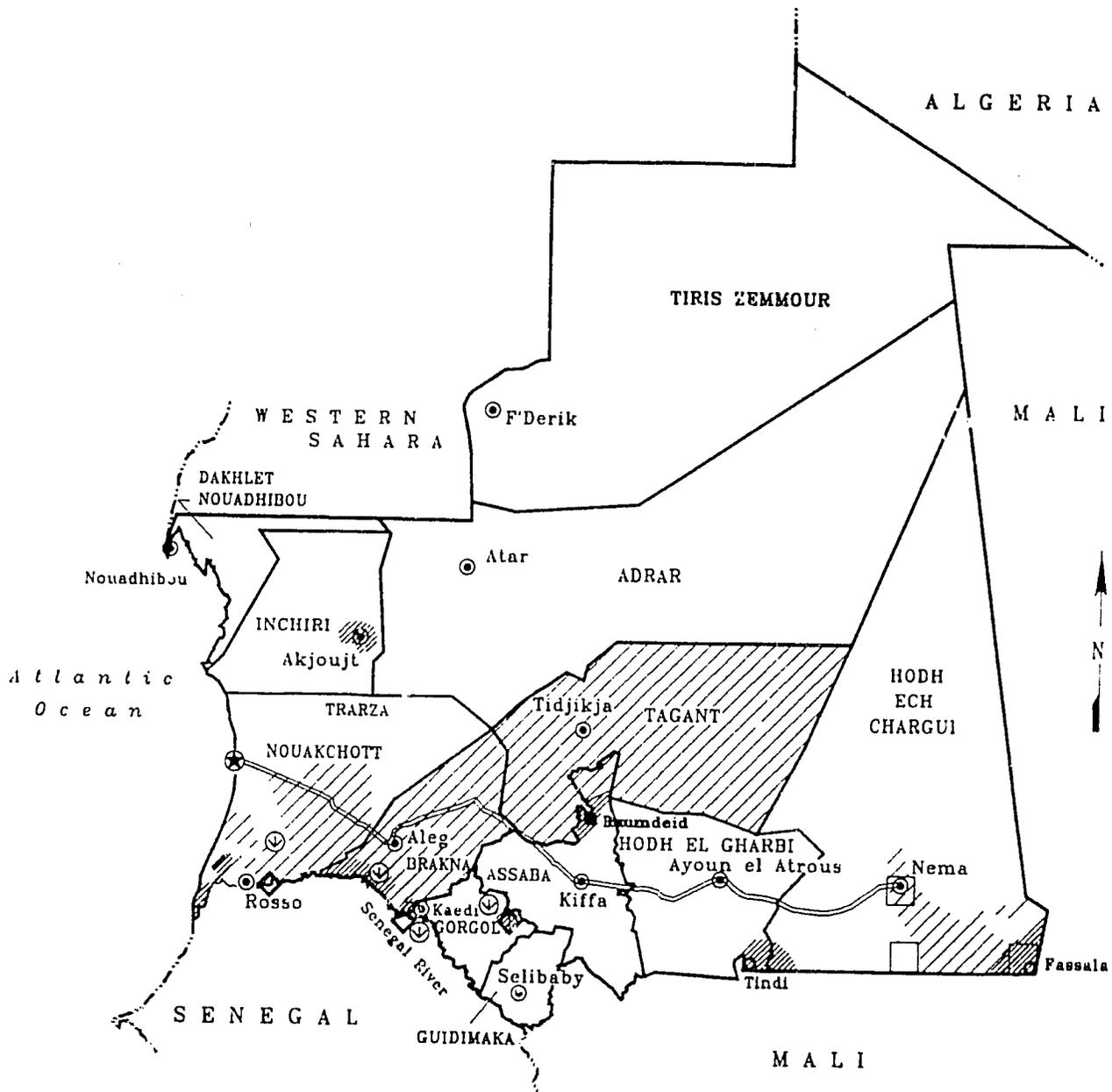
If emergency food distributions continue at the current reduced pace, emergency food stocks could rise above 800,000 MT by the end of 1988. The lower than projected distributions have put pressure on the government and donors to readjust the emergency food pipeline, which has pledges totaling over 1,500,000 MT. Diversion of some food shipments to other ports, delays in fulfilling pledges, and construction and discovery of new food storage sites will help, but not solve the problem. Seeking to assure the survival of the nation, the GDPRE has decided that increased food distributions must remain of secondary importance. Donors have therefore largely been forced to decide among themselves where the balance lies between pre-positioning sufficient supplies inland to cover any possible resumption of full-scale distributions, and not needlessly risking loss or spoilage of emergency food stocks in Ethiopian ports and district centers.

Rains and Crop Development

The failure of the Belg rains in March appear to have had a serious impact on low and mid-altitude plantings. Crop losses will be total in many of these areas. Highland Belg crops may not have suffered as badly; crop yields have been reduced by 20 to 30%. As the harvest of these crops occurs in late May and June, better estimates of production, losses, and the impact on populations in Wello and Shewa Regions will be possible.

The resumption of rains in April led to some optimism about planting of the long-cycle main season crops. Nevertheless, lowland areas have continued to receive only very light rains, if any. Rainfall figures for May, available for only 19 of the country's rain stations, suggest that the pattern continues to be one of generally low rainfall broken by dry spells and, infrequently, by heavy rains. Because it is still early in the year, this unfavorable pattern does not yet suggest any reason for alarm.

Mauritania



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊛ National Capital ⊙ Regional Capital ● Department Seat - - - International Boundaries — National & Regional Boundaries - - - Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Malian Touaregs have sought aid ▨ Vulnerable areas ▩ Areas of highest vulnerability ⊕ CSA rice purchase centers ◇ Vulnerable areas not receiving aid
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0 50 100 150 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers

MAURITANIA

Food Distributions Underway



Summary

Identified areas of potential food shortage are slightly reduced from previous area estimates, based on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's (GIRM) April 1988 assessment of the 1987 cereal harvest. Most of the identified problem areas are included in the GIRM Food Security Commission's (CSA) April-to-June free food distribution campaign, which should serve 72,400 households. The few needy areas not covered by the plan contain about 19,000 people. With no new donor pledges of free distribution stocks for 1988, the CSA free distribution stocks are extremely low.

The new harvest assessment shows a decrease in the area totally dependent on flood recessional agriculture¹, thereby lowering the estimate of people living in vulnerable areas by 12,000 (to 264,300).

The CSA's cereal buying campaign is expected to come close to its goal of purchasing 15,000 MT of rice. The campaign will fall far short of previous years' purchases of millet and sorghum, however, implying a lack of marketable surplus of coarse grains in some areas. This is in spite of the strong (for Mauritania) coarse grains harvest during 1987.

Desert locusts have apparently been controlled in Morocco and Algeria, but moved southward to Mali and Senegal in April and were sighted in Niger and Mauritania at mid-May. The consequences of this early southward movement are not yet clear. For Mauritania, the growing season does not begin until late June or early July, so current locust swarms pose no direct threat.

Food Security

Most of the areas noted in Table 1 as being at risk of food supply problems will have received free food aid by June. Identified vulnerable areas not included in the current or previous Fiscal Year (FY) 1988 CSA campaigns are: a small section of Gorgol Region just west of Kaedi, a small section of Trarza Region just east of Rosso, and villages in M'Bout Department of Gorgol Region (Map 1). Children formerly enrolled in the Catholic Relief Services food programs in areas other than Nouakchott are also not targeted for free food aid. Distribution during April to June is planned to serve 72,400 households, or 362,000 people (about 19% of Mauritania's population). The aid will be disbursed via distribution rolls drawn up in 1984, which are known to be no longer accurate but to which there is no alternative -- the CSA has not taken a thorough survey to update the official list of needy families since 1984.

¹ In flood recessional agriculture, crops are planted in soil left moist by receding river levels. During 1987, the Senegal River did not flood in Brakna and Trarza Regions, precluding any flood recessional agriculture in those regions.

Table 1: Populations in Mauritania with Potential for Food Shortages

Regions/Groups	Reason for Assessment	Population in Affected Areas/Groups¹
Riverine Population	Lack of recessional agriculture in 1987	48,000 people
CRS Program Children	Closing of the CRS Maternal and Child Health Program in November, 1987	10,000 children under five years of age
Hodh el Chargui Region, Tindi Area	1987 grasshopper infestation causing 100% crop loss	2,346 people
Inchiri Region, Akjoujt Town	Child malnutrition rates increasing since late 1985; closing of national copper mine	11,290 people
Hodh ech Chargui Region, Touareg Population in Southeast	Requesting assistance, appear to have no resources	2,832 families 14,160 people
Gorgol Region, M'Bout Department	Flooding of agricultural land in 1987	1,000 people
Hodh ech Chargui Region, Fassala Area	Lack of rainfall, agricultural production in 1987	4,000 people
Central Mauritania, Tagant Region northern Brakna Region	Lack of rainfall, agricultural production, pasture in 1987	116,500 people 50,537 people
Assaba Region, Boundeid Department	Loss of wadi recessional agriculture in 1987	6,397 people
TOTAL		264,290 people

Source: FEWS/Mauritania based on reports from CSA-run joint assessment missions, the GIRM/MRD April 1988 assessment of the 1987 harvest, and a University of Arizona/USDA/USAID/AGRES II Project study in the Senegal River Valley.

¹ The actual percentage of the population that is at risk of a food shortage is not yet clear for most of these areas.

The CSA will likely follow the April-to-June distribution campaign with a second aid distribution just as the planting season begins (which varies with the start of the rains). The second distribution will include some regions not covered in the spring distribution. In addition, FEWS/Mauritania reports a rumor that the Saudi government will repeat its generous 1987 donation of food to the northern Regions (Tiris Zemmour and Adrar) outside of CSA channels.

The Mission estimates that a total of 15,000 MT of food aid will be distributed during FY 1988, well under both the current donor-CSA cap of 20,000 MT and a previous target of 30,000 MT. The donor community expects that the CSA will request a transfer of cereal supplies from the sales stock to the free food aid stock. Without this transfer, spring and summer distributions combined with a lack of new food pledges for 1988 could leave the CSA's free food aid stock depleted.

The CSA buying campaign for rice appears to be on target, and has been greatly assisted by the Federal Republic of Germany. Of the 15,000 MT rice target for 1988, 10,400 MT have already been bought (about 22% of Mauritania's gross rice production). This year's rice purchase target is a 50% increase over the 1987 CSA campaign. The increase has been made possible by the doubling of rice cultivation during the 1987/88 growing season. The CSA has so far purchased most of the rice from the larger producers at Rosso, as the smaller producers have marketed their rice in Senegal, where the price has been almost double the CSA offer (32 Oughuiya (UM) per kilogram versus 18.5 UM/kg). Some of the rice was also purchased at Kaedi, Boghe (western riverine Brakna Region), and M'Bout (CSA purchase centers noted on Map 1). The CSA is planning a second rice-buying campaign in June, after the end of the rice harvest, to make up the difference from the targeted amount.

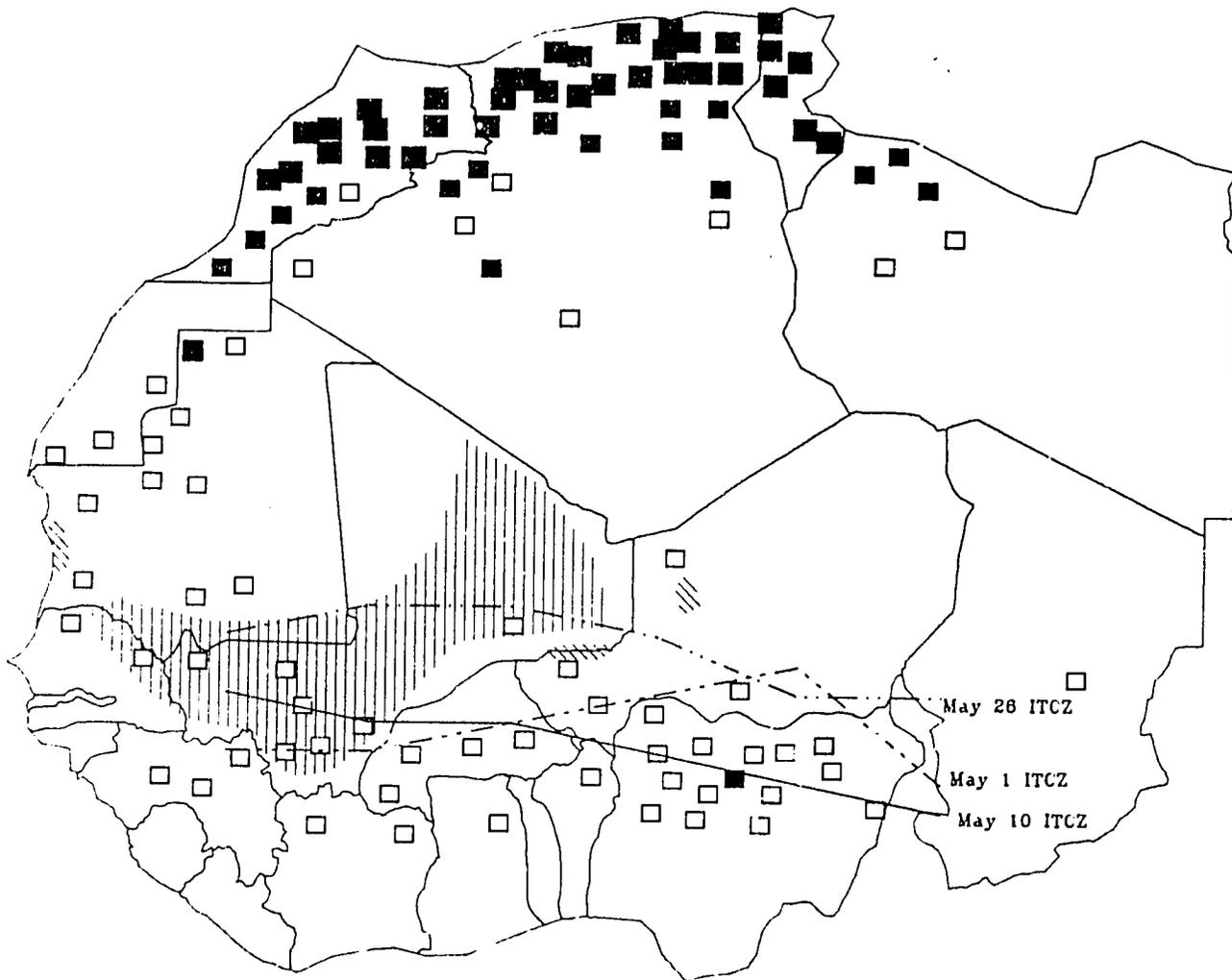
In contrast, the buying campaign for millet and sorghum (coarse grains) has acquired only 2,300 MT of grain so far, compared to a total of 5,000 MT purchased in 1987. It would be unlikely that the CSA would plan a second buying campaign for these rainfed crops, because their harvest is usually complete by December or January. This year's coarse cereals buying campaign was considered normal only in Gorgol and Guidimaka Regions. Reasons for the decline vary from region to region. In Trarza Region and the Kaedi area of Gorgol Region, the CSA's buying price of 21 UM/kg was less than the local market price, making the CSA an unattractive buyer. In the two Hodh Regions, however, no coarse cereals were purchased because the majority of local cereals had been sold to merchants to whom the farmers had become indebted in the previous growing season. This suggests a general lack of on-farm cereal reserves of those Regions. In Brakna Region, the lack of rain and the failure of the river flood caused a complete lack of rainfed and recessional agriculture, hence there were no coarse grains to market.

Desert Locusts

A 40 square kilometer Desert locust swarm travelled through Nouakchott from the south at mid-May, but its track was then lost. The swarm reportedly destroyed 50% of the green matter in the vegetation zone north of Nouakchott (trees and shrubs -- Nouakchott is not in an agricultural zone), but this is actually less troublesome than swarms sighted during April in the Sahel of Senegal and Mali (Map 2).

The extreme southern location of the swarms and the earliness of the sightings raise concern that the locusts will remain in the Sahel through the growing season, causing crop damage and then moving

April–May Desert Locust Swarms



	April 1988 Desert Locust sightings
	May 1988 Desert Locust sightings
Frequency of April Desert Locust swarm presence from 1939–1975	
	1 to 2 years out of 37
	3 or more years out of 37

Source: Desert Locust Forecasting Manual,
Mission Cables
FEWS/PWA, June 1988

back in much larger numbers to traditional breeding grounds in the Sahara. The factor that could keep the locusts in the Sahel is the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)¹. Experts fear that once the locusts move south of the ITCZ, they will be trapped behind it in the hospitable Sahel. The ITCZ is not stationary, and in fact can shift latitude greatly from one day to the next (Map 2). At the end of May, the ITCZ was quite far north compared to the norm. In the absence of recent locust reports, however, it is not clear whether the bulk of the locusts are north or south of the front.

If the locusts remain in the Sahel, it might be possible for them to go through four breeding cycles during the Sahel's growing season, rather than the more usual three for that time period. According to locust experts, however, the fact that the Desert locusts have been controlled in Morocco and Algeria is an encouraging sign, indicating that no new swarms should be moving south to join the swarms already seen. If the locusts move back to the Sahara before the rainy season is well established they will pose little threat to Sahelian agriculture this year.

¹ Also referred to as the Inter-Tropical Front (ITF) or the Inter-Tropical Discontinuity, the ITCZ is the area in which the warm, moist weather front originating in equatorial regions meets the colder air masses descending from Europe. Winds blowing from the south generally do not cross over the ITCZ. This is what could keep locusts trapped in the Sahel. The ITCZ stretches across northern Africa from the west coast almost to Sudan. The zone tends to move northward from early spring to late summer and then return southward during the fall. Rains generally occur about 100 km south of the ITCZ as the zone makes its annual circuit.

Famine Early Warning System (FEWS)

Country Reports

FEWS publishes monthly reports on Burkina, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, and Sudan. These reports are designed to provide decisionmakers with current information and analysis on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. Each situation identified is described in terms of geographical extent and the number of people involved, and the proximate causes insofar as they have been discerned.

It is necessary to identify or "target" populations in-need or "at risk" in order to determine appropriate forms and levels of intervention. FEWS reports will employ the term "at risk" to mean...

...those persons lacking sufficient food, or resources to acquire sufficient food, to avert a nutritional crisis (i.e., a progressive deterioration in their health or nutritional condition below the status quo), and who, as a result, require specific intervention to avoid a life-threatening situation.

Perhaps of greatest importance to decisionmakers, the process underlying the deteriorating situation is highlighted by the FEWS effort, hopefully with enough specificity and forewarning to permit alternative intervention strategies to be examined and implemented. Food assistance strategies are key to famine avoidance. However, other types of intervention can be of major importance both in the short term and in the long run, including medical, transport, storage, changes in economic development policy, etc.

Where possible, food needs estimates are included in the FEWS reports. It is important to understand, however, that no direct relation exists between numbers of persons at risk and the quantity of food assistance needed. This is because famines are the culmination of slow-onset disaster processes which can be complex in the extreme. The food needs of individual populations at risk depend upon when in the disaster process identification is made and the extent of its cumulative impact on the individuals concerned. Further, the amount of food assistance required, whether from internal or external sources, depends upon a host of considerations. Thus the food needs estimates presented periodically in FEWS reports *should not* be interpreted to mean food aid needs, e.g., as under PL480 or other donor programs.