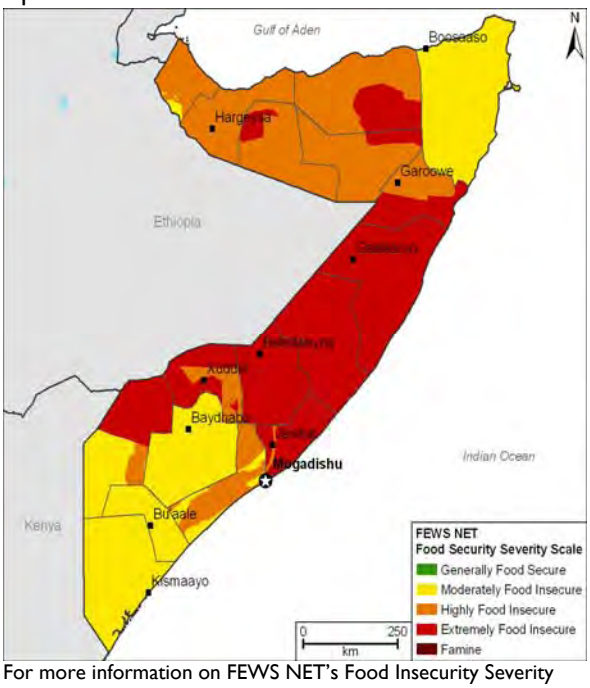
SOMALIA Food Security Outlook April to September 2010

- Increased and renewed conflict, mainly in Mogadishu and the central regions, and ongoing civilian displacement continue to fuel a humanitarian crisis. Increasing staple cereal prices, market instability, and the interruption of trade flows are expected to significantly increase in these areas and humanitarian access remains limited. As a result, IDPs and the urban poor in these areas remain extremely food insecure.

- In the most likely scenario, food security is expected to improve in many pastoral parts of the country between April and September, as good rainfall will lead to improvements in pasture and water availability, increased milk production, kidding, and calving. However, parts of central regions, IDPs in Afgoye, and parts of Soal plateau will remain in crises.

- For farmers in the south, food insecurity will persist through June, the peak lean season in this area. However, as of July, improvements in these cropping areas are expected to follow an average to above-average crop harvest. Some improvements are also expected in the Coastal Deeh and Cowpea belt livelihood zones and Togdheer agropastoral areas between July and September. In the Northern region, Awdal and Gabiley districts of Northwest food security will remain stable assuming normal *gu* rains.

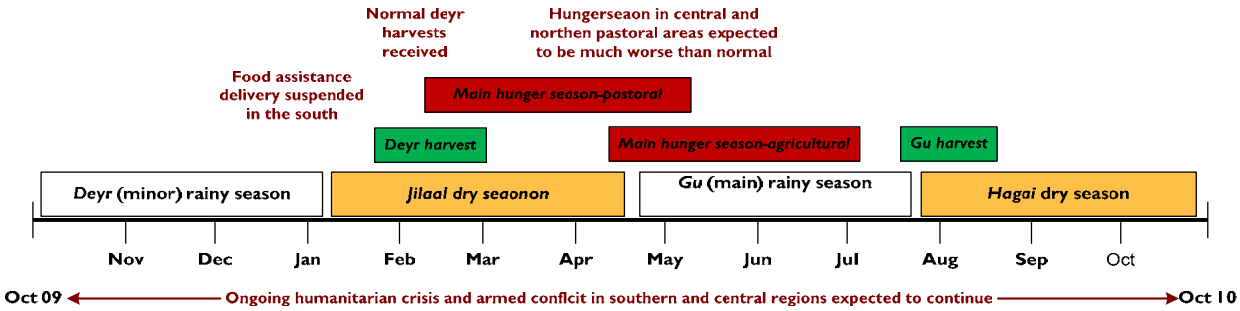
Figure 1. Current estimated food security outcomes, April 2010



For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale.

Source: *FEWS NET/FSAU*

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

Current food security conditions

Despite the ongoing relief programs in many parts of the country, especially in the central, northeast, and northwest regions where the security situation is relatively better, the overall food security situation in areas specified humanitarian crisis ove the past six months will are expected to remain food insecure. In cropping areas of southern Somalia, an above-

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average *deyr* season (Oct-Dec) crop harvest has led to improved food availability and access among pastoral and agropastoral communities in the region. However, the suspension of food assistance in southern Somalia as of January 2010, and conflict-related market disruptions have resulted in unseasonably high staple food prices (i.e., sorghum and maize), especially in Mogadishu, Qoyoley and Buale (Price Annex), offsetting some of these improvements. The urban poor and IDP households in southern Somalia, who also face limited income generating opportunities, are particularly affected.

Ongoing armed conflict in Mogadishu and parts of the central regions has resulted in large number of new IDPs and a new influx of refugees into neighboring countries since January. According to UNHCR over 150,000 people were reported to have been displaced during this period, with the majority of them settling in the Afgoye corridor. The IDPs are heavily dependent on humanitarian relief for their food and other essential needs, like shelter and water. The conflicts in Mogadishu and other parts of the country have also affected the access to income, particularly for IDPs and poor urban households in main towns who mainly depend on market purchase to meet food needs. Due to loss of income in urban areas coupled with very high prices for imported/high value commodities (e.g., V. Oil, pasta, wheat flour) most urban dwellers have shifted to the consumption of locally produced and traditional relief foods like maize, sorghum, and cowpea. However, due to market disruptions, reduced supply of locally produced cereals (maize and sorghum) to main markets, and the suspension of food assistance, the prices of these staple foods have also increased in many reference markets monitored by FEWS NET and FSNAU. For instance, compared to same month last year, the prices of maize in important producing areas like Qoryoley, Lower Shabelle and Buale, Middle Juba have increased by 55 percent and 27 percent, respectively, while in Mogadishu the price of the same commodity increased by 47 percent. Similarly, compared to last March, the prices of sorghum, another important staple food for IDPs and urban poor populations in Afgoye and Beletweyne, have increased by 11 percent and 147 percent during the same period. Compared to the five-year average (2003 – 2007), the price of maize and sorghum in these areas are 200 to 400 percent higher than April 2010 (Price annex). Taking seasonal price increases into account, such price surges within two months at this time of the year are very unusual.
Due to the continued conflict and market disruptions coupled with the ongoing heavy rains in the *gu* or main rainy season (April-June), which rendered most roads impassable, the flow of traded commodities within the country as well as population movement remains severely affected.

Unusual rainfall received in most pastoral parts of the country during the dry season in February and March have improved rangeland conditions and relieved severe water shortages, including most of the northwest and northeast. However, rainfall performance was less positive in the **central regions,** and so for livestock body improvements were not seen in these areas. As a result the prevailing extreme levels of food insecurity and high levels of acute malnutrition are expected to persist through at least the end of the year, especially in the **Hawd and Addun Pastoral livelihood zones**.

In the south, the early rains have prompted early land preparation and crop planting, hence increased farm labor opportunities for agropastoral and riverine communities. Improvement in pasture and water condition are also observed in key grazing areas of this region. In the southern and northern regions, and as a result, livestock body conditions and production for all species have improved. In addition, due to recent lift of livestock import ban by Saudi Arabia, increased livestock export has been reported (17 percent higher than the same month last year), leading to improved food security for pastoral communities.

Most-likely food security scenario April-September 2010

The most likely food security scenario for the April-September period is based on a number of assumptions. These include:

- Increased armed conflict in Mogadishu and central regions will persist.
- Average to good crop harvests are expected in July in key crop producing areas of the south such as Bay, Juba Shabelle and in the northwest region.
- Cereal prices may decline in July/August with harvests; therefore prices are expected to decrease from the current high level. Imported commodity prices will steadily increase in most main markets in the entire country due to Monsoon season (June-September).

- Owing to the recent lift of livestock export embargo by Saudi Arabia, the volume of livestock export through Berbera and Bosasso is expected to increase.

Based on these assumptions, the overall food security situation in the country is expected to remain as it is in the current situation between April and June 2010 whereby more than three million people will still remain in need of humanitarian and livelihood support (Figure 2). Nevertheless, FEWS NET predicts improvements in food security, starting in late June in **Coastal *Deeh* and Cowpea belt, Togdheer agropastoral** areas, **North Gedo,** and most pastoral communities in the north due to expected average crop production and improved livestock produce. These communities are currently either extremely or highly food insecure (Figure 3).

In the most likely scenario between April and September 2010, the persistent conflict, particularly in Mogadishu and central regions (south Mudug, Galgudud, and Hiraan), will drive further deterioration of food security among IDPs and urban host communities in different parts of the country. The conflict and the targeting of aid agencies and their staff will continue to limit humanitarian access in these area and further restrict market activities and trade flows, keeping cereal prices high. With the buildup of military and militia activities around Mogadishu and possibility of large scale armed conflict between the TFG and opposing groups, more civilian displacement and overcrowded IDP camps in the Afgoye corridor is expected. In the next three months (April-June), according to the UN's "South Central Somalia Conflict Scenario"**,** up to 490,000 people could be displaced nationally in a worst-case scenario. The epicenter of the current conflict in the country is Mogadishu, central regions and Juba, and the projected IDPs are mainly expected to come from these regions. Availability of casual labor opportunities will be minimal particularly in areas with heavy concentrations of IDPs. In addition, continued suspension of food assistance in the south will likely result in a reduction in market supplies and a subsequent continuation of rising cereal prices in main towns, where majority of the population heavily rely on market purchase. Piracy activities will affect volume of import and export which in turn will have negative impact on the local economy. IDPs in the Afgoye corridor and Mogadishu and drought/conflict households in the central regions will remain extremely food insecure during the outlook period. However, the severity of food insecurity in areas accessible to humanitarian agencies is likely to be somewhat mitigated by food aid and nutritional support.

Figure 2. Most likely food security outcomes, April to June 2010

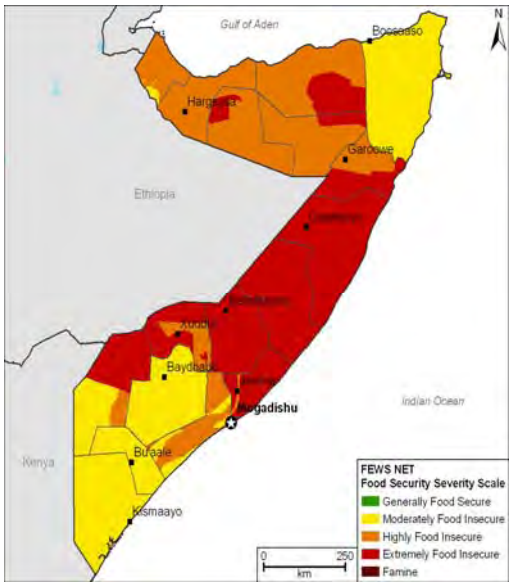
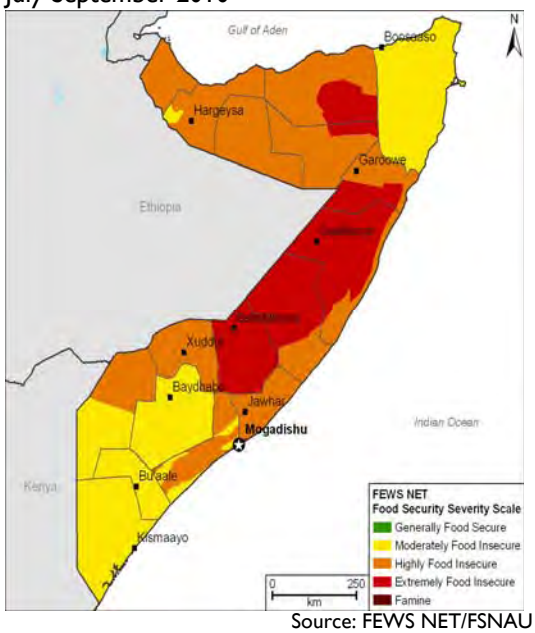


Figure 3. Most-likely food security outcomes, July-September 2010



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

In the south, current moderate/high levels of food insecurity are expected to decline through June as rising staple food prices erode the benefits of an average/above average 2009 *deyr* harvest. However, a worsening security situation in **Juba,** will result in a decline in cross border trade movements between Kenya and Somalia and increase of cereal prices such as maize and sorghum. As a result, cross border movements and people coming to Dadab refugee camps will increase. Then, beginning in July, average to above-average crop harvests will likely lead to improvements in food security in cropping areas of **Juba and Shabelle regions.**

In most parts of **Golis-Guban**, **parts of Sool Plateau** and some parts of **Nugal valley,** food security will likely improve between April and September due to improved livestock to cereal terms of trade that are expected to follow to early rains followed by average *gu* rains and the subsequent improvements in pasture and water availability. Increased livestock prices due to rising export demand will also contribute to improved household income in these areas mainly to middle and better off households. Drought affect areas in **Sool plateau**, **and rain deficit areas in Hawd**, **central Nugal**, **Gabi, Guban and costal areas of the north** have received average rains by alleviating water purchases, food security outcomes these areas will likely to improve.

Between July and September, some improvements in food security are expected in the **Cowpea belt agropastoral and Costal *Deeh* pastoral livelihood zones** in the central regions, however, this still leaves large number of population facing food crisis in this region following repeated drought and conflict. The recovery of livelihood assets of these regions would require several consecutive normal seasons. Improved livestock body condition will drive high livestock prices in the **Hawd and Adun pastoral livelihoods**. As a result of water and pasture availability expected between April and June, return of out-migrated livestock to their areas of origin is also expected which will result limited resource conflict.

In the north, livestock body recovery has taken into progress since late March 2010 and followed high conception rates for all species in April and afterwards, which may lead to recovery of food security situation, however a portion of Sool plateau pastoralists will remain in humanitarian crisis.

Table 1: Events which could affect the food security outlook

Geographic Focus Area	Possible events in the next 6 months that would change the most likely scenario in this area	Impacts on food security conditions	Likelihood of occurrence*	Key variables to monitor
Central	Above normal *gu* rainfall and cessation of conflict	Above normal gu rains will improve access to livestock products. Cessation of conflict will allow displaced communities to return to their home areas and ease burden on host communities.	Unlikely	Cumulative precipitation and its distribution Population movement and number of conflict incidences
Sool Plateau and Nugaal valley	Worsening and emerging crises due to erratic *gu* rains Political instability/conflict in contested areas	Re-emergence of conflict between the Puntland and Somaliland over Sool and Sanaag regions lead to political tension and disruption of transport and trade flow.	Unlikely	Cumulative precipitation and its distribution Population movement and conflict incidence.

* Probability levels	Description
Unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed moderately
Very unlikely	Could occur in the time period if conditions changed significantly