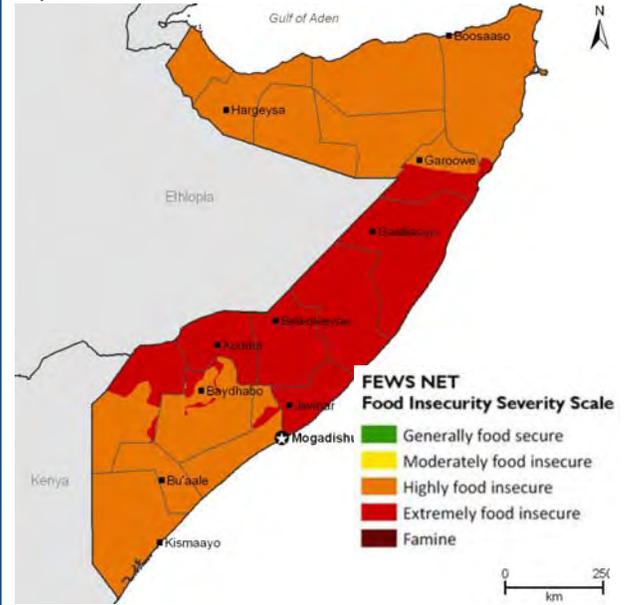


SOMALIA Food Security Outlook

October 2009 to March 2010

- The 2009 *deyr* rains began in late September in most key pastoral areas in the north, northeast, and central regions, indicating an early onset of the much-needed 2009 *deyr* rainy season. Well-distributed rains have continued into early October in most drought-affected regions including Mudug, Togdheer, Nugaal, Sool, and Sanaag.
- In the most likely scenario normal to above-normal rains between October and December, due to the El Niño event, could end the prolonged drought and improve water and pasture availability. Nonetheless, food insecurity and relief needs will persist, with more than 3.6 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and livelihood support.
- Given the increased availability of water and pasture in most key grazing areas, a significant reduction in pastoral households' expenditure on water and migration is expected during the January to March period. However, recovery from the current drought in Bakool, Hiran, Galgadud, Mudug, Nugaal, Sool, Sanaag, and Togdheer regions is not expected during the next six months, as cattle and camel require several seasons of normal rainfall to calve and produce milk. Moreover, poor households cannot repay the high water and food debts incurred during the last several seasons, due to the dwindling number of saleable animals.

Figure 1. Current estimated food security conditions, September 2009

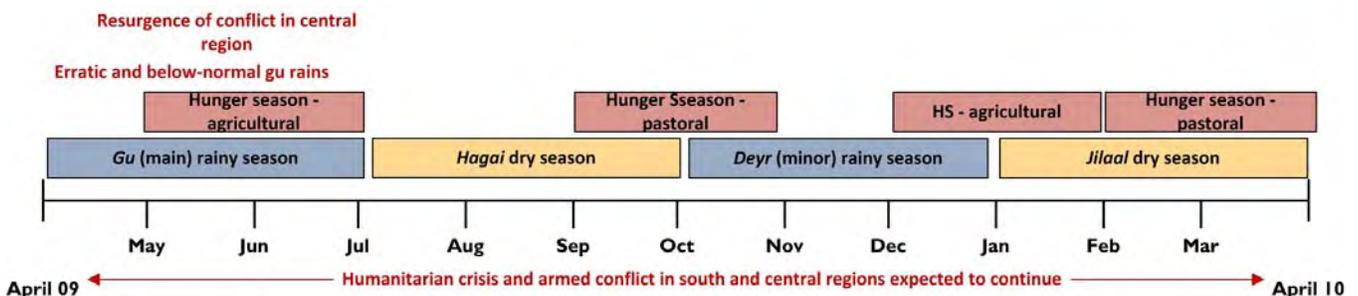


For more information on FEWS NET's Food Insecurity Severity Scale, please see: www.fews.net/FoodInsecurityScale

Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

- Increased/renewed armed conflict and civil insecurity, restriction of cross border trade, and market access will also continue to impede the pace of recovery. In the south, civil insecurity and armed conflict in Mogadishu, and parts of Juba, Bakool, and Hiran regions, will continue drive internal displacement and refugee movement into neighboring countries. Increased river levels due to possible heavy rains in the upper catchments in the Ethiopian highlands are expected to cause large scale flooding in the lower reaches of the Juba and Shabelle river basins, potentially resulting in extensive population displacements.

Seasonal calendar and critical events



Source: FEWS NET

Current food security conditions

Somalia faces one of the worst humanitarian crises in its recent history, with over 3.6 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and livelihood support. A combination of persistent and reinforcing shocks, including inflation, drought, conflict, and civilian displacement, has eroded households' ability to cope with crisis. Moreover, the global economic crisis has led to a decrease in remittance flows, affecting social and kinship support systems of Somalis. Rural and urban populations in southern and central regions remain the worst-affected, with an increased number of IDPs and increasing migration into neighboring countries.

In the traditionally stable economies of the north and northeast, severe drought threatens livestock marketing and trade, the mainstay of the economy. Falling income and revenues from livestock export and related activities has led to increased unemployment among youth in both Somaliland and Puntland. Meanwhile, due to the economic crisis in urban and rural areas, access to food and income become increasingly difficult. The findings of the recently concluded FSNAU-led post *gu* seasonal assessment confirm that the average Consumer Price Index for urban centers has increased by 65 percent since March 2007. The increase has been especially large in the North where the total number of urban poor in crisis has increased. Preliminary findings of the FEWS NET led multi-agency urban livelihood baseline study in Bosasso town (Northeast) confirm a significant gap in poor households' food and income sources due to high food prices and low wage rates. The urban food insecurity condition is further aggravated by the continuous influx of IDPs from the drought-affected neighboring pastoral areas, southern Somalia and, Ethiopia, which led to stiff competition for the limited income earning options. These conditions have pushed a large number of youth toward extreme high-risk coping mechanisms, including increased sea piracy and unprecedented levels of illegal human migration to East Africa, North Africa, and Europe.

In south and central Somalia the food security and nutrition situation remains precarious. About 75 percent of the 3.6 million people in need of assistance are concentrated in these regions. In particular, extreme levels of food insecurity persist in Mudug, Galgadud, Hiran and Bakool regions, which are the epicentre of the current humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Moreover, the majority of the 1.55 million internally displaced people who are currently in humanitarian crisis are located in south and central regions. New IDPs are also fleeing daily from the fighting and conflict in Mogadishu and more recently from the coastal town of Kismayu in the south where several days of armed confrontation between two opposing armed groups in Kismayu town and surrounding areas triggered a new wave of internally displaced persons. According to FEWS NET partners on the ground most of the new IDPs from Kismayu fled to areas bordering with Kenya, including Afmadow, Dhobley, and Badhadhe in the Lower Juba region and, west Jilib in the Middle Juba.

According to findings from FSNAU and partner's nutrition assessments, GAM rates in several parts of the country including the Bakool pastoral livelihood zone, and Gedo, Central, and Hiran regions remain above the 15 percent emergency threshold. Currently, over 285,000 children aged 6 -59 months are acutely malnourished, with 21 percent of the 285,000 acutely malnourished children residing in the Shabelle regions, followed by 20 percent in the five northwestern regions, 13 percent in Bay region, and 10 percent in Central and Juba regions. Specialized assistance for the treatment of acute malnutrition is needed in these areas.

Although prices of both imported and locally produced cereals in most reference markets have declined, prices have not reached the pre-inflation levels of 2007 and are still above the five-year average. High food prices coupled with lack of income earning opportunities continue to worsen food security in urban areas.

Rains began during late September in many parts of the north, northeast and central regions, indicating an early onset of the much-needed *deyr* 2009 rainy season in Togdheer, Hargiesa, Sool, and parts of Sanaag and Nugaal as well as central regions. Field reports confirm that the initial rains have been beneficial in terms of increased water access and browse. So far the rains have not resulted in the expected deaths of drought affected goats and sheep. A comparison between actual and normal rainfall for this time of the year shows that most of the north and northeast pastoral regions received above normal rainfall. If the trend continues over the coming weeks, it will end the drought. However, the humanitarian crisis will still persist through the middle of next year. Moreover, if rains become above normal it would worsen the conditions of conflict displaced civilian populations in different parts of the country, especially in Mogadishu and central regions where the majority of the IDPs are located. Access to food could also worsen in areas where road access is hampered by the heavy *deyr* rains.

Despite increasing humanitarian needs, there has been a significant drop in humanitarian funding for Somalia in 2009. While the number of people in need have doubled from 1.8 million in January 2008 to 3.6 million in 2009, humanitarian funding has dropped by nearly 40 percent according to UN OCHA. This year, the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) has received approximately US\$459 million of 849 million requested (54 percent). Continued humanitarian assistance and livelihood support is required especially in areas where a significant number of the population is extremely food insecure.

Most-likely food security scenario (October 2009 to March 2010)

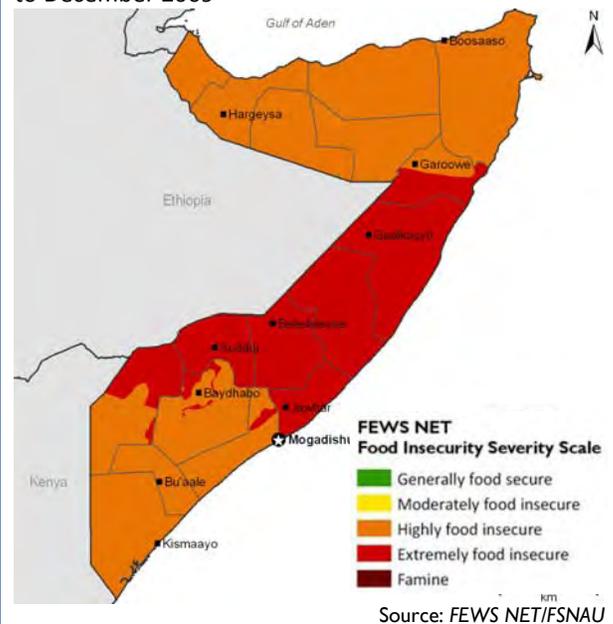
The most likely food security scenario for the October 2009 to March 2010 period is based on a number of assumptions. These include:

- The East Africa Climate Outlook Forum and local weather forecasts indicate that the observed El Niño event is expected to be associated with normal to above-normal rainfall in the secondary rainy season (October to December).
- Above-normal *deyr* rains lead to improved water and pasture availability and end of the drought in the north, northeast, and central regions, and in parts of Bakool. However, livestock productivity (milk and ghee production) remains poor (since livestock conception and calving take 1-2 seasons), hence humanitarian emergency persists through December.
- Heavy *deyr* rains result in severe flooding along the Juba and Shabelle river basins, causing large-scale population displacement in riverine communities.
- Escalation of the multi-dimensional conflict between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and opposition groups and within the opposition in Mogadishu, Shabelle, central regions and Juba region, resulting in more civilian displacement/refugees.

In the most-likely scenario through December 2009, the overall food security situation in the country will not show any improvement, and the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance will not fall below the current 3.6 million. However, in this scenario good *deyr* rains will result in improved rangeland conditions, which will reverse the rate of livestock asset loss, especially among sheep and goats. Some relief is therefore expected (improved water and pasture hence reduced expenditure on water and migration) in the drought affected regions of Hiran, Galgadud and Mudug, Sool, Sanaag, Nugaal and Togdheer.

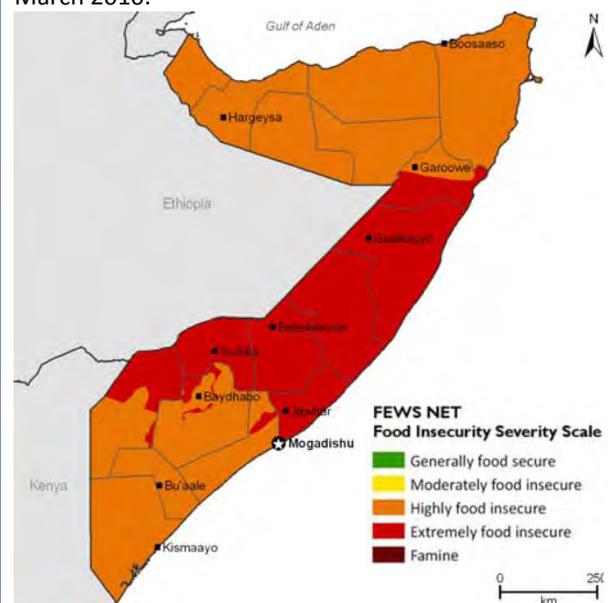
In the areas that are currently extremely food insecure, including parts of Gedo, Bakool, Middle Shabelle, Hiran, and central regions (Figure 1), several seasons of poor rainfall have affected the main livelihood sources through reduced crop production and decimated livestock. While the overall food security situation may not deteriorate further, it is unlikely that livestock productivity and value will recover soon, even if the prevailing *deyr* rains are above normal. Though pasture and water access

Figure 2. Most likely food security scenario, October to December 2009



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

Figure 3. Most-likely food security scenario, January-March 2010.



Source: FEWS NET/FSNAU

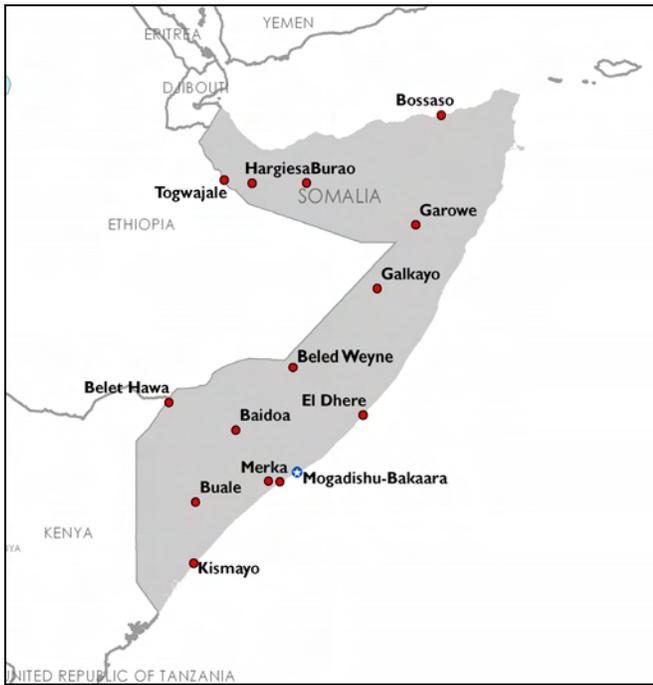
may improve, livestock calving rates (and therefore milk production) in these pastoral communities is not expected to improve within six months, as cattle and camel (the main livestock species in these regions) require more than one season of good rainfall to conceive, calve, and produce milk. Moreover, poor households cannot repay the high water and food debts incurred during the last several seasons due to the dwindling number of saleable animals (herd sizes are well below sustainable levels). Therefore, the population in these regions will continue to face extreme levels of food insecurity in the coming six months.

Increased river levels due to heavy rains in Ethiopian highlands and within Somalia will likely trigger flooding along the river valleys. This flooding will be largely beneficial for both crops and livestock in the Juba and Shabelle river valleys as floods normally create opportunities for off-season crop production in the river valleys between January and April and improve fishing conditions. However, if the floods are severe, crops and underground grain stores will be destroyed and thousands of hectares of farmland in the Gedo, Juba valley, Hiran and Shabelle regions could be affected causing a significant reduction in the *deyr* harvest (February 2009) and inhibiting the drought recovery process among agropastoral communities in these areas. Heavy rains could also over-saturate the soil, affecting crop germination, and forcing farmers to replant their fields several times, delaying the harvest. They could also affect both internal and cross-border cereal trade, which could lead to serious food shortages in rural areas. Prices of the staple food and imported commodities in many regions are already high and may rise beyond the reach of many poor households. Flooding would therefore exacerbate the prevailing humanitarian crisis in those regions.

Table 1: Events that 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
Urban and IDPs	Cessation of armed conflict, return of IDPs to Mogadishu, and other urban centers.	Cessation of hostility and resumption of productive economic activities in main towns improves access to income opportunities, which will improve poor households' ability to purchase food and non food essential commodities.	Very unlikely	Number of newly displaced people, IDPs returning to their home towns, market activities, labor wages and terms of trade in urban areas.
South and Central regions	Below normal <i>deyr</i> rains	Below normal rains lead to another season of crop failure and worsening rangeland conditions in Gedo, Bakool, Hiran and parts of Juba and Shabelle.	Unlikely	Cumulative precipitation and its distribution

* 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



Monthly prices are supplied by FEWS NET enumerators, local government agencies, market information systems, UN agencies, NGOs, and other network and private sector partners.

Maize, sorghum, rice, and cowpea are the most important staple foods for Somalis. Maize and sorghum are the preferred staple in agriculture areas, while rice is more popular in pastoral and urban areas. Cowpea is an integral component of all households' diets. Mogadishu is Somalia's largest market with links to most markets in the country. Baidoa is a significant sorghum producing and consuming area. Qorioley is a large maize production area. Burao and Galkayo/Dhusamareb are exclusively pastoral where people depend on domestically produced sorghum and imported rice purchases. Togwajale is a sorghum producing area with links to Ethiopian markets; most cereal flows from Ethiopia pass through this market. Hargeisa is the capital of Somaliland and an important reference market for livestock trade with Ethiopia. Buale, located in an important maize production area in the southern region supplies most nearby markets. Eldhere and Merka are areas of cowpea production: the principal source of income. Bosasso and Kismau are both port towns and entry points of imports. Beletwene connects the south and central regions of the country, and also has linkages with Ethiopia. Bula Hawa is an important cross-border market with Kenya.

