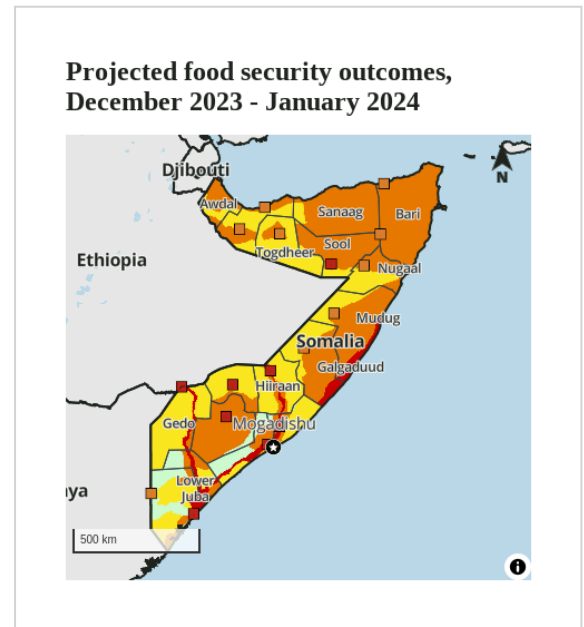


Flood-affected riverine areas face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes

Key Messages

- The October to December *deyr* rainfall season concluded as the wettest or second-wettest season on record. Heavy rainfall and flooding affected widespread areas of southern and central Somalia, displacing approximately 900,000 people and damaging an estimated 83,360 hectares of cropped land according to December estimates. Riverine livelihood zones have been among the worst affected given displacement and disruptions to typical livelihood activities and trade. In these and other badly flood-affected lowland agropastoral areas of the south, main-season *deyr* agricultural activities were completely suspended. However, recessional cultivation activities have started in December alongside the gradual recession of flood waters. Though households in these areas will likely not harvest until the recessional harvest in February/March 2024, recessional crop production will likely be above average given the abundant moisture that encouraged planting.
- In most areas of Somalia not affected by flooding, the plentiful rainfall during the *deyr* was largely beneficial for crop and livestock production activities, contributing to ongoing gradual recovery from the historic 2020-2023 drought. However, poor households in many drought-affected areas are still contending with reduced asset bases and atypically high debt levels. Most pastoralist livelihood zones have seen improvements in livestock conceptions and births in recent seasons, though livestock herd sizes remain below average in many areas, also resulting in below-average milk production for consumption and sales. Given the lasting impacts of the drought—compounded by the impacts of recent flooding in affected areas—typical social support structures are reportedly weaker than in past years.
- The provision of humanitarian food assistance continues to be scaled down from peak levels of 2022, with only 1.8 million (10-15 percent of the national population) reached in November 2023. Due largely to access constraints and limited funding, the humanitarian response to the flooding was reportedly more limited than in comparable years of severe flooding.
- Given the lasting impacts of the recent drought amid depleted *gu* food stocks, above-average prices, and reduced assistance, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist in many



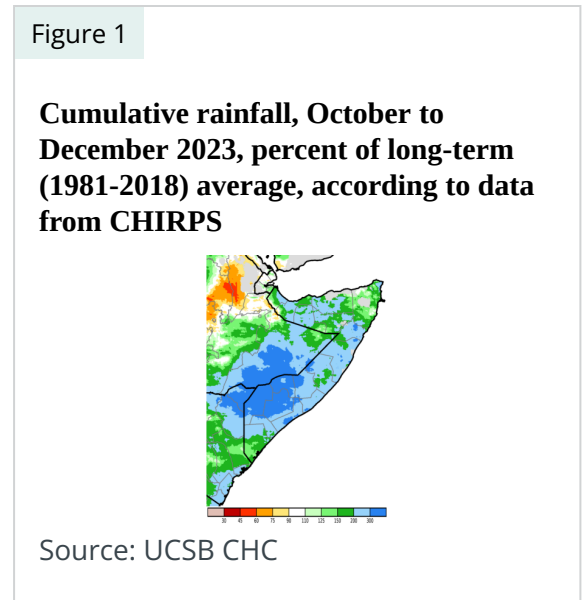
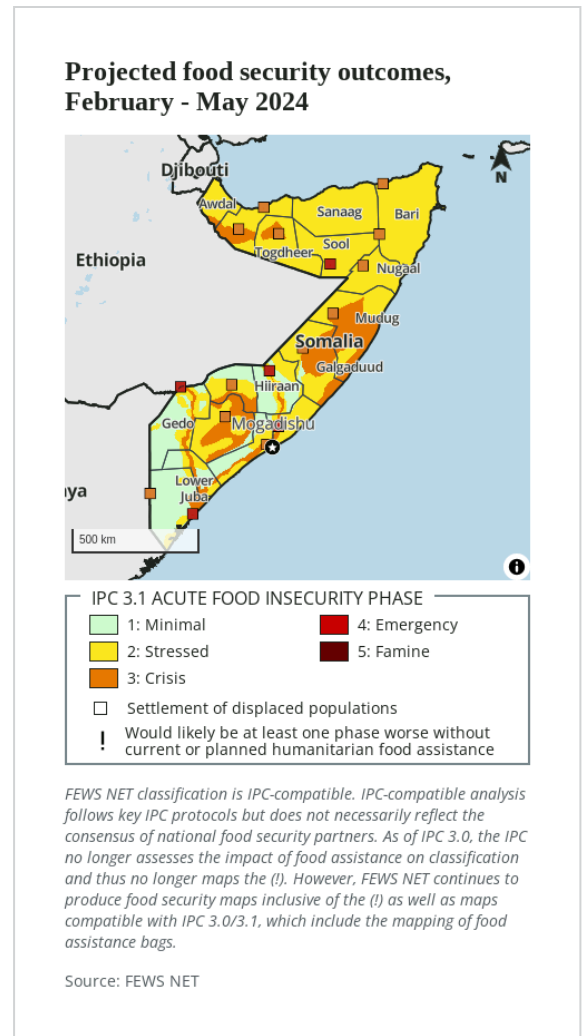
pastoral and agropastoral areas of the country in December. Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are expected in flood-affected riverine areas, in the badly drought-affected *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* livelihood zone of the central region, and in several settlements of people displaced by comparatively severe conflict and flooding. In the February to May 2024 period, improvement in outcomes is expected in most areas given improved access to food and income from the main- and off-season *deyr* harvests. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes will likely persist in flood-affected riverine areas, northwestern agropastoral areas affected by poor rainfall, central pastoral areas badly affected by the recent drought, and several displacement settlements.

Current Situation

Progress of October to December *deyr* rainy season: According to field information from the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit of Somali (FSNAU) and FEWS NET, 2023 *deyr* rainfall began earlier than normal—between late September and mid-October—in most parts of northern and central Somalia and in Bay and Bakool regions. The season started in most of the remainder of the country between late October and late November, with the latest onset in northeastern Somalia. Despite a slow start in early October, rainfall notably intensified in the latter half of the month. Overall, cumulative rainfall for the season (October to December) ranged from slightly above average across much of the north to more than 300 percent of average in southern and central Somalia (Figure 1), making for the **wettest or second wettest season on record** across widespread areas of the country. The heavy rainfall was associated with prevailing El Niño and positive Indian Dipole climate conditions.

Flooding: Heavy rainfall over both the river catchment areas of Somalia and in the upstream Ethiopian highlands drove severe river flooding in most of the Juba and Shabelle riverine areas of southern Somalia between October 24 and November 20. In affected areas, the heavy rains and floods destroyed standing *gu* off-season crops and prevented the maturation of early planted *deyr* season crops, including irrigated cash crops. According to FSNAU field reports in December, flash and river floods damaged approximately 83,360 hectares (ha) of cropped land: 37,700 ha in Juba, 20,850 ha in Hiiraan, 17,260 ha in Bay, 4,700 ha in Bakool, and 2,850 ha in Gedo. According to information from the Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA) as reported by **UN OCHA**, approximately 2.5 million people across Somalia had been adversely affected by the seasonal flash and river floods as of December 10, including 899,000 displaced.

In flood-affected riverine and agropastoral areas—particularly in Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle, Juba, and Gedo—many households lost any remaining food stocks after storage areas were submerged. Heavy rains and flooding also disrupted trade and transportation, blocking typical flows of cereals from surplus to deficit production areas and driving up prices in



areas with atypically low supply. Typical livelihood and income-earning activities—including labor—were significantly disrupted as towns were under water. At least in part due to flooding-related access constraints, only limited humanitarian food assistance was reported in flood-affected areas. The heavy rainfall and flooding have also increased the risk of water- and vector-borne diseases given the presence of contaminated and standing water. According to data from FSNAU, the number of recorded cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) and malaria increased by 26 and 85 percent, respectively, from October to November 2023.

Following this, rainfall ceased earlier than forecast in late November across most of the country, resulting in a dry spell between late November and late December that is typical for most of the country during normal seasons. As of the end of December, water levels in both the Juba and Shabelle rivers have declined to near or slightly above typical levels and remain below flood risk according to FAO SWALIM monitoring data (Figure 2). With the cessation of rainfall and the gradual recession of flood waters in many areas, the burden of displacement is easing as people are returning home. As of mid-December, poor riverine and agropastoral households in flood-affected areas are beginning to access off-season planting labor. However, in some areas—such as in Gedo and Middle Shabelle, key informants report that flood waters are receding more slowly.

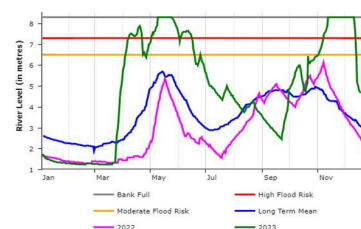
Deyr seasonal agricultural activities: Across most of the south, main season *deyr* crops have already germinated and other activities such as weeding are progressing. Despite some disruptions to planting associated with the heavy rainfall early in the season, most farmers were able to plant or replant, with the abundant moisture facilitating an overall increase in planted area. In areas along the Juba and Shabelle rivers, some farmers practiced dry planting during the main season. However, both standing crops and fallow farms were inundated due to the sudden rise of the river levels and associated flooding in late October and November. Following the cessation of rainfall in the second half of November, above-average temperatures spurred the recession of flood waters and allowed for the start of off-season recession cultivation, increasing opportunities for agricultural labor. However, agriculture labor wages in riverine areas are largely lower than at the same time last year and the five-year average due to low demand given the severe floods that inundated most of the riverine farms. In Raaxoole of Buale district, for instance, labor wages in November 2023 were 73 percent and 78 percent lower, respectively, than at the same time last year and the five-year average.

As of mid-December, recession cultivation had been completed in approximately two-thirds of southern agropastoral areas, with the remaining third still inundated with flood water. Overall, key informants estimate that 50 percent of cropped land in the agropastoral south will be harvested during the main season harvest period from late January to February 2024, with a gradual off-season harvest expected to follow across much of the remaining cropped land through February to March 2024. In southern riverine areas, most recession crops planted in December are too far behind schedule to reach maturity by January, and households will not harvest until the off-season *deyr* harvest in February/March 2024.

In central Somalia, the *Cowpea Belt Agropastoral* livelihood zone is the main agropastoral area. The *Cowpea Belt* received average to above-average *deyr* rainfall this season, which fully replenished water sources, facilitated crop and pasture development, and supported livestock conditions. No notable negative impacts of heavy rainfall were observed. Various typical cropping activities are underway, including weeding, protecting crops from rodents, and harvesting in the case of some early planted crops. These are providing poor households with some income from agricultural labor and are also likely providing some crops for own consumption and sales. Early estimates indicate that cowpea production is likely to be average to above average for the 2023 *deyr* season.

Figure 2

River water levels (m) in Beledweyne on the Shabelle River, according to river gauge station data



Source: FAO SWALIM

In northern agropastoral areas, a preliminary assessment conducted by FSNAU and the Somaliland Ministry of Agriculture and Development from November 21-30 found that prospects for the *gu/karan* harvest in November/December are worse than previously projected. Ground evidence indicates that rainfall was poorly distributed and insufficient to support normal crop production. A significant stalk borer infestation further spoiled the crop. Crop losses due to dry conditions and pests were high in the *Northwestern Agropastoral* livelihood zone, especially in Borama, Gabiley, and Hargeisa districts.

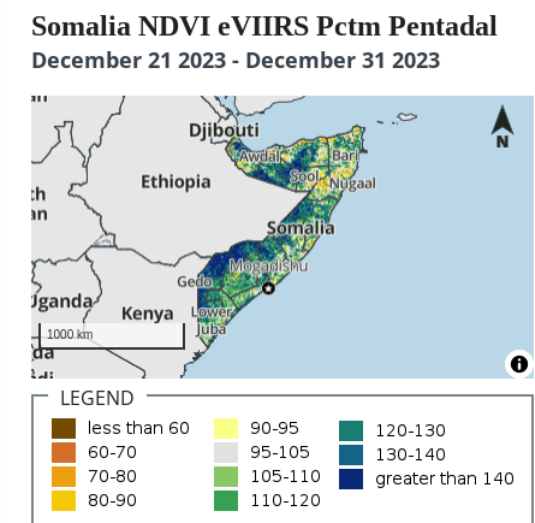
Rangeland conditions: Pasture and water availability improved significantly in November and December in most pastoral and agropastoral areas alongside the largely above-average rainfall (Figure 3). However, some pastoral areas in the northern Bari, Sanaag, and Woqooyi Galbeed regions received only light to moderate rainfall, and there has been little growth of pasture or refilling of water points. Overall low water and pasture availability persist in these areas, similar to what would be expected during the dry season.

Livestock: Supported by improvements in rangeland resources, most livestock body conditions are good and near normal. *Medium to high* livestock conception rates were observed across most pastoral and agropastoral livelihood zones during the October to December *deyr* season. Additionally, *medium* birth rates of goat and sheep were reported in October/November in most pastoral and agropastoral areas, while *low* rates of camel births started in November. Across the south, cattle calving rates were also *medium to low*. While livestock birth rates have yet to recover fully from the impacts of the historic 2020-2023 drought (particularly for large ruminants whose gestation periods are longer), these livestock births increased household herd sizes, contributing to ongoing gradual recovery of drought-induced livestock losses. Alongside these births, livestock milk production also increased in October and November, supporting households' food consumption and income from milk sales. However, in the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* livelihood zone, although conception levels and conditions of livestock have dramatically improved in recent months due to improvements in pasture and water supported by *deyr* rainfall, livestock birth rates have largely remained *low* due to poor conception rates in past seasons, which is in turn driving below-normal milk availability.

Goat prices remained unchanged from October to November in most markets due to broadly sustained supply and demand. However, in northwestern regions, goat prices increased by 17 percent from October to November alongside a typical seasonal reduction in imports from the Somali Region of Ethiopia due to impassible roads during the wet season. Given typical patterns of pastoralist migration to remote wet season grazing areas distant from markets, local agropastoralists are benefiting from reduced competition.

Staple food prices: Maize and sorghum are available in most markets, although stocks are being drawn down as supplies from the *gu* harvest are sold and consumed. From October to November, the price of red sorghum increased by 12 percent in Baidoa, the reference market for sorghum-producing areas, to reach levels 35 percent lower than the same time last year (during the time of peak drought impacts) but still 20 percent higher than the five-year average. In Qoryoley, the reference market for maize-producing areas, maize prices in November decreased by 5 percent compared to October, to reach levels 9 percent lower than the same time last year but 27 percent above the five-year average. Recent maize price declines are attributed to the near-average off-season *gu* harvest in September/October combined with reduced maize trade outflows due to torrential *deyr* rains that hindered transportation. These disruptions have also reduced maize supply to consumer markets in Lower and Middle Juba regions, driving rising prices. For instance, maize prices in Juba increased by 30 percent from October to November 2023, to reach levels 4 percent higher than last year and 30 percent higher than the five-year average. Maize prices

Figure 3



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

are also high in riverine areas, especially in the flood-affected markets of Juba, Gedo, Hiiraan, and Lower Shabelle regions, due to below-average off-season *gu* production, crop losses during the *deyr*, and low market supply driven by severe river and flash floods.

Household purchasing power: The terms of trade (a ratio) between labor wage rates and cereal prices have also declined in southern regions from October to November given rising cereal prices and flooding-related disruptions to labor activities. However, in most areas, purchasing power remains better than in November 2022 given the better *gu* 2023 and off-season cereal production, which is sustaining generally lower local cereal prices and higher agricultural wage rates compared to 2022 across most agropastoral areas of the country.

Conflict and insecurity: Insecurity continues to limit trade and population movement in the central, Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Juba regions. Additionally, unresolved interclan conflict in much of the Sool region and in Ceel Afweyn district of Sanaag region has further limited trade and of population movement, largely reducing income-earning opportunities and driving soaring food prices. This conflict also continues to drive loss of life, population displacement, and loss of assets.

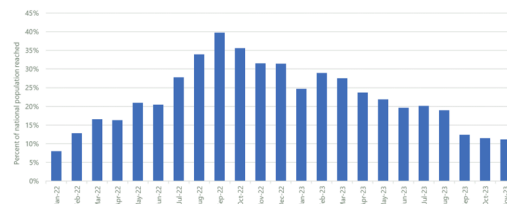
Humanitarian food assistance: The total number of beneficiaries reached with humanitarian food assistance declined further in October and November, with around 1.9 million people reached in October and 1.8 million people reached in November, representing between 10-15 percent of the national population reached monthly (Figure 4). These levels of assistance are significantly lower than the 3.1 million beneficiaries reached in August and the more than 4.7 million reached at the peak of assistance provision in February 2023. The scale-down in assistance is expected to continue in December.

In late November, the Russian Federation **delivered 25,000 tons of wheat** to Mogadishu port, representing the first of several shipments that Russia intends to donate to Somalia for use as humanitarian food assistance. However, most of the wheat has reportedly remained in the seaport due to transportation limitations linked to both Al Shabab restrictions and the recent heavy *deyr* rains that rendered roads impassable.

According to information from key informants and FSNAU field analysts, the humanitarian response to the floods was limited, and less than in past historic flood years. Donated boats were used to reach stranded settlements in the Gedo, Hiiraan, Juba, and Middle Shabelle regions for evacuation. However, at least in part due to access constraints, limited food reached flood-affected areas. WFP, in partnership with the Somali Disaster Management Humanitarian Agency, provided 100-110 USD to 1,492 flood-displaced people in Beledweyne town for two months. The Somali Red Crescent Society and other response agencies also provided clean water and non-food items to some displaced populations.

Figure 4

Number of beneficiaries of humanitarian food assistance reached monthly, January 2022 to November 2023

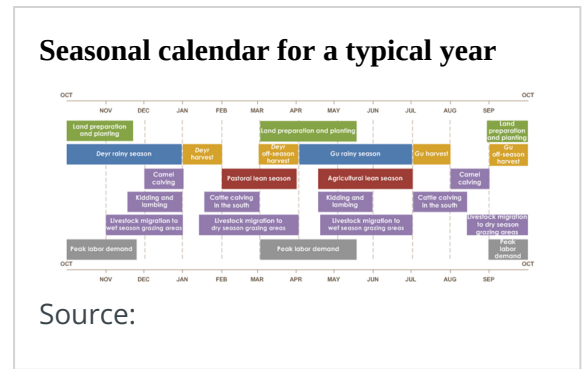


Source: FEWS NET, using data from the FSC

Updated Assumptions

The assumptions used to develop FEWS NET’s most likely scenario for the Somalia Food Security Outlook for October 2023 to May 2024 remain unchanged except for the following updated assumptions:

- In much of the agropastoral northwest, crop production is now expected to be even farther below the long-term (2010-2022) average than what was previously anticipated, due to poor *karan* rainfall performance in July and August and a high rate of stalk borer infestation. Some worst-affected areas are likely to experience crop failure, with no long-cycle sorghum harvest expected in November.
- Risk of water- and vector-borne diseases is likely to remain elevated for the rest of the season in flood-affected rural and urban areas as well as in displacement settlements, given the consumption of stagnant, unprotected water.
- In riverine areas, many households will likely not harvest until the off-season harvest in February/March. The off-season *deyr* harvest in Juba and Shabelle riverine areas in February to March 2024 is likely to be better than previously anticipated above-average production levels given the early cessation of *deyr* rainfall, high moisture levels, and above-average temperatures, likely to lead to increased area planted with cash crops. On the other hand, *deyr* crop production in the Gedo region is now expected to be minimal given damage to irrigation infrastructure and water pumps during the floods.
- In the central region, average to above-average cowpea production is anticipated following average rainfall received during the October to December *deyr* season.
- In riverine areas of Gedo, Hiiraan, Lower and Middle Juba, and Middle Shabelle, the availability of agricultural labor opportunities is likely to remain below average until the end of December, with improvement then expected through late March alongside off-season *deyr* agricultural activities.
- In agropastoral areas of Lower and Middle Shabelle, Bay and Bakool regions, seasonal demand for agricultural labor will likely persist at near average levels through January 2024.
- Given the expected increase in conflict and limited available funding, humanitarian assistance is likely to be further gradually scaled down, including to relatively stable regions that have not seen active conflict in a long time.



Projected Outlook through May 2024

The most likely food security outcomes through May 2024 remain generally as discussed in FEWS NET’s [October 2023 Food Security Outlook report](#).

In **riverine** areas, flooding during the *deyr* disrupted typical main-season agricultural activities, and many households will not harvest until the off-season *deyr* harvest in February/March 2024. Flooding-related disruptions to other typical income-earning activities as well as high cereal prices in many consumption markets given temporarily restricted supply further reduced poor households’ available resources. Poor households had limited capacity to cope with these shocks given already exhausted stocks from the previous season and low levels of social support reported by key informants compared to past flood seasons. As such, many poor households are likely to continue to face food consumption gaps through January, with Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes likely to persist. In the February to May period, riverine areas are expected to see improvement to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes following increased availability of labor opportunities since December, improved access to wild fish, vegetables, and fruits, and

improved access to food and income from the off-season harvest beginning in late February. However, many poor households will continue to face food consumption gaps given that crop harvesting will be gradual and most of their products will be sold to repay debts.

Agropastoral areas generally benefited from the average to above-average *deyr* rainfall. However, some areas affected by heavy rainfall and flooding are also likely to harvest late, in February/March 2024, prolonging the lean season. Despite improvements in access to food and income from crop and livestock production during the *deyr* season, many poor households continue to experience below-average livestock herd sizes and high levels of debt as they struggle to recover from the impacts of the 2020-2023 drought amid above-average food prices. As such, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to persist through January in most agropastoral areas before improving to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) in the February to May period given improved access to food and income from the main and off-season *deyr* harvest and seasonally declining cereal prices. However, the *Bay/Bakool Low Potential Agropastoral* livelihood zone is projected to remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) as many areas require several good seasons to recover from the recent drought; similarly, northwestern agropastoral livelihood zones will likely remain in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) given expectations for poor *karan* crop production and below-normal livestock holdings.

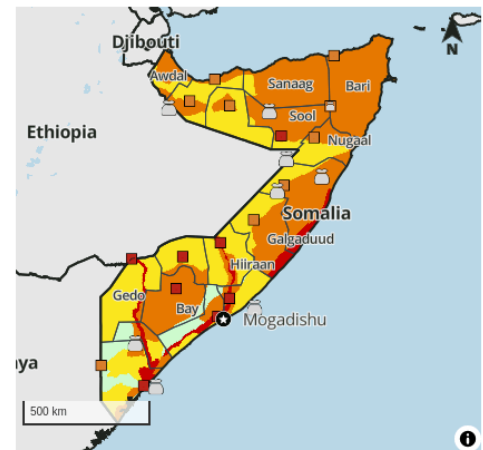
Given further improvements in livestock production during the *deyr*, most **pastoral areas** continue to gradually recover from the impacts of the 2020-2023 drought. Improvement to Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and even Minimal (IPC Phase 1) outcomes is expected in many areas in the February to May period given improvements in livestock production during the beginning of the *gu* season around April. However, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes will likely be sustained in several of the worst drought-affected areas, including the *Coastal Deeh Pastoral* zone of central Somalia where livestock holdings are still very low and unsustainable.

Resources supporting **displacement settlements** continue to be stretched thin given waves of new displacement, including most recently driven by conflict and flooding during the *deyr*. While flood-displaced households will continue to return home in the coming months, Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes are likely to persist in many worst-affected settlements as conflict drives fresh waves of displacement amid highly limited income-earning opportunities and anticipated further reductions in humanitarian assistance.

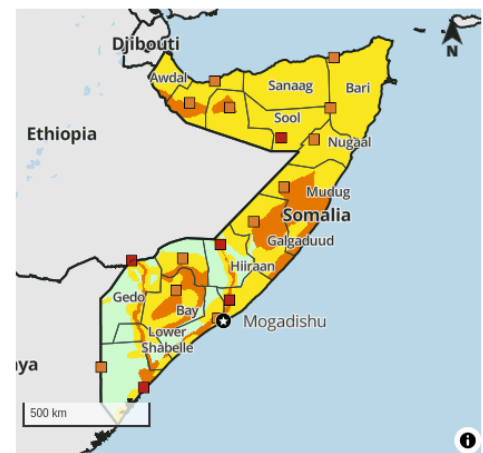
Recommended citation: FEWS NET. Somalia Food Security Outlook Update December 2023: Flood-affected riverine areas face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes, 2023.

Each of these maps adheres to IPC v3.1 humanitarian assistance mapping protocols and flags where significant levels of humanitarian assistance are being/are expected to be provided. 🍲 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average 25-50 percent of caloric needs from humanitarian food assistance (HFA). 🍲 indicates that at least 25 percent of households receive on average over 50 percent of caloric needs through HFA. This mapping protocol differs from the (!) protocol used in the maps at the top of the report. The use of (!) indicates areas that would likely be at least one phase worse in

the absence of current or
**Projected food security outcomes,
 December 2023 - January 2024**



**Projected food security outcomes,
 February - May 2024**



IPC 3.1 ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY PHASE

 1: Minimal	 4: Emergency
 2: Stressed	 5: Famine
 3: Crisis	

- Settlement of displaced populations
- \geq 25% of households met 25-50% of their kcal needs through HFA
- \geq 25% of households met $>$ 50% of their kcal needs through HFA

FEWS NET classification is IPC-compatible. IPC-compatible analysis follows key IPC protocols but does not necessarily reflect the consensus of national food security partners. As of IPC 3.0, the IPC no longer assesses the impact of food assistance on classification and thus no longer maps the (!). However, FEWS NET continues to produce food security maps inclusive of the (!) as well as maps compatible with IPC 3.0/3.1, which include the mapping of food assistance bags.

Source: FEWS NET

About Food Security Outlook Update

This Food Security Outlook Update provides an analysis of current acute food insecurity conditions and any changes to FEWS NET's latest projection of acute food insecurity outcomes in the specified geography over the next six months. Learn more [here](#).