

By Mohamed Mire

Humanitarian-Climate Nexus in Somalia: Devastating Hunger Amidst Drought

Key highlights

- By June, over half of the population (or 7.1 million people) is set to face acute food insecurity, of whom, over 11 per cent (or 1.8 million people) are anticipated to hit emergency status, 223,000 people classified in famine, and over 26 per cent (or 4.4 million people) to cross a level considered a crisis.
- By nutrition, as of June this year, nearly 1.8 million children under five (or 54 per cent of the overall population of children) are projected to fall into malnutrition, of these, over 513,000 is set to cross severe malnutrition.
- By March, an estimated 822,000 people have displaced within Somalia, of whom, 245,000 and 133,000 have displaced over drought and flood events, respectively.

Introduction

With extreme climate-induced events in the Horn of Africa, Somalia is grappling with a historic drought worst in a 40-year history following a series of under-performed rainy seasons resulting in an appalling humanitarian crisis amid tensions and insecurity. Climate change as a “risks-multiplier” would not only leave longer-lasting effects on the livelihood means of the most vulnerable communities that had been consistently suffering from back-

to-back famine but also undermines peace, social cohesion, ignites human rights abuses, and escalates local communal tensions compromising Somalia’s peace and state-building efforts. Against the backdrop of this, Juba Institute concisely analyses impending risks and provides a set of policy interventions to the Government of Somalia and its international donor partners to help alleviate the crisis.

Juba Institute is a Mogadishu-based, non-profit, and policy-oriented research institute, aimed at promoting climate adaptation through leading-edge research.

Food and Nutrition Security

Somalia's food insecurity situation hits a surprising record high after a series of underperformed seasonal rainfall over the last two years. According to IPC's predictions for April - June, over half of the population (or 7.1 million people) is set to face acute food insecurity, of whom, over 11 per cent (or 1.8 million people) are anticipated to hit emergency status, 223, 000 people classified in famine, and over 26 per cent (or 4.4 million people) to cross a level considered a crisis.

As for January - April's analytic results, unlike the above, the figures show, close to 5 million people were struggling with acute food insecurity rated as crisis or worse, to which, a staggering 1.4 million people were classified in emergency status, and 96, 000 people were considered as in catastrophe. By nutrition, as of June this year, nearly 1.8 million children under five (or 54 per cent of the overall population of children) are projected to fall into malnutrition, of these, over 513,000 is set to cross severe malnutrition, with an overwhelming majority of the same being recorded in drought-hit and security sensitive regions¹.

Displacement

According to UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) Somalia, by March, an estimated 822,000 people have displaced within Somalia, of

whom, 245,000 have displaced due to drought-induced events and 133,000 over downpour floods, with Baardheere district of Gedo region and Baidoa district of Bay region being mapped as the hotspot districts receiving the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) seeking protection at 131,000 and 71,000, respectively².

Wetter conditions

ICPAC's newest seasonal rain forecast for May-July (locally referred to as Gu) one the most productive seasonal rain in the country shows higher-than-average rainfall conditions over most parts of the country. Hence, this event may lead to a rise in the proportion of people displaced by flood-related incidents³.

Food Price Inflation

According to Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, the inflation rate in food hit a five per cent high in March this year following a drastic drop in local food supply due to a prolonged period of drought, intensive securitization exercise in the south and central parts of the country and soaring global food and energy prices stemming largely from the intense war in Ukraine⁴.

¹ IPC – Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (ipcinfor.org).

² Document – UNHCR Somalia PRMN internal displacement 28 February 2023

³ ICPAC May – July 2023

⁴ Somali National Bureau of Statistics

Recommendations

- The international community should help Somalia's Federal government in delivering emergency assistance to drought-affected communities by supporting disaster risk reduction mechanisms and ensuring that people in riskier settings are reached.
- The international community should help the Federal Government of Somalia in providing social safety-net support to agropastoral, rural communities and extremely poor households in drought-stricken regions to elevate access to food, water, shelter, and health care.
- The international partners should support Somalia's government in upscaling feeding interventions for children suffering from critical malnutrition conditions.
- International partners should support the Somali government's strategic priorities on climate-driven human mobility and displacement to promote the adaptive capacities of vulnerable households to cope with increasingly frequent climate-related risks.

Endnotes

1. Somalia: Acute Food Insecurity Situation March 2023 and Projection for April - June 2023 | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (ipcinfo.org)
2. Document - UNHCR Somalia PRMN Internal Displacements 28 February 2023
3. May - July 2023 - ICPAC
4. Somali National Bureau of Statistics (nbs.gov.so)

About The Author

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About the Juba Institute for Climate Adaptation

The Juba Institute for Climate Adaptation is a Mogadishu-based, non-profit policy research institute dedicated to promoting adaptation to climate change through undertaking a blend of leading-edge research, in-depth analysis, timely policy briefing and frank dialogues shaping policies and strategies toward sustaining peace, building climate resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability for a peaceful, inclusive, and equitable transition in Somalia.



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