

Overview

The UN has declared famine in six areas of southern Somalia based on evidence that food access, nutrition and mortality outcomes in those areas surpass the thresholds of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), including:

- Global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates exceeding 30 per cent – estimated from representative sample surveys and by using weight for height and/or oedema tests to define global acute malnutrition.
- Crude mortality rates exceeding 2 deaths per 10,000 people per day population-wide, and 4 deaths per 10,000 per day among children under five.
- At least 20 per cent of households facing extreme food shortage.
- Food consumption below 2,100 kilocalories per person per day, as well as an extreme lack of micro-nutrients.

Monitoring food security

The IPC is used by two key organizations working on food security in the region:

- The Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), managed by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), provides a broad range of information and analysis on food insecurity and malnutrition in Somalia. FSNAU was founded in 1994 with funding from USAID.
- The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) is a USAID-funded activity that collaborates with international, regional and national partners – including FSNAU – to provide timely and rigorous early-warning and vulnerability information on emerging and evolving food security issues. FEWS NET produces monthly food security updates for 25 countries. The organization was created after the 1984/85 famine in Sudan and Ethiopia to anticipate possible impending famines and advise policy makers on how such famines might be prevented and their effects mitigated.

Indicators for southern Somalia

Data provided by these organizations indicate the serious nature of the situation in the Horn of Africa, and particularly in southern Somalia:

- According to FSNAU nutrition and mortality surveys across southern Somalia, the average global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence had reached levels significantly above the 30 per cent threshold in July and August, with a peak of 58.3 per cent in Bay region. The severe acute malnutrition (SAM) prevalence in Bay region stood at 22.1 per cent.
- Death rates for children under five years of age are higher than 4/10,000/day in all areas of southern Somalia, except in the Juba pastoral zone. In some areas, under-

five death rates even reach 15/10,000/day. This is equivalent to 10 per cent of under-five children dying every 11 weeks.

- Population-wide death rates are above the famine threshold (2/10,000/day) in the Bay, Bakool and Middle Shabelle (Balcad and Cadale) agro-pastoral livelihood zones – and more than double the famine threshold in Lower Shabelle and among internally displaced populations in the Afgoye corridor and Mogadishu.
- Local cereal prices across the south are far above average, more than triple the 2010 prices in some areas. These high prices have eroded the value of wages and livestock. Combined with reduced crop production, high food prices have resulted in substantial food deficits among poor and lower middle-income households, especially in marginal cropping areas.