

East African Drought (Expected***)**

- Since mid-July 2011, a severe drought has been affecting the entire East Africa region. Said to be "**the worst in 60 years**", the drought has caused a severe food crisis across Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya that threatens the livelihood of 9.5 million people
- Many refugees from southern Somalia have fled to neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia, where crowded, **unsanitary conditions** together with **severe malnutrition** have led to a large number of deaths.
- Other countries in East Africa, including Sudan, South Sudan and parts of Uganda, are also affected by a food crisis.
- **FAO:** According to FAO-**Somalia**, the food crisis in Somalia primarily affected **farmers in the south** rather than the **northern pastoralists**.
- **UN:** On 20 July, 2011, the United Nations officially declared famine in two regions in the southern part of the country (IPC Phase 5), the first time a famine has been declared by the UN in nearly thirty years. (**rebel-held Somalia**, southern Bakool and Lower Shabelle)
- Tens of thousands of people are believed to have died in southern Somalia before famine was declared.
- **Aid:** Although fighting disrupted aid delivery in some areas, a scaling up of relief operations in mid-November had unexpectedly significantly reduced malnutrition and mortality rates in southern Somalia, prompting the UN to downgrade the humanitarian situation in the Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabele regions from famine to emergency levels.
- According to the Lutheran World Federation, military activities in the country's southern conflict zones had also by early December 2011 greatly reduced the movement of migrants. By February 2012, several thousand people had also begun returning to their homes and farms. In addition, humanitarian access to rebel-controlled areas had improved and rainfall had surpassed expectations, improving the prospects of a good harvest in early 2012.
- **ICRC:** By January 2012, the food crisis in southern Somalia was no longer at emergency levels according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Although **security restrictions** precluded the collection of updated information in December/January for a few regions in southern Somalia, the UN indicated in February 2012 that indirect data from health and relief centers pointed to improved general conditions from August 2011.
- The UN stressed that continued **multi-sectoral response** is necessary to secure the recent gains made, and that general humanitarian needs requiring international assistance would persist until at least September 2012.
- Aid agencies have now shifted their emphasis to recovery efforts, including digging irrigation canals and distributing plant seeds. Long-term strategies by national governments in conjunction with development agencies are believed to offer the most sustainable results.

International Response:

- Humanitarian agencies have requested **US\$2.48 billion** to address the crisis, but as of 1 August have secured less than half that amount.
- The **European Union** announced it would provide **€5.67 million** to help millions of people in the Horn of Africa affected by the drought.
- On 16 July, the **UK government** pledged £52.25 million, on top of £38 million pledged earlier that month and more than £13 million raised.
- As of 25 August, the amount raised by the Disasters Emergency Committee had increased to £57 million.



- As of 5 October, the **Canadian government** and people also contributed about **\$142 million** CAD to the relief efforts in Eastern Africa, with the Canadian government pledging an additional \$70 million.
- In late August 2011, Saudi Arabia announced that it would donate **\$60 million** in aid to the drought-impacted peoples in Somalia and urged the **Al-Shabaab militants** to cease their hostilities so as to facilitate the delivery of relief materials.
- **Iran** dispatched multiple convoys of humanitarian supplies and \$25 million to the famine-stricken parts of the country, with **Lebanon** sending its first consignment to Mogadishu over the same period.
- Despite experiencing financial difficulties, **Palestinians** in the **Gaza Strip** also assisted in the relief efforts. Imams in mosques raised awareness about the drought crisis and its parallels with the Palestinian situation, and urged Palestinians to contribute; the Arab Doctors Union Gaza branch also launched a fund-raising initiative, with most donations coming from affluent entrepreneurs and local NGOs.
- Additionally, Bahrain donated \$3 million to the campaign, with Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Qatar, and Sudan also sending supplies
- **Turkey** dispatched multiple aid convoys to Somalia, working closely with the Somali Red Crescent Society to deliver the materials to the drought-stricken parts of the country.
- **China**, Venezuela, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Indonesia have assisted in the humanitarian campaign, with Malaysia dispatching aid workers on site.
- The U.S. has pledged an additional \$5 million to help refugees from Somalia. However, the U.S. has withheld aid from the Somalia region, due to recent regulations which prevent the sending of food aid that risks "materially benefiting" designated terrorists, in this case the rebel group **Al-Shabaab**.
- The regulations came into force after reports that Al-Shabaab was "**taxing food convoys**", and as a result U.S. aid spending in Somalia has dropped from \$150 million to \$13 million this year.
- The UN's declaration of famine has been its first since the 1984–1985 famine in Ethiopia, when over a million people died.
- Under international law, there is no mandated response which must follow from an official declaration of famine. However, it is hoped that the use of the term will serve as a "**wake-up call**" to the rest of the world, who have so far failed to respond.
- On 27 July, the **UN World Food Programme** announced that it had begun an **airlift of food to Somalia**. Ten tonnes of food were delivered to Mogadishu, with plans to expand delivery to southern Somalia where millions remain inaccessible, and may be too weak to cross the border into neighbouring Kenya. Delivery of food to the region remained complicated by the refusal of al-Shabaab militants to allow certain foreign aid agencies to work in the country.
- On 25 Aug., a much delayed African Union summit raised \$51 million of direct aid, some of which were perhaps announced before, along with an additional \$300 million from the African Development Bank to be spent over a four-year period. The African Union is, however, a young organization with little humanitarian experience.
- In early Oct. 2011, the **ONE Campaign** unveiled a public service message in which celebrities appear to be cursing and then the message says that famine is the real obscenity.
- The ONE Campaign is an international, nonpartisan, non-profit organization which aims to increase government funding for and effectiveness of international aid programs.

- Somalis in the diaspora have likewise routinely sent money to drought-affected relatives at home through the informal money transfer system.
- Part of this funding stream experienced a potential setback in December 2011, when Sunrise Community Banks, a U.S. financial institution that wires the transfers for many of the hawalas, announced that it might discontinue the service on December 30 due to overly strict government security regulations.
- Somalian and American federal officials as well as representatives of the transfer companies have worked together closely to resolve the issue, with the CEO of the **Sunrise Community Banks** indicating that "from a risk perspective, we are making progress, and I am optimistic that we are on the right path to get to a solution".
- Kenyan expatriates have similarly availed themselves of mobile phone services to send funds to their own drought-impacted family members in Kenya.

LATEST UPDATION

- The famine, which was declared in July, killed tens of thousands in south and central Somalia, much of which is controlled by Islamist militants. More than 2.3 million Somalis, almost a third of the population, are still in need of aid.
- "...famine conditions are no longer present," said a statement from the office of **Mark Bowden**, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia.
- "Millions of people still need food, clean water, shelter and other assistance to survive and the situation is expected to deteriorate in May," the statement cited
- **Al Shabaab** said there was no hunger crisis in parts of the anarchic country it governed and accused aid agencies of misleading the population.
- While aid deliveries to some 180,000 people in camps in the capital Mogadishu have improved the situation there, fighting in southern and central Somalia is still hampering aid deliveries to the worst-hit areas.
- **Government forces** have been fighting Islamist rebels for the past five years, while Kenyan and Ethiopian forces both moved into the country last year to help fight the al Qaeda-linked militants al Shabaab.
- The fighting, combined with attacks on aid workers and a history of aid being manipulated for political gain, means Somalia is one of the toughest countries for relief agencies to operate in.

CRISIS NOT OVER

- Bowden called al Shabaab's expulsion of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from its territories a "critical concern."
- **The militants this week banned the agency**, one of few international aid groups delivering food aid to areas under rebel control, accusing it of distributing out-of-date food.
- Al Shabaab denied a hunger crisis persisted, accused relief groups of misleading Somalis and said it would not lift a ban imposed on more than a dozen aid agencies.
- The U.N. said the **latest harvest in Somalia was double** the average of the past 17 years, and this had lowered food prices, though mortality rates in southern Somalia were still among the highest in the world.
- In many parts of the south, **acute malnutrition rates remain** about 20 percent and access to treatment is severely restricted.
- ""The crisis is not over. It can only be resolved with a combination of rains and continued, coordinated, long-term actions that build up the resilience of the population and link relief with development."

Could Somali famine deal a fatal blow to al-Shabab?

- The famine has forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee the Lower Shabelle and Bakool regions in search of food.



- Many are escaping to the capital, Mogadishu, where over the weekend the group made what it called a tactical withdrawal of its forces from the northern suburbs that were under its control.
- "Nearly 500,000 people have left. Al-Shabab cannot do anything about it. They have become bystanders."
- People are saying that the drought in the region was caused by a lack of rains, but the famine was man-made"
- He says al-Shabab - formed as the youth wing of the now-defunct Union of Islamic Courts in 2006 - had genuine support when it took power in most of south and central Somalia, as people longed for an end to the lawlessness that has gripped the country since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991.
- "Even though al-Shabab had draconian laws, they were somewhat popular because of the stability they provided," "Government areas were not safe - even soldiers were involved in robbing and looting. In al-Shabab areas, you will have your hands amputated if you steal. It was a deterrent. "
- Kenya-based Somali journalist Fatuma Noor, who travelled through al-Shabab territory last year, says the famine has damaged the group's credibility.
- "Al-Shabab are losing support. People are saying that the drought in the region was caused by a lack of rains, but the famine was man-made. They are asking - why has it been only in al-Shabab's areas?" Ms Noor says.
- Many Somalis are **blaming al-Shabab** for the severity of the crisis because of the ban it imposed on the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and some other Western agencies in 2009.
- " Al-Shabab says there is a drought, caused by Allah and people should pray for rain."It is difficult for charities to work with al-Shabab because it demands money from them. "Al-Shabab are suspicious of aid agencies but 10%-15% of their revenue comes from them.
- "Al-Shabab has a humanitarian co-ordination office, which charges a registration fee of \$4,000 to \$10,000 (£2,400 to £6,000). They also charge a project fee - 20% of the overall cost of digging a borehole or setting up a feeding centre," Mr Aynte says.

Al-Shabab at a glance

- Al-Shabab means "The Youth" in Arabic
- Formed as a radical offshoot of the Union of Islamic Courts in 2006 Affiliated to al-Qaeda
- Killed 76 people in double attack in Uganda during 2010 football World Cup Estimated to have 7,000 to 9,000 fighters
- The al-Shabab observer who preferred anonymity says the group's leadership is heavily divided over the food crisis - something the UN could have exploited to gain access to starving people.
- Al-Shabab's southern leaders - especially Muktar Ali Robow, who comes from famine-hit Lower Shabelle, and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who is seen as the elder statesman of Somali Islamists - favour accepting Western aid.
- However, they were overruled by the overall leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, who has led al-Shabab into forging close ties with al-Qaeda.
- "Al-Shabab was collecting taxes from about 4,000 shops - from \$50 a month from the small trader to thousands of dollars from telecoms companies," Mr Aynte says.

