

Briefing Note – 24 February 2017

SOMALIA

Food Security and Nutrition Crisis



	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Need for international assistance				X	
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
				X	

Crisis overview

Severe drought conditions are rapidly deteriorating food security, nutrition, and health levels across Somalia. A pre-famine warning was declared in January, and there is currently a larger population at risk than in the 2011 famine. Below average *gu* (April-June) rainfall is predicted in most of the country, with famine conditions likely in localised areas if humanitarian assistance cannot reach all populations in need. Due to continued insecurity, this scenario is a distinct possibility.

Somalia is currently in the middle of the dry *jilaa*/season (January-March). With little rain during this time, livelihoods are severely affected. The Shabelle river has dried up in some places, affecting hundreds of thousands that live along its banks. Livestock losses due to a lack of pasture; a lack of water sources; low wages; and high food prices have led to significant distress migration towards urban centres, with 73,000 displaced between 1-21 January. More than six million people (50% of the population) are in need of food assistance. In February, 439,000 people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food security – ten times more than six months earlier, and more than twice as many (2.47 million) were in Crisis (IPC Phase 3). A 24% increase in severely malnourished children from August 2016 to February 2017 has been recorded. Cholera cases have increased critically during the *Jilaa*/season, with latest reports indicating 900 cases per week. An estimated 4.5 million people are predicted to be in need of WASH assistance in April, up from 2.7 million reported in August 2016.

Key findings

Anticipated scope and scale

The drought affects the whole of Somalia, with localised areas in Puntland and south central Somalia suffering from severe drought conditions. The drought is expected to last at least until mid-2017, and if the *gu* rainfall from April to June is poor, it could last until 2018. Food security is deteriorating rapidly in the current dry *jilaa* season, leading to an aggravation of poor nutrition and health.

Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- **Food** security is rapidly deteriorating, with more than half the population currently in need.
- **Nutrition** levels are at Critical levels in most regions, with a significant deterioration predicted.
- **Displacement** is increasing as drought effects are worsening.
- **Health and WASH** conditions are poor due to a lack of water. Cholera affects eight regions in the country, and could spread further.

Humanitarian constraints

Al Shabaab controls significant territory in south central Somalia, rendering many areas inaccessible. 165 violent incidents against humanitarian workers were recorded in 2016. Roadblocks by various armed groups are widespread in south central Somalia especially, with up to USD 4,000 charged for access to certain areas. Unexploded bombs are present in localised areas of south central Somalia.

Widespread corruption, especially around aid exists.

Limitations

Population information is out of date, including numbers for internal displacement.

Crisis impact

An estimated 6 million people, more than half the population, are currently in need of humanitarian assistance in Somalia (FEWSNET 02/02/2017). The current drought was declared in Somalia in August 2015. A significant degradation in food security, nutrition, WASH and health conditions has been recorded across the country since the start of the current *jilaa*/dry season (January–March), which is hotter than usual. Conditions have also been causing widespread displacement of rural populations towards urban centres since November (UNHCR 21/02/2017; OCHA 17/02/2017).

In 2016, the *gu* rains ended in early May instead of late June, the July–September *xagaa* was unseasonably hot, and the *deyr* rains from October–December were under half of their usual level (SWALIM/FSNAU 15/11/2016; FEWSNET 17/01/2017).

Displacement

Drought-related displacement has reached 135,000 since November 2016, including 73,000 between 1 and 21 January. Distress migration towards urban areas should increase significantly, due to loss of livelihoods, severe pasture distress for pastoralists, the drying up of key rivers, and the ongoing dry *jilaa*/season until April (UNHCR 21/02/2017; OCHA 17/02/2017).

Puntland, Somaliland, Bay, and Bakool regions are the worst affected by drought, and have reported large numbers of displaced (UNHCR 21/02/2017). In January, 80,000 pastoralists migrated from Mudug, Galgaduud, and Middle Shabelle regions to areas in Hiiraan region that received some rain in November. In January and February, there have been reports of 40,000 people displaced in Awdal, Somaliland, more than 50,000 in Puntland, 3,900 from Lower Shabelle to Afgooye, Lower Shabelle and Mogadishu, and 18,000 moving into Baidoa, Baay region. 12,500 were displaced in Jubbaland, with many moving to Kismayo (Garowe Online 09/01/2017; OCHA 17/02/2017; Radio Ergo 30/01/2017). Around 100 people are moving to Ethiopia per day from Middle Juba, Bay, and Gedo regions (Reuters 04/02/2017).

Food security

More than six million people, 50% of the population, are in need of food assistance. In February, 439,000 people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food security, ten times more than six months earlier, and more than twice as many (2.47 million) were in Crisis (IPC

Phase 3). A further 3.33 million people are in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) (FEWSNET 02/02/2017; FEWSNET 20/09/2017).

Rural areas have seen the worst degradation of conditions. Poor rainfall and river water levels have led to near total crop failures, reduced employment opportunities, shortage of pasture and water, and significant livestock deaths (FEWSNET 02/02/2017; Radio Ergo 01/02/2017). *Deyr* 2016/17 cereal production in January was 70% below the five-year average. The situation has further deteriorate across the country since then (FEWSNET 17/01/2017; FSNAU 29/12/2016). In south central Somalia, cereal stocks are predicted to run out in February, with little to no off-season harvest during the *jilaa* season. In some areas of Somalia, there have been four consecutive seasons of poor harvests (OCHA 17/02/2017).

Rains have been insufficient to replenish animal feed and water sources, resulting in total livestock losses in some areas. Animals that have survived are weak, more susceptible to disease, less productive, and therefore less valuable. Livestock prices have fallen significantly across the country since October 2016 (FAO 16/01/2017; FEWSNET 02/02/2017; UNHCR 23/02/2017). Loss of income has resulted in limited spending capacity (FAO 16/01/2017).

Poor families will be dependent on market purchases to meet basic needs. Markets continue to be operate despite disruptions due to insecurity in major cities in Bakool, Hiiraan, Mudug, Bari, and Bay, but lack of available money contributes to high levels of food insecurity (FEWSNET 02/02/2017). Wages have declined in rural areas of south-central Somalia as the poor rainfall has limited agricultural activities (FSNAU 29/12/2016; FEWSNET 21/02/2017). Prices of key cereals have increased significantly since October 2016 due to poor harvests and a lack of availability. Prices of coarse grains in January in south-central Somalia were double those of January 2016, and continue to increase. In Lower Shabelle, maize prices increased 32–41% in January alone (FAO 14/02/2017).

In certain areas controlled by Al Shabaab, access to food is limited, due to heavy taxation by the armed group (Reuters 04/02/2017).

WASH

Individual water consumption in assessed areas across the country has dropped to 3L per day, well below the SPHERE minimum standards of 15L (World Vision 25/01/2017). Drought has increased distances to water sources and displaced people as they search for water. Available water sources are at low levels, and are contaminated (Radio Ergo 02/02/2017; Inter-Agency Working Group on Disaster Preparedness for East and Central Africa 09/12/2016).

The Juba and Shabelle Rivers are below normal levels due both to poor rainfall and deliberate breakage of embankments by agriculturalists to divert water to their lands in Ethiopia (FAO 25/01/2017). The Shabelle River is particularly affected. It was at 0.8m on 25 January, and reports since then show that the river has dried up in several areas, affecting hectares of farmland that surround the river and hundreds of thousands of people living along the river (SWALIM 26/01/2017; Goobjoog News 18/01/2017, Africa Prime News 08/02/2017; OCHA 17/02/2017).

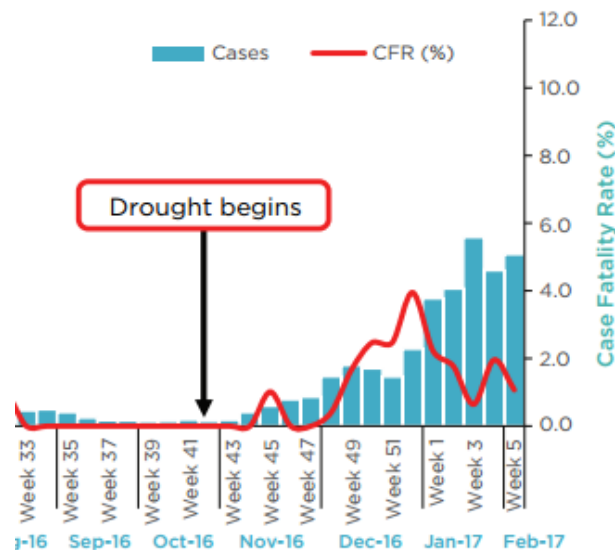
In locations in Puntland such as Himilisdiye, Hursaale and other remote pastoral settlements, prices of water increased six-fold between June and December 2016. In Bari, a 200L drum of water reportedly costs USD 15 (OCHA 17/02/2017; UNICEF 08/02/2017). Those who cannot afford to buy water at these prices rely more and more on unprotected water sources (OCHA 17/02/2017).

Awareness of quality and safety of water is limited (ActionAid 15/03/2016).

Health

A cholera outbreak that started in late October 2016 has deteriorated since the start of the *jilaa* dry season due to water shortages leading to contamination in south-central Somalia and Puntland. Between 1 January and 13 February 4,026 cholera cases were recorded, with 57 deaths and a case fatality rate (CFR) of 1.5% (WHO 13/02/2017). 913 of those cases were recorded between 6 and 13 February. Most districts reporting the cholera cases are along the Shabelle River, which has dried up in some areas (WHO 12/02/2017). The outbreak is affecting Banadir, Hiiraan, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Mudug, Lower Juba, Bay, Bakool, and Bari.

Cholera cases and case fatality rate in Somalia



Source: WHO 13/02/2017

As of February, an estimated 363,000 children under five were moderately and 71,000 severely malnourished. This is a 12% increase in moderately and a 24% increase in severely malnourished children since August 2016 (FEWSNET 02/02/2017). Critical global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates (15-30%) were observed in Banadir, Bay, Gedo, Galgaduud, Mudug, Nugal, Bari, Sanaag, Sool, and Togdheer regions in January, with deterioration into Critical rates of GAM likely in Awdal, Bakool, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle regions by April (FEWSNET 02/02/2017).

Protection

Drought conditions across the country have caused many families to separate, with men remaining with animals and children and women moving to urban areas. Pre-emptive migration towards urban areas has also been done by family members able to move long distances, increasing the vulnerability of people left behind, including in some cases children and elderly. Family separation means women have a higher risk of exposure to gender-based violence (OCHA 17/02/2017).

Insecurity is increasing as tensions rise over access to natural resources. Violent clashes have been reported in south-central Somalia (FAO 15/02/2017; Goobjoog News 12/01/2017).

There are reports of suicide over livestock losses (Somalia Live Update on Twitter 20/01/2017; Radio Dalsan 18/12/2016).

Outlook

Below-average *gu* (April–June) rainfall is predicted, increasing the risk of famine if humanitarian assistance cannot reach all populations in need. As insecurity related to Al Shabaab continues in south-central Somalia, this scenario remains a possibility (ECHO 18/01/2017; IGAD 08/02/2017).

An estimated 4.5 million people are predicted to be in need of WASH assistance in April, up from 2.7 million reported in August 2016 (OCHA 17/02/2017).

Vulnerable groups affected

IDP populations, including returnees suffer from high rates of food insecurity and malnutrition (UNHCR 18/08/2016; FSNAU 19/10/2016). While food security levels of rural and urban populations rapidly declined between August 2016 and February 2017, previously all Emergency (IPC Phase 4) security levels in the regions were in IDP camps (FSNAU 19/10/2016). Returnees from Kenya and drought related distress migration sees rural populations join existing IDP camps, further aggravating conditions and supplies for existing IDPs. IDPs lack WASH, shelter, health, and food assistance, and often build on private land, where building infrastructure such as latrines is not possible (American Refugee Council 30/01/2017)

Poor households will be severely affected by ongoing food price increases (FSNAU 19/10/2016). Poor households in these areas had little to no harvests, typically their main source of food for consumption and income from sales. In addition, poor households have few livestock and are especially reliant on wage labour, an income source that has declined during severe drought. (FEWSNET 17/01/2017).

Humanitarian and operational constraints

Al Shabaab occupies significant territory in south-central Somalia, including key roads and towns. Fighting between Al Shabaab and AMISOM forces has made many areas inaccessible (NGO Safety Program 26/02/2016). 165 violent incidents against humanitarian workers were reported in 2016 including 14 killed, 16 injured and 25 detained. These numbers represent an 18% increase in the overall number of incidents compared to 2015, despite a marked reduction of humanitarian presence in the country (OCHA 03/02/2017; Somalia Logistics Cluster 15/12/2016; Somalia Logistics Cluster 16/01/2017).

Humanitarian access is also frequently blocked, or impeded. Access to many locations is either granted or denied depending on local negotiations and the armed actors present. Al Shabaab banned humanitarian agencies in El Wak in west Gedo, when they took over in October 2015 (UNSC 31/10/2016). Al Shabaab and other armed actors have also created roadblocks for humanitarian actors on many major roads in south central Somalia, charging up to USD 4,000 for access (UNSC 31/10/2016; OCHA 26/10/2016).

Some areas are only accessible by plane, which increases operational and transportation costs (OCHA 26/10/2016; Somalia Logistics Cluster 31/05/2016). The withdrawal of AMISOM troops in late November 2016 in Bakool further disrupted humanitarian activities due to less security in the region (FSNAU 29/12/2016).

The closure of the Kenya–Somalia border for official business since October 2016 has hampered cross-border operations (OCHA 03/02/2017).

There are unexploded bombs in localised areas of south-central Somalia; a result of continuing bombing against Al Shabaab in the region (UNSC 31/10/2016).

Widespread corruption exists in Somalia, ranked last on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in 2016. Much corruption revolves around foreign aid, and more opportunities for corruption are likely to exist in 2017 as more aid flows into the country (Transparency International 25/01/2017; Marqaati 11/02/2017).

Aggravating factors

Al Shabaab

Al Shabaab controls large rural areas in south-central Somalia, where the drought impact is most severe. More than 1,200 security incidents involving Al Shabaab were reported in 2016, causing almost 4,000 deaths (ACLEDA 02/06/2017). As well as violent incidents, Al Shabaab taxes residents in its areas of control, affecting livelihoods (Reuters 04/02/2017).

Returnees from Dadaab, Kenya

36,823 returnees arrived in 2016, mostly to south central Somalia. They continue to be returned to south central Somalia despite limitation on institutional capacity, both governmental and non-governmental to receive this population (Somalia WASH Cluster 28/09/2016; UNHCR 31/12/2016).

Weak WASH/health infrastructure

In Somalia, 1.8 million people do not have access to health facilities (OCHA 04/11/2016). In areas where there is access, many facilities have been damaged. The largest health sector assistance programme, the Joint Health and Nutrition Programme, is ending in March due to a lack of funding. This is likely to lead to weakened ability to control disease outbreaks (OCHA 17/02/2017).

Forced evictions

Large scale forced evictions of IDPs are common. An estimated 10,000 are forcibly evicted every month, primarily in Mogadishu (Shabelle News 12/01/2017). Arrivals of those migrating from drought affected locations increases shelter needs in areas where evictions are ongoing.

Political stability and security

The presidential election process that ended on 8 February distracted from international and national drought response across the country. Political instability at the state level is widespread. In 2017 MPs in three out of four states in south central Somalia (Southwest, HirShabelle, and Galmudug) have voted to impeach their presidents, accusing them of abusing powers of the office for personal gain and neglecting responsibilities, including drought response (Somalia Newsroom 12/01/2017; Goobjoog News 17/02/2017; Shabelle News 22/02/2017).

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

The government of Somalia, along with other partners, developed an El Niño contingency plan for preparedness and immediate response in March 2016 (FAO 15/03/2016). The National Drought Committee has been launched, and state level drought committees exist nationwide, including in Puntland and Somaliland (OCHA 17/02/2017). However, local media sources indicate that local response is lacking, and those affected by drought often rely on other residents for assistance. However, with the drought affecting more and more people, communities are struggling to assist those in need (Shabelle News 15/01/2017; Radio Dalsan 02/02/2017; Radio Ergo 27/01/2017).

The President of Somalia appealed on 13 November 2016 and 19 January for international assistance as well as further remittances from the Somali diaspora community to assist in this current drought emergency (Africa Times 14/11/2016; VOA 19/01/2017).

International response capacity

Although the declaration of the possibility of famine has seen Somalia in international attention, with famine declared in South Sudan, and the possibility of famine in Yemen and Nigeria there will be less aid available (Reuters 16/02/2017; DFID 22/02/2017).

In Somalia, donors have shifted from a drought response at the end of 2016 to a pre-famine scale-up to mitigate drought effects. Response is built around lessons learned from the 2011 famine, with a focus on water, food, nutrition, and health services. An inter-cluster approach that looks to extend assistance as close to the rural population as possible, as well as enhancing response capacity to those newly displaced has been adopted (OCHA 17/02/2017).

For health services, mobile clinics are scaled up in priority areas, as well as the utilisation of community structures like schools to reach children. Cash based assistance is being prioritised in order to provide timely assistance and to reach remote areas easily (OCHA 17/02/2017).

Only 53% of the Humanitarian Response Plan in Somalia was funded in 2016 (OCHA 10/02/2017). However, in 2017, \$17.3 million was allocated from the Somalia Humanitarian Fund, \$18 million from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), \$7 million from the government of Norway and \$125 million from DFID (OCHA 15/02/2017; DFID 22/02/2017; Government of Norway 14/02/2017).

The governments of Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia have committed to cross border collaboration in response to the regional drought (UNSOM 22/02/2017).

Population coping mechanisms

There are reports of a reduction of meals consumed per day, increases in remittances from diaspora and urban areas, and migration by heads of households to look for work in towns (IFRC 30/12/2016; Radio Ergo 02/02/2017).

Coping mechanisms, especially for pastoralists, are becoming exhausted due to lack of response (OCHA 28/11/2016). The loss of livelihoods has diminished access to loans, a common coping mechanism in Somalia (OCHA 17/02/2017). People are reported begging on the side of the road for water. (Radio Ergo 25/11/2016). Pastoralists are sharing food with livestock, and feeding them thatched roofs of their homes (Radio Ergo 08/02/2017; All Africa

20/12/2016). Increasingly desperate pastoralists follow their herds where there is still pasture, taking their children with them, and sleeping outside (Radio Ergo 09/02/2017).

Information gaps and needs

Information regarding displacement is limited, especially in areas of insecurity.

Limited information for gender-sensitive needs assessments

Population estimates are out of date, with the most recent estimate of 1.1 million displaced people dating back to 2012.

Lessons learned

- Flexibility in delivery of aid is necessary in areas of Al Shabaab influence to ensure it is delivered to areas largely considered inaccessible. During the drought in 2011, aid deliveries from the Middle East, Turkey, and Islamic Relief agencies were permitted due to their religious links (Rift Valley Institute 19/10/2016).
- Cash transfers were an effective response during the 2011 drought. This allowed people to support kin and wider community and distribute aid among themselves where access was limited (Rift Valley Institute 19/10/2016).
- During the 2011 Famine, excess mortality increased sharply between April and May, when a late start to the *gu* followed a failed *deyr* season. (FEWSNET 17/01/2017).
- The high casualty rate among children in the 2011 famine shows that a tailored response is necessary for this population (OCHA 17/02/2017).
- Areas expecting low rainfall should vary crops to include short maturing, drought tolerant crop varieties. (IGAD 08/02/2017).

Key characteristics (see also table below)

Demographic profile: Somalia has an estimated population of 12,316,895, with 60% living in rural areas. 50.7% are male, and 49.3% are female..

Food security 3.33 million IPC Phase 2 (Stressed), 2.47 million IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), 439,000 Emergency (IPC Phase 4).

Nutrition 363,000 children are moderately malnourished, and 71,000 are severely malnourished.

Health: Under five mortality rate: 137 per 1,000 live births. Maternal mortality rate: 732 deaths for 100,000 live births. Infant mortality rate: 85 deaths per 1,000 live births.

WASH: 23.6% of the population has access to improved sanitation facilities: 6.3% of the rural population and 52% of the urban population. 31.7% of the population had access to improved water sources prior to the current drought: 8.8% of the rural population, and 69.6% of the urban population.

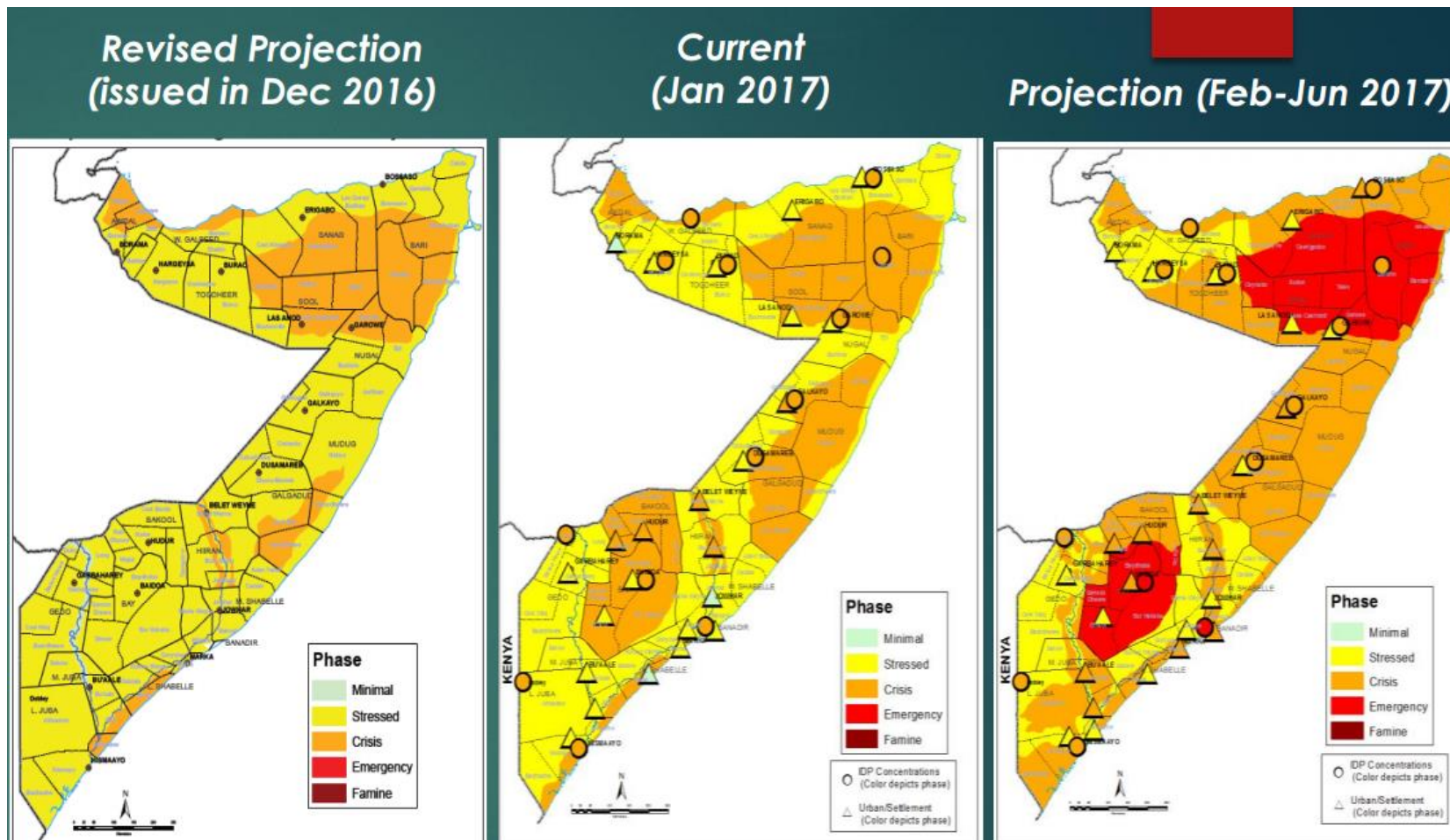
Literacy 37.8% of the population is literate: 49.7% of males, and 25.8% of females.

Sources: Geohive, UNFPA 2013, FEWSNET 02/02/2017, UNICEF 2015, World Bank data 2015, Index Mundi Somalia

Key characteristics

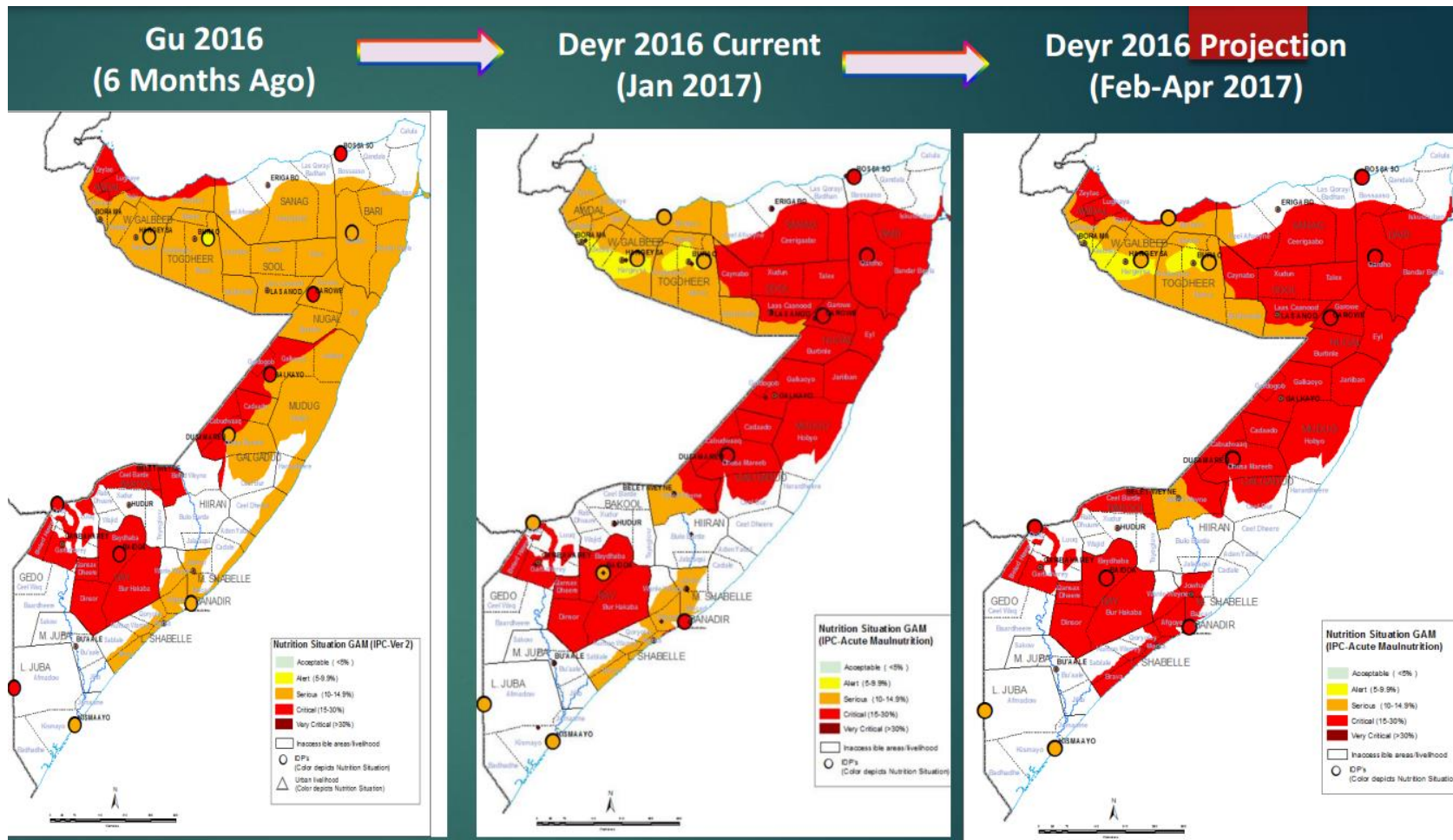
Region	Population (2014)	Food Insecurity (IPC 3 and 4) February-June 2017	Food Insecurity (IPC 3 and 4) August-December 2016	Malnutrition
Bay	792,182 (93,046 urban, 39,820 IDP, 659,316 rural)	332,000	42,000	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Banadir	1,650,228 (1,280,939 urban, 369,289 IDP)	312,000	0	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Mudug	717,862 (381,493 urban, 70,882 IDP, 265,488 rural)	286,000	0	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Hiiraan	520,686 (81,379 urban, 51,160 IDP, 388,147 rural)	230,000	44,000	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Lower Shabelle	1,202,219 (215,752 urban, 102,970 IDP, 883,497 rural)	210,000	17,000	Serious (10-14% GAM)
Bari	730,147 (471,784 urban, 59,646 IDP, 198,717 rural)	188,000	25,000	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Bakool	367,227 (61,929 urban, 24,000 IDP, 281,298 rural)	171,000	29,000	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Toghdheer	721,363 (483,724 urban, 25,760 IDP, 211,879 rural)	146,000	0	Serious (10-14% GAM)
Galgaduud	569,434 (183,553 urban, 119,768 IDP, 266,113 rural)	138,000	15,000	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Sanaag	544,123 (159,717 urban, 910 IDP, 383,496 rural)	138,000	49,000	Critical (15-30% GAM)
Woqooyi	1,242,003	123,000	35,000	Serious (10-14% GAM)
Galbeed	(802,740 urban, 44,590 IDP, 394,673 rural)			

Map: Food security in Somalia, January–June 2017



Source: FEWSNET 02/02/2017

Map: Nutrition in Somalia, July 2016–April 2017



Source: FEWSNET 02/02/2017