

Hunger and Malnutrition Crises Persist in Somalia as Projected Floods and Funding Shortfalls Threaten Vulnerable Populations

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Millions of people across Somalia continue to face high levels of hunger, while acute malnutrition among children is set to worsen over the coming months as heavy flooding associated with the anticipated El Niño is expected to worsen the situation from October to December 2026, the Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations (UN) warned today.

The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis projects that 5.4 million people will face crisis levels of hunger or worse between October and December 2026, including 1.5 million people facing emergency levels of hunger or worse. According to the IPC analysis, 1.92 million under-five children will require treatment for acute malnutrition between July 2026 and June 2027, including 433,000 children with severe acute malnutrition - the deadliest form. Nearly 62 per cent of the country's malnutrition burden is concentrated amongst rural populations, while internally displaced people in Belet Weyne and pockets within the displacement sites in Baidoa are projected to reach Extremely Critical levels (IPC Acute Malnutrition Phase 5) as anticipated flooding disrupts access to services.

According to the assessment, acute malnutrition in Burhakaba district, Bay region, which was at risk of famine in April, has improved, as a combined result of the Gu rains and a scale-up of the humanitarian response in that district. The current analysis, however, indicates a risk of famine in Baidoa, also in Bay region, where internally displaced people (IDPs) face both catastrophic hunger risk and extremely critical malnutrition classifications. As the risk of famine assessment for Baidoa IDPs is based on data collected in April 2026, a follow-up assessment is planned for October 2026 to gather new evidence and confirm the level of risk.

"The humanitarian crisis in Somalia remains dire and millions of people are at risk due to these high levels of hunger and malnutrition," said George Conway, Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. "The projected threat of El Niño-related flooding will further undermine already fragile livelihoods, displace vulnerable communities and increase the risk of disease. We call for urgent action and additional resources to protect lives, strengthen preparedness and prevent this crisis from deteriorating further."

The period from October to December 2026 carries the highest risk, as floods are projected due to heavy El Niño-induced rains that will hit rural riverine and agropastoral communities hardest, destroying crops and livestock, cutting households off from markets and income, and triggering new waves of displacement. According to the Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA), 2.5 to 3.5 million people could be exposed to flooding, with 1 million likely to be displaced from areas where they farm and graze livestock, swelling the ranks of people already facing acute hunger.

“We are deeply concerned by the worsening food insecurity and malnutrition situation, particularly as we prepare for the potential impacts of El Niño,” said Mohamuud Moallim Abdullahi, Commissioner, Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA). “The Government is working closely with humanitarian partners and state authorities to address the multiple crises that Somalia is facing. We urge all partners and donors to support these efforts so that we can act early, protect lives and livelihoods, and reduce human suffering.”