

Press Release

The Food Security and Nutrition Situation in Shabelle Region is Rapidly Deteriorating

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Riverine and agro-pastoral households in Middle and Lower Shabelle are at increased risk of humanitarian crisis, as the impact of recent shocks is now manifesting itself through **increasing rates of acute malnutrition** which, as of May 2007, are above the emergency threshold of 15% (GAM). Even more worrying are the extremely high rates of severe acute malnutrition of 4.9% (SAM) and mortality rates also above the alert threshold.

This **deteriorating food security and nutrition situation in Shabelle region** is the result of the cumulative effects of conflict, insecurity and concentrated displacement within the Shabelle region, which has led to stress on host communities with the IDP influx and sharp inflationary price increases over the last three months. These shocks are further compounded by an ongoing Acute Water Diarrhea epidemic, losses from the last Deyr floods, and three seasons of below normal cereal production.

The performance of the Gu '07 season rains (April to June), the most critical rains of the year, have been **well below normal in terms of intensity, distribution throughout the season, amount and coverage for most of the country**. The exception is the northwest and localized areas in the northeast, central region and Juba Valley. **The Gu season crop establishment conditions vary from region to region, but generally are well below normal in most agricultural areas in the south, both for rainfed and irrigated cereal crops**. Rangelands, however, are near normal in most regions due to last season's above normal rains and a mild dry season.

For **riverine households** already in areas of **Humanitarian Emergency and Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (163,000 people) in Gedo, Juba and Hiran regions, below normal cereal production or a crop failure this season will lead to a further deterioration in their food security and nutrition situation**.

Pastoralists in most of the country are **continuing to benefit** from good livestock body conditions for all species, high rates of calving, kidding and lambing, increased milk production, high livestock prices and favorable terms of trade (livestock to cereal).

Conflict in Mogadishu has led to the loss of lives, injuries and significant displacement. **Displaced populations still require urgent humanitarian assistance, including both those who remain outside Mogadishu and those who have returned to Mogadishu over the last few days**. Many of the displaced people have lost property and livelihoods, and are now facing sharp inflationary price increases in essential food and nonfood commodities. Estimates suggest that between February and June, 398,000 fled Mogadishu (UNHCR, June 8) and a further 30 to 40% of the Mogadishu population were estimated to be displaced within the city.

Currently, the UNHCR estimates that 98,085 IDPs have returned to Mogadishu (June 13). However, returnee numbers are difficult to estimate, as the situation is in flux, changing daily and displacement into and out of Mogadishu is continuing to be reported. The actual number of returnee's could be much greater or between 100,000 and 200,000. For those who have returned, many have found their homes destroyed, with food and medical care in short supply, reduced business activities in some neighborhoods, and limited options for supporting themselves.

Most, or 89%, of those who have returned are from the surrounding areas in Lower and Middle Shabelle. Central region is now hosting the largest number of IDPs (50% or 150,000) of the total displaced population, although Shabelle region still is hosting the second largest number of IDPs (20% or 61,000), followed by Hiran (14% or 43,000).

For more analysis and information see FSAU Food Security and Nutrition Brief, June 15, 2007 and FSAU website: www.fsasomali.org.

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