WFP
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION IN EASTERN AFRICA

JANUARY 2025 UPDATE

The food security and nutrition situation in Eastern Africa continues to remain dire. As of end of January 2025, there are an estimated **61.6 million** food insecure people in Eastern Africa, a slight decrease since last quarter (down 3 percent compared with October 2024).

Over 11 million children aged 6-59 months and **4 million** Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women and Girls (PBWGs) are estimated to be acutely malnourished across the region, with **Sudan**, **Ethiopia**, **South Sudan**, and **Somalia** having some of the highest levels of malnutrition.

MAP 1: Regional acute food security situation according to the IPC classification (or equivalent), Janurary 2025

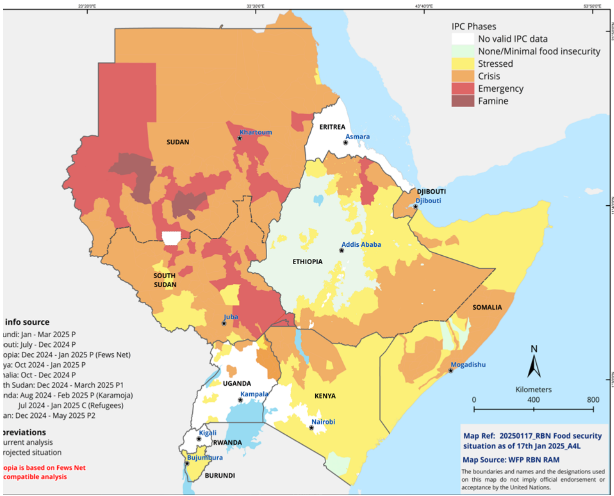
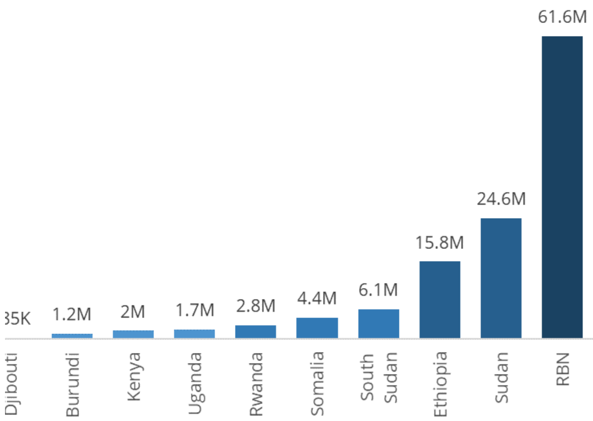


FIGURE 1: Acutely food insecure population by country, January 2025[2]



COUNTRY UPDATES

SUDAN[1]

The ongoing conflict in **Sudan** has significantly worsened the food and nutrition crisis, driven by mass displacement, economic collapse, the breakdown of essential services, and restricted humanitarian access. Between December 2024 and May 2025, an estimated **24.6 million** people, approximately half of Sudan's population, are projected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC 3+), an increase of 3.5 million compared to earlier estimates. Among them, 15.9 million people (33 percent) are expected to be in IPC3 (Crisis), 8.1 million (17 percent) in IPC4 (Emergency), and 638,000 (1 percent) in IPC5 (Catastrophe).

Malnutrition remains a critical concern. Surveillance data indicate that 30 to 40 percent of children in refugee camps and local communities suffer from severe chronic malnutrition. Sudan ranks among the top four countries countries globally with the highest prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM), with rates exceeding 10 percent. Findings from SMART surveys conducted between January and October 2024 reveal alarmingly high GAM rates, surpassing 30 percent in eight localities across North Darfur, South Kordofan, and West Kordofan.

Famine conditions were detected in August 2024 in Zamzam camp, North Darfur, and have since expanded to Al Salam and Abu Shouk camps, as well as the Western Nuba Mountains by late 2024. Between December 2024 and May 2025, famine is expected to spread further into five additional localities in North Darfur. There is also a high risk of famine in 17 other areas, including parts of the Central Nuba Mountains and regions with large internally displaced populations in North and South Darfur. Refugees in Al Firdous (East Darfur), residents and IDPs in Medani al Kubra and Sharg al Jazira (Al Gazira), and specific neighborhoods in Jabel Awlia (Mayo and Alingaz) are also at risk if the conflict persists.

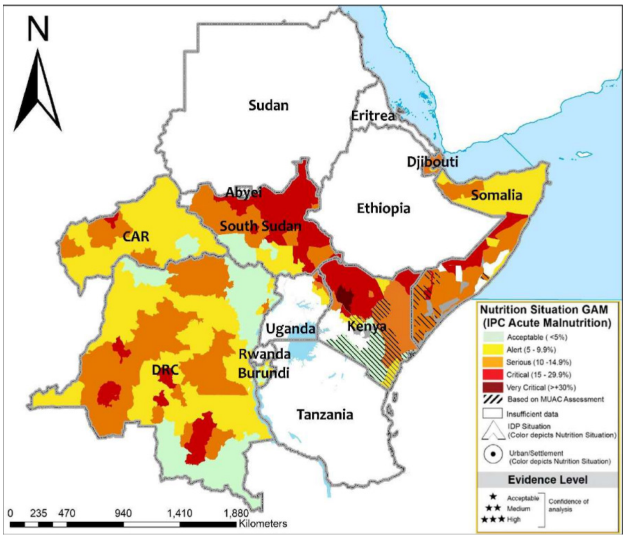
SOUTH SUDAN[3]

Acute food insecurity and malnutrition in **South Sudan** continue to worsen due to multiple factors. The ongoing macroeconomic crisis, characterized by currency depreciation, high food prices, and reduced household purchasing power, is exacerbating the situation. Agricultural production remains low due to flooding, dry spells, poor seed access, reliance on traditional farming methods, and extreme weather.

Flooding has also displaced communities, disrupted humanitarian aid, limited healthcare access, and increased disease risks, further heightening malnutrition. Additionally, forced displacement, localized conflicts, and insecurity in areas such as Greater Tonj (Warrap), Luakpiny/Nassir (Upper Nile), and parts of Jonglei, Lakes, and Equatoria states have worsened food insecurity.

Between December 2024 and March 2025, **6.1 million** people (45 percent of the analyzed population) are projected to face IPC3, including

MAP 2: Regional acute maluntrition situation according to the IPC classification, Janurary 2025[4]



1.71 million in IPC4 and 31,000 returnees in IPC5. Since the conflict in **Sudan** began, **South Sudan** has received 1.02 million new arrivals across multiple border points, with most planning to relocate to Upper Nile, Central Equatoria, or Northern Bahr el Ghazal.

Between July 2024 and June 2025, **2.1 million** children (6-59 months) and **1.1 million** PBWGs are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition. Critical GAM levels exceeding 15 percent have been reported in 39 of the country's 80 counties. High malnutrition rates, particularly among children, are fueled by disease outbreaks such as malaria and diarrhea, worsened by poor sanitation, inadequate child feeding practices, and limited access to malnutrition treatment programs.

ETHIOPIA[5]

Despite declining inflation and favourable rainfall, **Ethiopia** faces ongoing challenges, including conflict in Amhara, rising food prices, and persistent double-digit inflation, worsening the cost of living. Excessive rainfall has also led to floods and landslides, causing casualties and property damage.

The *Meher* harvest (September–January), which accounts for 90 percent of the country's agricultural production, is expected to improve food access. However, acute food insecurity will persist in 2025 due to conflict, high prices, and

slow livelihood recovery from past crises. Households that harvested in July/August are likely to deplete their stocks by February, while poor pastoral households will struggle with below-normal herd sizes.
Households that harvested in July/August are likely to deplete their stocks by February, while poor pastoral households will struggle with below-normal herd sizes. Malnutrition remains a concern, with regional disparities. In Tigray, mass screening shows a proxy GAM rate of 21.2 percent, while in Afar, a community health campaign found GAM levels of 26 percent in children and 42.3 percent among PBWGs, indicating a worsening situation. Meanwhile, a SMART survey in East Wollega (Oromia region), an area previously inaccessible, recorded a serious GAM rate of 10.2 percent.

KENYA[6]

In **Kenya**, the overall nutrition situation has improved, but GAM levels above 15 percent persist in some ASAL counties. Turkana, Mandera, Samburu, and parts of Baringo and Marsabit remain critical, with 760,488 children aged 6 to 59 months requiring acute malnutrition treatment, a decrease from 847,932 in February 2024. Despite enhanced nutrition coordination, the delayed short rains in late 2024 could further deteriorate the situation in 2025.

SOMALIA[7]

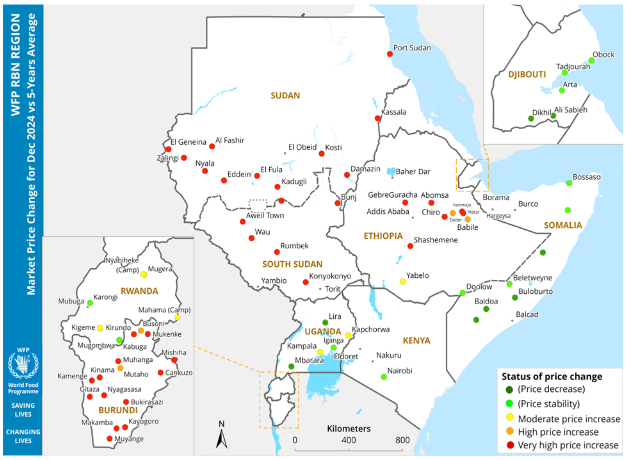
An estimated 1.6 million children (including 1.2 million with MAM) and 400,000 PBWGs are projected to suffer from acute malnutrition in **Somalia**. This represents a 14 percent increase in GAM compared to the same season in 2023. Over 60 percent of the malnutrition cases are concentrated in southern **Somalia**.

DRIVERS

MACROECONOMIC SITUATION AND FOOD PRICE TRENDS[8]

Mixed food price trends were observed across the Eastern Africa region during the last quarter of the year. While food prices sustained an upward trend hitting new record levels in most

MAP 3: Cereal price change in WFP-monitored markets: December 2025 vs. 5-year average



markets across **South Sudan**, in **Sudan** some decline was recorded as new harvests reached the markets helping to ease prices. Noteworthy, food prices in both countries remained atypically high over the reporting period, at least 400 and 200 percent higher than the 5-year average and previous year levels respectively. Similarly, in **Burundi** and **Ethiopia** staples prices remained elevated driven by varied factors. Elsewhere, price stability relative to the long-term average was recorded over the reference period supported by near average to above average production and cross border trade.

TABLE 1: Trends in annual and food inflation rates, December 2024

Country	Annual Inflation		Food Inflation	
	Dec-24	Dec 24/23	Dec-24	Dec 24/23
Burundi	36.4%		36.9%	
Djibouti	-0.6%		-0.9%	
Ethiopia	17.0%		18.7%	
Kenya	3.0%		4.8%	
Rwanda	6.4%		5.7%	
Somalia	5.7%		-1.5%	
South Sudan				
Sudan	187.8%			
Uganda	3.3%		0.2%	
RBN	32.4%		9.1%	

The cost of living remained high in the region during the last quarter of 2024, averaging 32.4 percent by December 2024 (excluding **South Sudan**, where it likely hit triple digits). **Sudan** recorded the highest inflation rate of the region at 187.8 percent. In December, **Burundi** and

Ethiopia recorded double digit annual inflation at 36.4 and 17 percent, respectively. Food inflation remained elevated at 9.1 percent on average, with **South Sudan** estimated to record the highest annual food inflation given the surge in food prices across the country. **Burundi** continued to record double digit food inflation recording 36.9 percent by December. The high food inflation in **Burundi** in primarily linked to high cost of production and transportation following countrywide fuel shortages experienced in 2024. Similarly, **Ethiopia** continued to record double digit food inflation (18.7 percent).

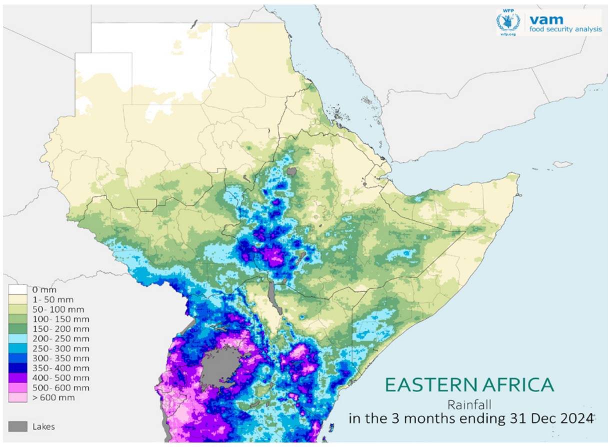
Macroeconomic conditions in Eastern Africa remained challenging in the fourth quarter of 2024, with most local currencies depreciating against the U.S. dollar (USD), except in **Kenya** and **Uganda**. As of December, **Sudan** and **South Sudan** experienced the steepest currency depreciations in parallel markets (77.4 percent and 55 percent y-o-y, respectively), driven by prolonged conflict and economic instability. **Ethiopia's** Birr also declined against the USD by 20 percent in the parallel market y-o-y, while **Burundi's** currency depreciated by 36 percent.

Pump prices remained stable or declined in most Eastern African countries, except in **Sudan** and **South Sudan**. Petrol prices in **Sudan** surged by 36.7 percent m-o-m and 208.4 percent y-o-y (USD 3.1/L) due to supply disruptions. In **South Sudan's** prices quadrupled y-o-y (USD 2.3/L) amidst high inflation and currency depreciation. Fuel remained costly in **Burundi** due to scarcity and severe depreciation. Repetitive fuel shortages has led to an informal market where the price per liter reaches 4 times the formal one, with huge consequences on the transport costs and markets supply. Meanwhile, **Somalia**, **Uganda**, and **Kenya** recorded y-o-y declines of 20.4, 10.4, and 16.9 percent, respectively, aided by lower global prices, currency gains, and policy interventions.

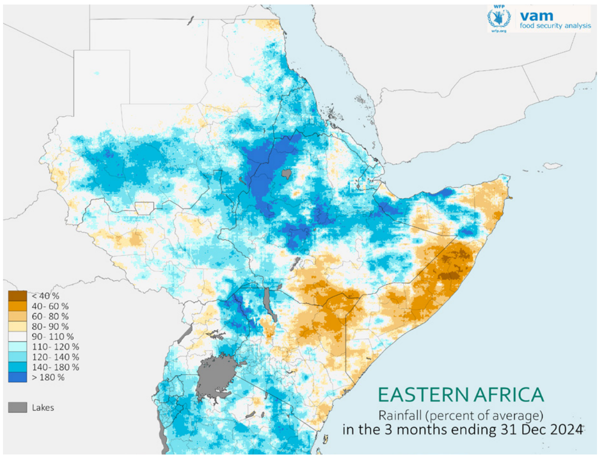
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION AND OUTLOOK[9]

In October, the northern areas of the region (**South Sudan**, southern **Sudan**, and western **Ethiopia**) experienced an extension of the June-September rains, while the October-December short rains had just started in **Burundi**, **Rwanda**, **Uganda**, and northern **Tanzania**. Most of eastern **Kenya, Somali**a and parts of southern-southeast **Ethiopia** had a delayed rainfall onset. In November, the rains declined in northern areas, including central and pastoral areas of southern-southeast **Ethiopia**, but intensified to wetter-than-normal conditions in **Kenya** and southern **Somalia**. By end of the season in December, most areas had received near-normal to above-normal rains except in central and northern **Somalia**, northeast **Kenya**, and parts of southern-southeast pastoral areas of **Ethiopia** with less than 60 percent of the average seasonal

MAP 4: Cumulative seasonal rainfall amount in mm as of 31 December 2024



MAP 5: Rainfall anomaly as a percent of the average as of 31 December 2024



rains (Map 4 and 5). As a result, moderate drought occurred in the affected areas of southern **Ethiopia** while in central and northeast areas **Somalia**, moderate to severe drought conditions (SPI based) were recorded.

The normal to above-normal seasonal rains in western **Kenya**, **Rwanda**, **Burundi**, and **Uganda**, led to localized flooding and/or landslides that added to the vulnerability burden in the region. In **South Sudan**, the cumulative flooding in the low-lying areas in proximity to Nile River and the Sudd wetlands had affected 1.4 million people with 380,000 of them displaced.

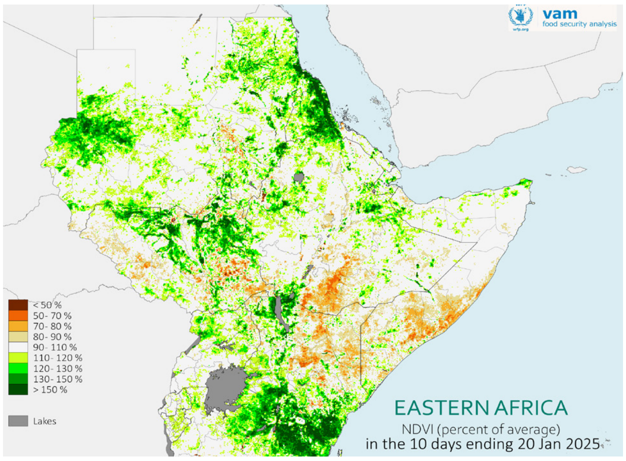
The seasonal rainfall performance provided favourable conditions for crop production in the equatorial areas of **Kenya**, **Uganda**, **Burundi**, **Rwanda**, and South Sudan except in localized areas affected by flooding/waterlogging or landslides. However, the significant moisture deficits in Somalia and parts of eastern and coastal Kenya negatively impacted on the crop growing conditions and will lower food availability from own production, driving food insecurity in 2025 before the next harvests.

The January-March 2025 period is expected to remain dry with warmer-than-normal land surface temperatures before the next seasonal rains starting from March. However, forecasts indicate a likelihood of below-average rainfall performance, especially in the eastern and western areas of the region. Only the central areas (eastern **Uganda**, western and southwest **Kenya**) and **Tanzania** are likely to experience favourable rains. A below-average March-May seasonal performance is likely to worsen the situation in **Somalia**, eastern **Kenya** and parts of southern-southeast **Ethiopia** where the October-December 2024 rains were poor.

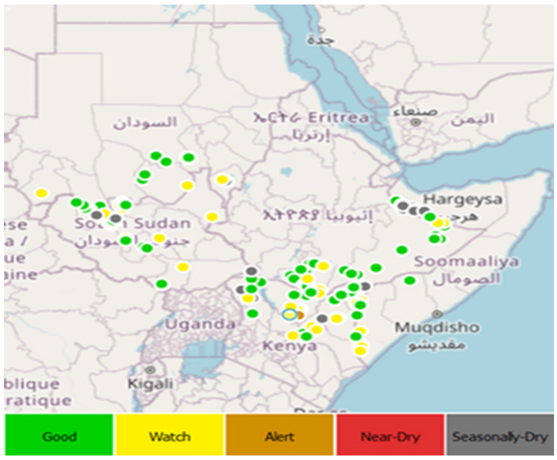
VEGETATION AND WATER RESOURCES

By end of the season in December 2024, regeneration of vegetation and pastures had taken place in most areas except in central **Somalia**, northeastern **Kenya**, and parts of southern Ethiopia where poor conditions were evident (Map 8). The surface water resources had also improved although not fully in areas with below-average rains (Map 6). It is anticipated that the hot and dry weather over January-March 2025 period will trigger earlier-than-normal deterioration of vegetation/pastures and water depletion, driving competition for available resources and earlier-than-usual livestock movement in search of water and pastures. This will negatively impact on availability and consumption of milk. A consecutive poor season during March-May 2025 will limit the opportunity for recovery.

MAP 6: Vegetation condition (NDVI) in early Jan 2025 as a percent of average



MAP 7: Status of surface water points by end of December 2024. Source: (USGS/FEWS NET)



CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT[10]

The number of internally and externally displaced persons across the region continues to increase, mainly due to the conflict in **Sudan**. As of mid-January 2025, the overall number of displaced individuals reached 27.1 million, including 21.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 5.4 million refugees and asylum seekers. In **Sudan**, approximately 12.4 million people had been displaced, including 8.8 million internally displaced since the beginning of the conflict in April 2023 and more than 3.3 million people displaced outside **Sudan** (including refugees, asylum seekers and returnees).

The last quarter of 2024 saw intense battlefield activity in **Sudan**, with the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) regaining territory in Sennar and advancing in Gezira and North Khartoum/Bahri, while frontlines in North Darfur remained static amid high violence near El Fasher. Escalated airstrikes by SAF and drone strikes by the RSF increased risks to civilians and humanitarian operations. Efforts for a negotiated resolution stalled, with Sudan vetoing a UN Security Council resolution, prompting some member states to impose additional sanctions on parties involved in the conflict.

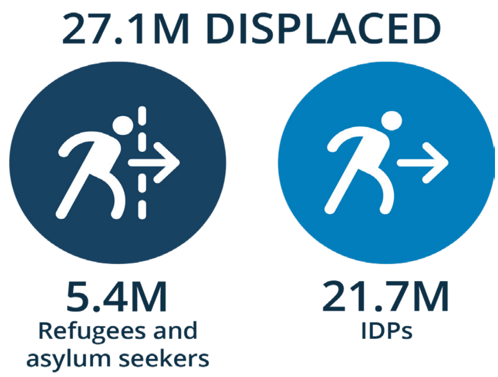
Somalia ended 2024 with mixed developments, including a de-escalation agreement with Ethiopia over political tensions and the UN Security Council's approval of the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in **Somalia** (AUSSOM), set to begin in January 2025. However, rising tensions between Mogadishu and Jubaland over election disputes, alongside continued instability in SSC-Khatumo and periodic clashes with Somaliland, overshadowed these positive strides and heightened regional insecurity.

Burundi is preparing for general elections in June 2025 amid severe economic challenges, including stalled IMF negotiations, high inflation, and a parallel exchange rate 250 percent above the official rate. Fuel shortages and soaring food costs have deepened humanitarian needs, while rising criminal activity and limited police capacity, compounded by allegations of police involvement in crime, have heightened security risks.

Ethiopia's security environment in late 2024 remained volatile, with persistent violence, human rights abuses, and governance challenges fuelling a humanitarian crisis. The Amhara region was the most active conflict zone, with movement restrictions and kidnappings disrupting aid delivery, while instability persisted in Oromia and political divisions in Tigray remained unresolved.

South Sudan faces economic challenges and international pressure to advance its political transition, following the extension of the transitional period to February 2027. While progress toward elections remains slow, the Tumaini Initiative gained momentum with a new framework introduced in December, breaking the deadlock in peace talks with R-ARCSS non-signatories, now scheduled to resume in January.

FIGURE 2: IDPs,refugees and sylum seekrs across the Eastern Africa Region as of end of Januray 2025



OUTLOOK - JANUARY-MARCH 2025

Food security and malnutrition are expected to remain critical across Eastern Africa, exacerbated by conflict, economic pressures, and climatic shocks, particularly in **Sudan** and **South Sudan**.

The food security and nutrition situation in **Sudan** is likely to remain severe, driven by conflict, disrupted livelihoods, displacement, and economic crisis. High food prices and reduced crop production for the 2024/2025 marketing year are likely to accelerate household food stock depletion, leading to an early lean season before May 2025.

Displacement and security pressures from the Sudan conflict are likely to worsen **South Sudan's** already precarious food security and nutrition situation. Persistent economic challenges, political instability, rising insecurity, and the growing influence of non-state actors are expected to continue undermining progress.

The ongoing economic crisis and spillover effects from the DRC conflict are likely to increase humanitarian needs in **Burundi**. Macroeconomic challenges could also lead to a resurgence of armed group activity or heightened civil unrest.

Below-average March-May rainfall is expected to worsen food insecurity in **Somalia**, eastern Kenya, and parts of southern-southeast **Ethiopia**, compounding the effects of poor October-December 2024 rains. Armed conflict in **Somalia's** Sool and Sanaag regions is likely to persist, adding further instability and straining food security.

Elsewhere in the region food prices are expected to remain elevated, sustaining pressure on vulnerable households. Overall, the interplay of climatic, economic, and security challenges continues to threaten food security across Eastern Africa, requiring sustained and targeted humanitarian interventions.

ENDNOTES AND SOURCES

[1]Based on IPC Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation - Updated Projections and FRC conclusions for October 2024 to May 2025, IPC Famine Review Committee Report Sudan, December 2024, WFP Sudan regional crisis external situation report #11; November 2024 and OCHA: Sudan Humanitarian Update by OCHA; 1-31 December 2024.

[2]The regional total includes another 2.7 million refugees who are not covered in the IPC analyses..

[3]Based on IPC South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Malnutrition Situation for September - November 2024 and Projections for December 2024 - March 2025 and for April - July 2025.

[4]The AMN classification for Burundi and South Sudan shown on the map does not reflect the latest projections. Please refer to the IPC website for the most up-to-date estimates and maps (Burundi, South Sudan).

[5]Based on WFP Ethiopia, Food and Nutrition Security Update, December 2024.

[6]Based on IPC Kenya: Acute Malnutrition Situation April - July 2024 and Projection for August - October 2024 (ASAL).

[7]Based on IPC Somalia: Acute Malnutrition Situation June to September 2024 and Projection October to December 2024

[8]Based on WFP Market and Trade Update, January 2025.

[9]Based on WFP Eastern Africa Seasonal Monitor: October–December 2024 Seasonal Rainfall Performance & Outlook for January-May 2025.

[10]Based on WFP Regional Bureau of Eastern Africa Analysis and data from UNHCR Operational Data portal: Refugees and Asylum-seekers in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region (accessed on 3rd Feburary 2025).

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