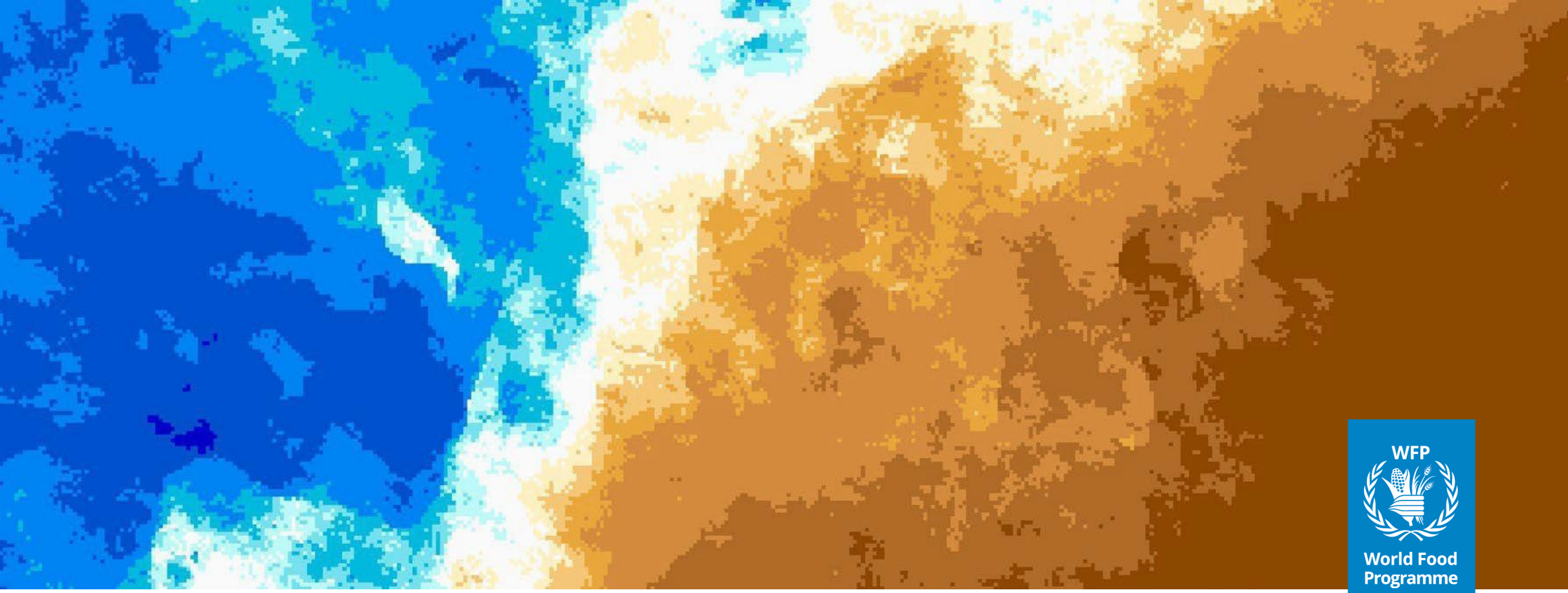


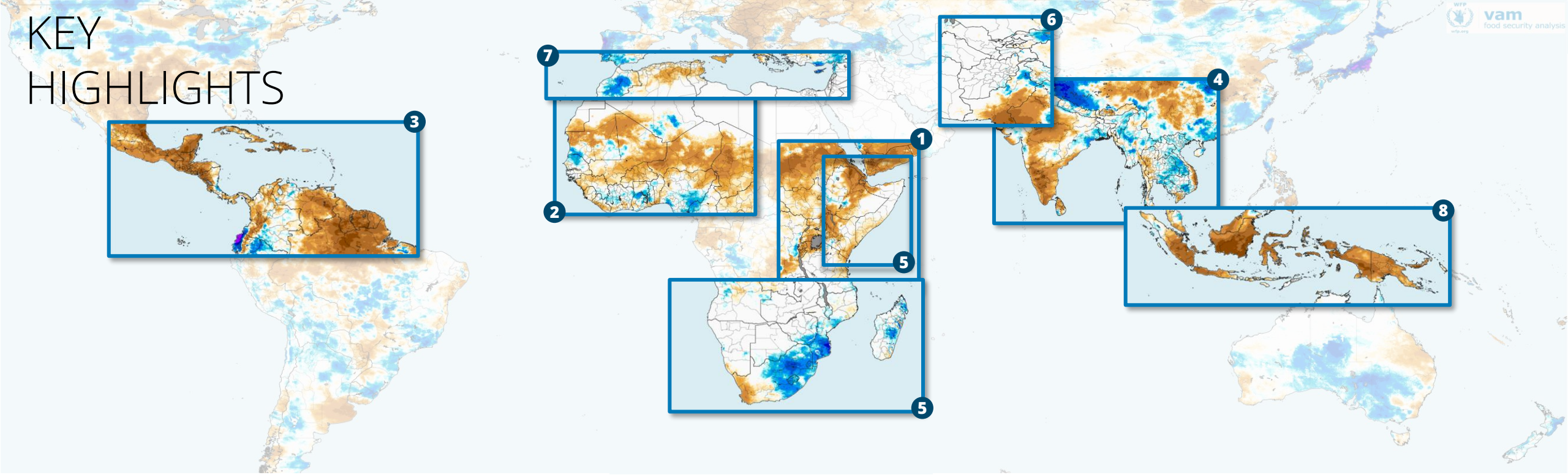
WFP
World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

Global Seasonal Outlook

2026 September

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



Regions are ordered to reflect the seasonal progression — from areas currently in-season to those where the rainy season is expected to begin:

1 EAST AFRICA — Drought

Persistent rainfall deficits through the main growing season have reduced crop prospects across several areas. With the season nearing completion, opportunities for recovery are increasingly limited.

2 WESTERN AFRICA — Dryness

Overall seasonal conditions remain generally favorable, although pockets of dryness and vegetation stress continue to affect parts of the Sahel as crops approach maturity and harvest.

3 LATAM — Drought

Persistent dryness has severely affected Primera crop production. Forecast below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures are expected to constrain Postrera planting and crop development, increasing the risk of further production losses

4 SOUTH & SE ASIA — Dryness, Flood

Below average rainfall forecast could worsen crop and water stress across parts of the region. Wetter conditions in Pakistan and Sri Lanka could improve water availability for coming seasons but also increase flood risks.

5 HORN OF AFRICA & SOUTHERN AFRICA — Flood, Drought

October marks the onset of the rainy seasons in both the Horn of Africa and southern Africa. Forecasts favor wetter-than-average conditions in much of the Horn of Africa and drier-than-average conditions in southern Africa, accompanied by above-average temperatures in both regions. In line with historical El Niño patterns these conditions may favor the development of flood- and drought-related hazards, respectively.

6 CENTRAL ASIA — Flood

Forecast above-average rainfall may enhance water availability and support winter planting but could also increase flood risk. Warmer conditions may reduce snow accumulation, with potential implications for irrigation water supplies later in the season

7 MIDDLE EAST & NORTHERN AFRICA — Flood

A strong wetter-than-usual signal is forecast for October to December, which could support winter cereal planting and improve water availability, while also increasing the risk of localized flooding.

8 INDONESIA & THE PACIFIC — Dryness

A strong El Niño-related hot and dry signal is forecast for the start of the wet season, raising the risk of delayed planting and poor crop establishment across Indonesia and neighboring areas.

El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) Outlook

A very strong El Niño is virtually certain, and the probability of a record-breaking event has increased to 75%.

SPECIAL FOCUS

El Niño Outlook – September 2026

A Very Strong El Niño Is Virtually Certain, with Growing Confidence in a Historic Event

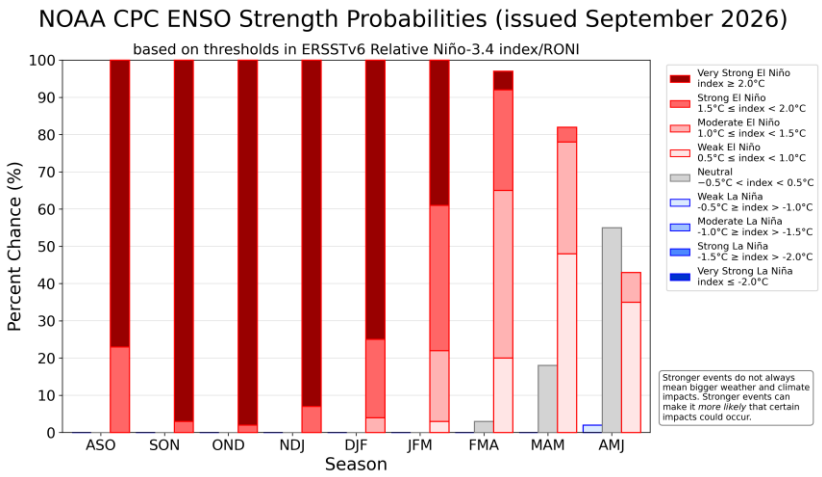


Fig. 1: NOAA ENSO strength probabilities issued in Sep 2026

El Niño has strengthened, with the 3-month RONI rising from +1.0°C (MJJ) to +1.4°C (JJA), and is projected to reach peak intensity during October to December (OND).

A very strong El Niño event (RONI > +2.0°C) is considered virtually certain (98% probability) during OND (Figure 1).

Forecast confidence has strengthened, with the likelihood of a record-breaking El Niño event increasing from 69% to 75%. A 3-month RONI exceeding +2.5°C would surpass all events observed since 1950.

El Niño is strengthening toward an **OND peak**, with a **very strong event virtually certain** and **growing confidence in record-breaking intensity**.

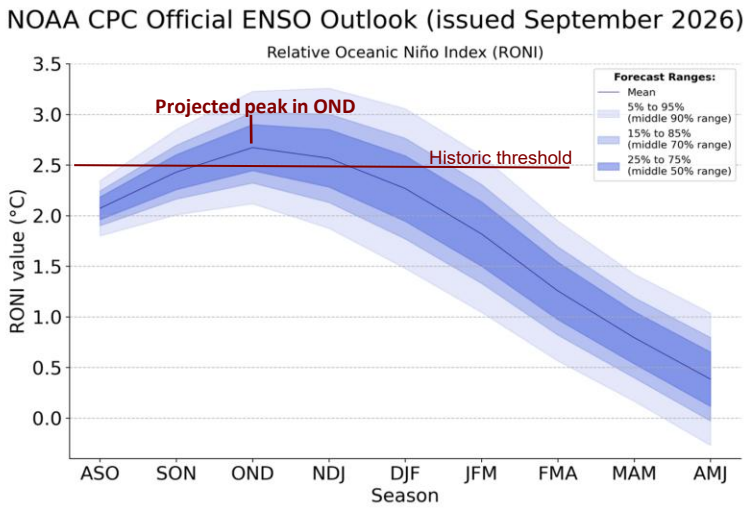


Fig. 2: Official NOAA 3-month sea surface temperature RONI ensemble forecast at the Niño 3.4 region issued September 2026.

Over the past month, El Niño has continued to strengthen, with sea surface temperature (SST) anomalies exceeding +3.0°C across the eastern equatorial Pacific. September forecasts (Figure 2) indicate a rapid intensification of El Niño conditions. Niño 3.4 SST anomalies are projected to peak during the OND season, with the ensemble median approaching +2.7°C. Confidence in the development of a historically strong event has increased, with a 75% probability that this threshold will be reached. If these conditions materialize, the current El Niño would become the strongest event observed since 1950. An event of this magnitude would substantially increase the likelihood of widespread and significant El Niño-related impacts worldwide. Following its peak, a gradual weakening is expected, with SST anomalies forecast to return to neutral conditions by the April to June.

What are the **climate impacts** of El Niño?

Tends to **redistribute rainfall**, causing flooding in some regions and drought in others.

Raise global temperatures, often contributing to the warmest years on record.

Increase the likelihood of climate extremes, such as floods, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires, and typically suppresses Atlantic tropical cyclone activity while enhancing activity in the Pacific.

Does **El Niño strength** influence the impact?

The **relationship between El Niño strength and impacts is not linear**, where even weak events have resulted in severe impact.

Stronger events **do not always translate into greater weather or climate impacts**, but they do make certain impacts **more likely to occur.** ENSO is only one of many factors that can influence seasonal weather and climate.

SPECIAL FOCUS

Extreme Weather Outlook

The October to December (OND) 2026 outlook suggests an increased probability of extreme wet, dry, and hot conditions.

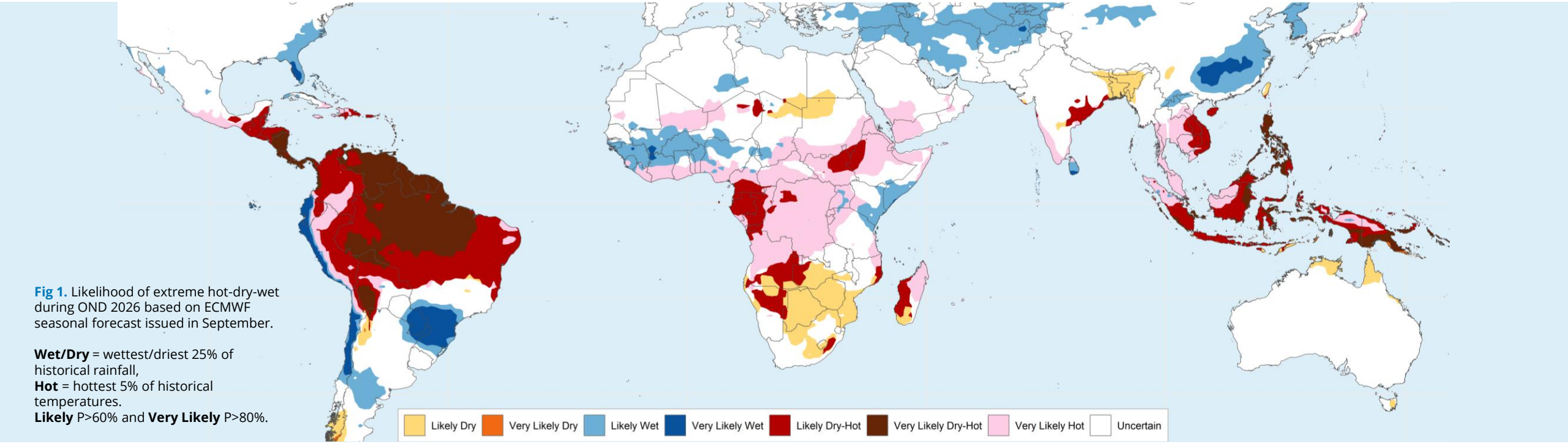


Fig 1. Likelihood of extreme hot-dry-wet during OND 2026 based on ECMWF seasonal forecast issued in September.

Wet/Dry = wettest/driest 25% of historical rainfall,
Hot = hottest 5% of historical temperatures.
Likely P>60% and **Very Likely** P>80%.

Wetter than usual conditions are forecast across parts of South America, Africa, and Asia, potentially increasing the risk of flooding in:

- Southern Brazil, Paraguay, and the Pacific coasts of Ecuador, Peru, and Chile, where the probability of exceptionally wet conditions exceeds 80% in some areas.
- Parts of West Africa, as well as Kenya and Somalia.
- Middle East and Central Asia, Sri Lanka, northern Laos and Vietnam.

The forecast also highlights an elevated risk of compound **hot and dry extremes** during OND. These conditions could adversely affect agriculture and water resources, potentially contributing to food insecurity in:

- Central America (Postrera season), northern South America, and the Amazon Basin.
- Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, the Philippines, parts of Laos and Vietnam
- Drier-than-average conditions are forecast to persist across parts of East Africa through the remainder of the current season and across Southern Africa, where prolonged dryness is expected to extend throughout much of the coming rainy season.

This map shows the probability of climate conditions that deviate from historical patterns during the period of interest. Higher probabilities do not necessarily imply extreme impacts, as their significance depends on the local climatology and the typical conditions for that time of year. It is important to note that this forecast should not be interpreted as a deterministic prediction of hazards such as droughts or floods at specific locations. Rather, it indicates an increased likelihood of climate conditions that may favour the development of such impacts.

EAST AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Eastern Africa				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Sudans and Ethiopia (Meher)												

Persistent Dryness Reduces Main-Season Crop Prospects

The 2026 main growing season is approaching its final stages following prolonged rainfall deficits across most of region. Dry conditions persisted through much of the core growing period in most of Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, north-eastern Uganda, western Kenya and Yemen, continuing the deterioration highlighted in August.

In several areas, exceptionally low rainfall coincided with unusually high temperatures, resulting in some of the most severe hot and dry conditions observed in the available historical record (Fig 4.). This combination has substantially increased stress during critical stages of crop development, raising concerns about crop performance and end-of-season production outcomes.

Vegetation conditions (Fig.3) have weakened across several affected areas, with particularly concerning conditions across key cereal-producing areas. With crops approaching maturity and harvest, opportunities for substantial late-season recovery are limited, and below-average production remains a concern where these conditions have persisted. The start of the second season in the bimodal areas of South Sudan has also been impacted by delayed and uneven rainfall.

Below-average seasonal rainfall across the Lake Victoria basin has contributed to limiting the expansion of flooding in the Sudd area of South Sudan. However, wetter-than-average conditions forecast for October-December could slow the recession of floodwaters and trigger renewed localized flooding.

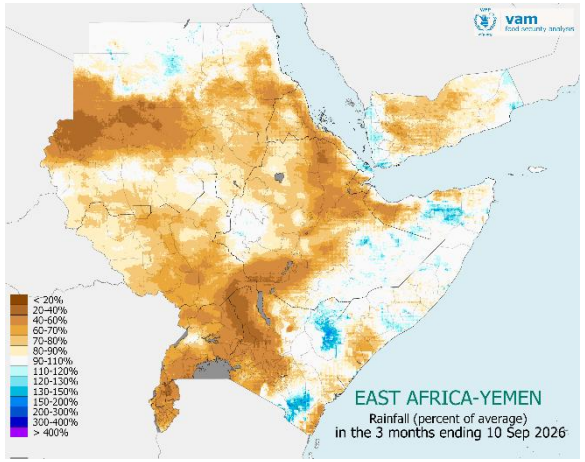


Fig 1. Observed rainfall for the 3-month **ending 10 Sep 26** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

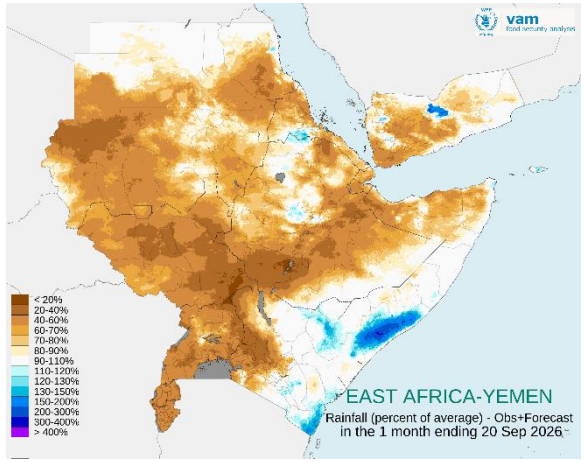


Fig 2. Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 20 Sep 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

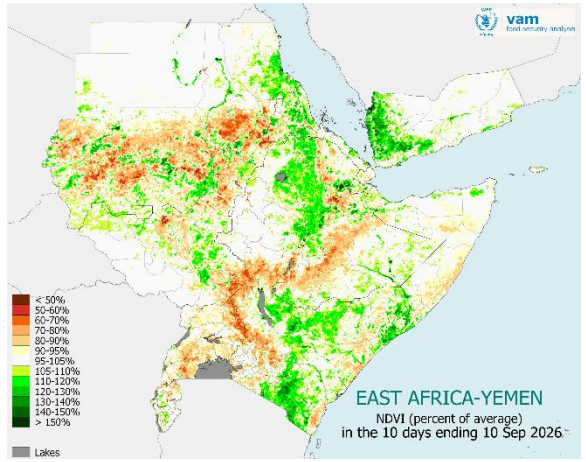


Fig 3. Observed Normalized Difference Vegetation Index for the 10 days **ending 10 Sep 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Green (red) shades correspond to above (below) vegetation greenness.

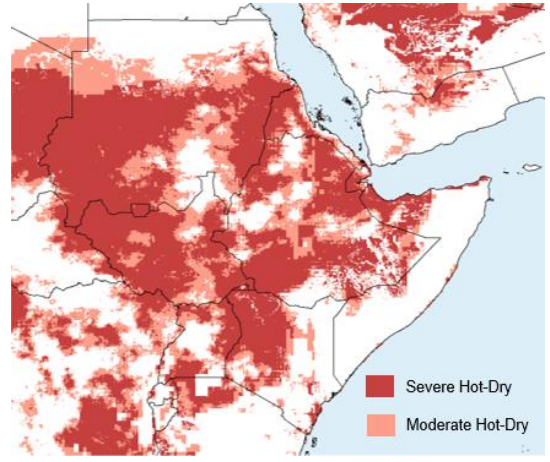


Fig 4. Observed hot-dry conditions for the **3-month** ending **31 Aug 2026.** Darker shades correspond to severe (rainfall <10th percentile and temperature >99th percentile) and moderate (rainfall <25th percentile and temperature >95th percentile) hot-dry conditions.

WESTERN AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar



Mixed Seasonal Conditions with Persistent Dryness Hotspots Across Parts of the Sahel

The 2026 rainy season is approaching its final stages under mixed conditions. Seasonal rainfall and SPI (Fig.1) indicate hotspot of dry conditions across the Sahel, particularly in Chad and parts of Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and northern Nigeria, reflecting below-average seasonal totals, a delayed onset of the season and uneven rainfall distribution. Farther south, rainfall performance has been comparatively more favourable.

Vegetation conditions provide a more detailed picture (Fig.2). Below-average vegetation development is evident across Lake Chad areas, central and southern Chad, northeastern Nigeria, eastern Niger, central Burkina Faso and eastern Mali, overlapping in several areas with persistent rainfall deficits. Elsewhere, vegetation remains largely near or above average, confirming the uneven spatial distribution of rainfall across the region.

With crops now in advanced development stages, opportunities for late rainfall to compensate for earlier deficits are diminishing. Overall, crop and vegetation conditions remain spatially mixed, with localized stress observed in some areas but no evidence of widespread deterioration.

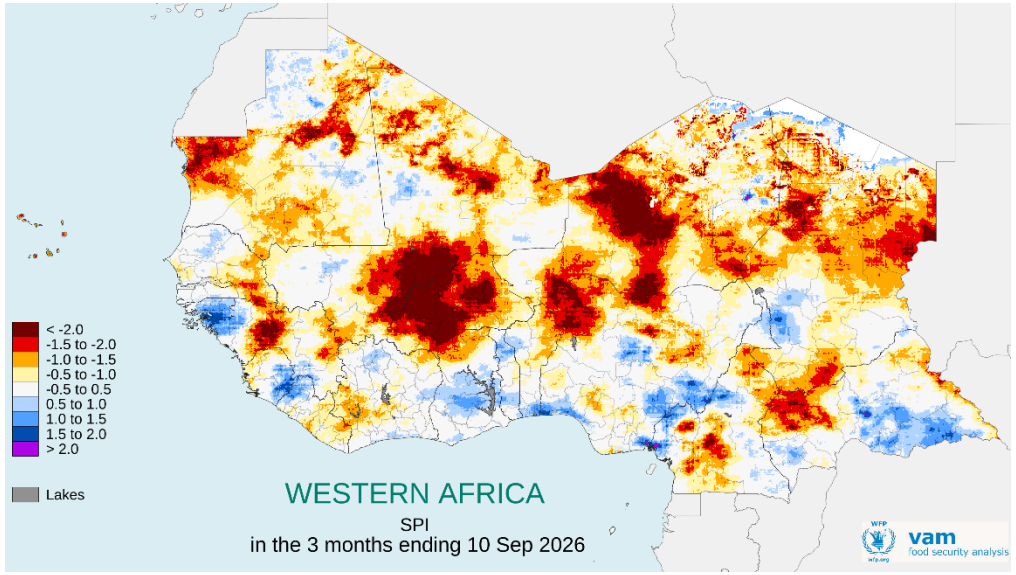


Fig 1. SPI – 3 months **ending 10 Sep 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

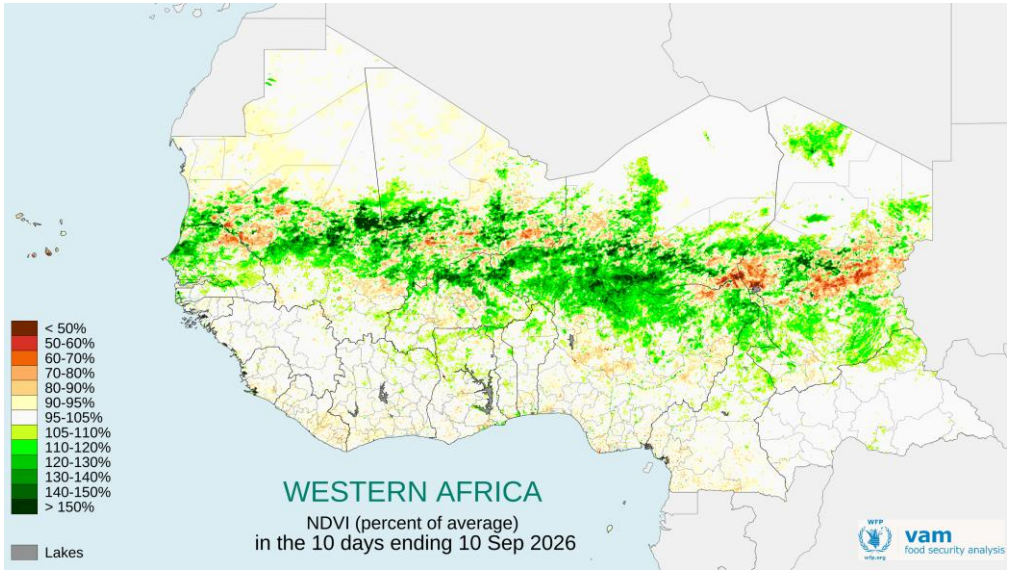
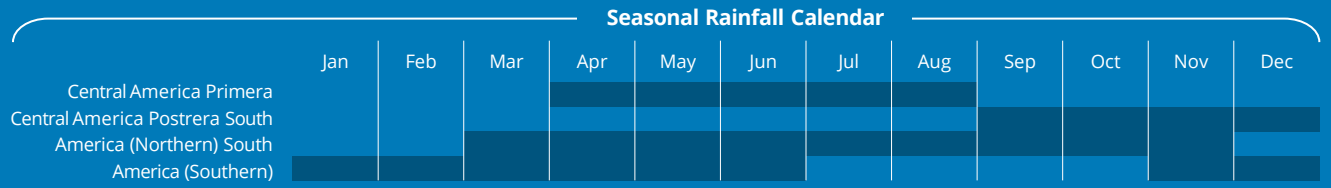


Fig 2. Observed Normalized Difference Vegetation Index for the 10 days **ending 10 Sep 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Green (red) shades correspond to above (below) vegetation greenness.

LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



Persistent Rainfall Deficits Drive Primera Season Losses and Raise Concerns for the Postrera

Persistent below average rainfall has affected much of Central America, with severe impacts on Primera production, particularly across the Dry Corridor. Prolonged dry spells and above average temperatures delayed planting and affected crop development. By early September, rainfall deficits remained pronounced most of Central America, Hispaniola, Colombia and Venezuela, despite recent rains. Poor vegetation conditions and continued moisture stress remain widespread in affected areas, while insufficient rainfall is delaying preparations and planting for the Postrera season.

The October to December outlook indicates below-average rainfall and above-average temperatures across much of Central America, Hispaniola, and parts of northern South America. These conditions are likely to exacerbate moisture deficits during the Postrera season, increasing the risk of reduced agricultural production. Continued dryness may hamper crop development, constrain planting activities, and further reduce water availability for both agricultural and domestic use.

El Niño is also expected to suppress Atlantic tropical cyclone activity while favoring increased activity in the eastern and central Pacific. Despite the dry seasonal outlook, individual storms could still bring heavy rainfall, flooding and additional damage.

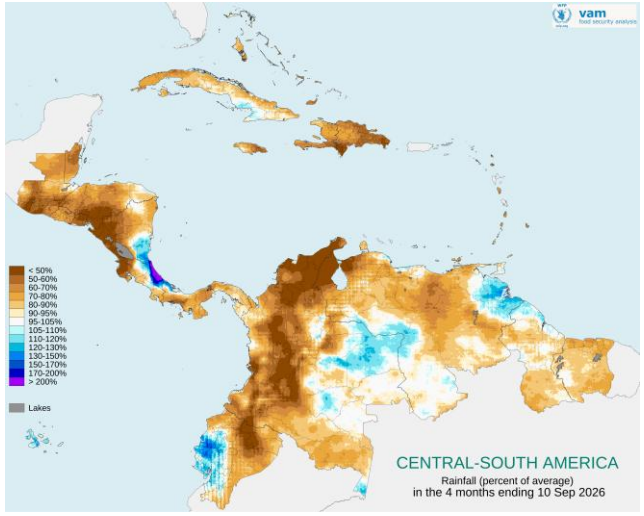


Fig 1. Rainfall anomalies for 4 months ending **10 Sep 2026** using the Standardized Precipitation Index. Blue and purple (yellow and red) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

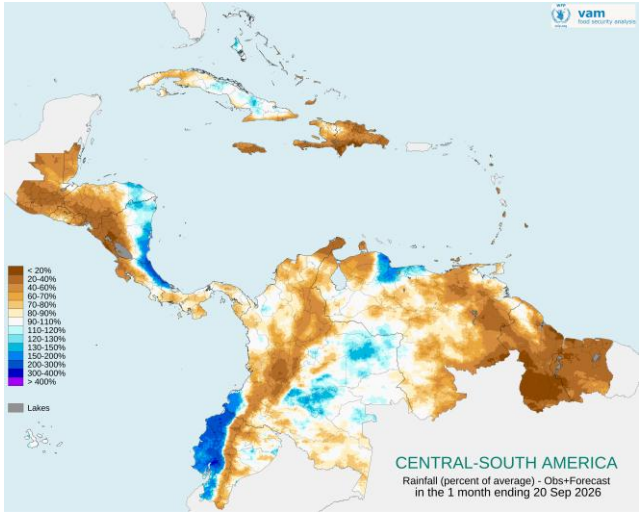


Fig 2. Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 20 Sep 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

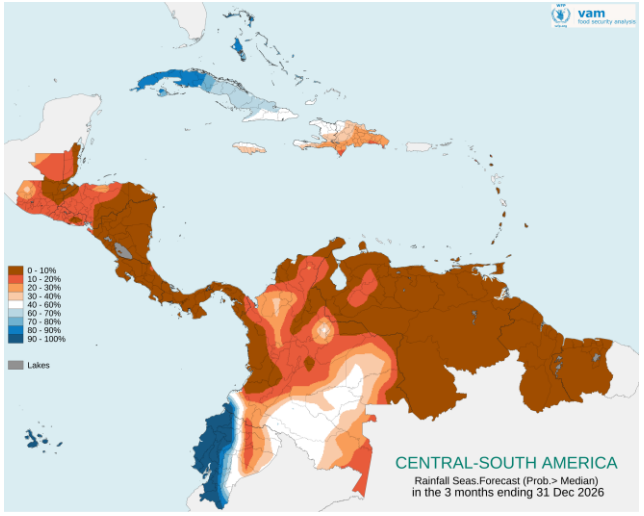


Fig 3. Rainfall forecast for **Oct-Dec 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual condition.

SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar



Contrasting Rainfall Outlooks Raise Concerns

Persistent rainfall deficits are increasing pressure on key agricultural production areas across parts of the region. In Pakistan, dry conditions in the south continue to constrain crop development. Deficits across India and parts of Southeast Asia, particularly in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, raise concerns for agricultural production. As is typical during the monsoon season, heavy rainfall, flooding, and storms have caused localized crop damage and disruptions to agricultural activities especially in Philippines and Myanmar.

The Oct-Dec outlook favors below average rainfall across the Philippines, parts of India, Vietnam, Cambodia and Bangladesh. Continued rainfall deficits could impact crop development and reduce water availability for the following crop season. In contrast, above average rainfall is favored across much of Pakistan, North Korea and Sri Lanka. In Pakistan, wetter conditions could improve water availability for winter planting but could also trigger flash and riverine flooding. In Sri Lanka, wetter conditions can facilitate the start of the main crop season, but heavy rainfall could cause localized flooding.

EL Niño tends to shift cyclone activity eastward, reducing landfall frequency in the region, although individual storms can still cause severe flooding and crop losses.

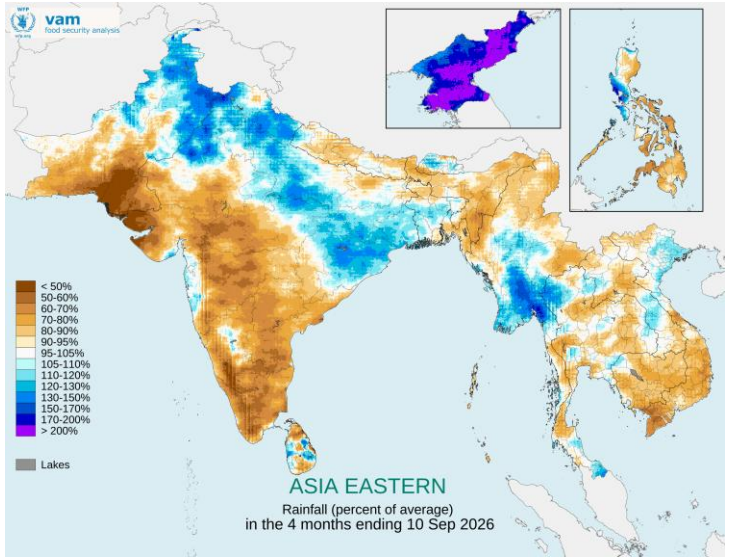


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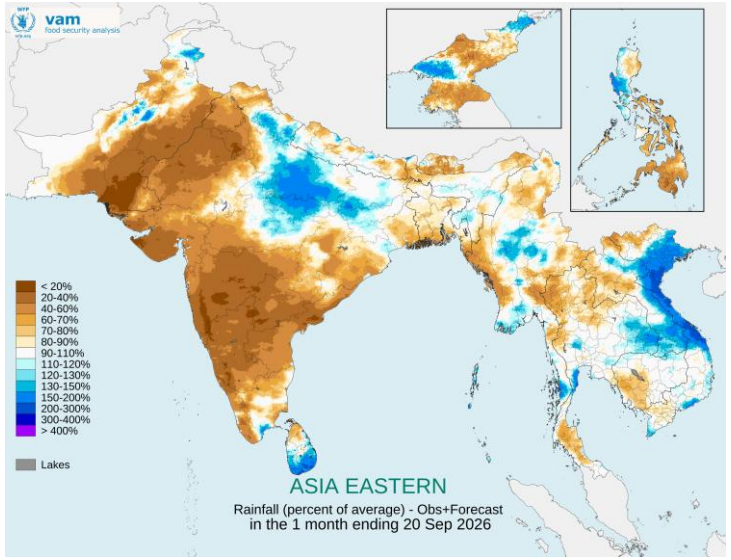


Fig 2. Observed and Rainfall forecast for the 1-month **ending 20 Sep 2026** as a proportion of the long-term average. Blue and purple (orange and brown) shades correspond to above (below) average rainfall.

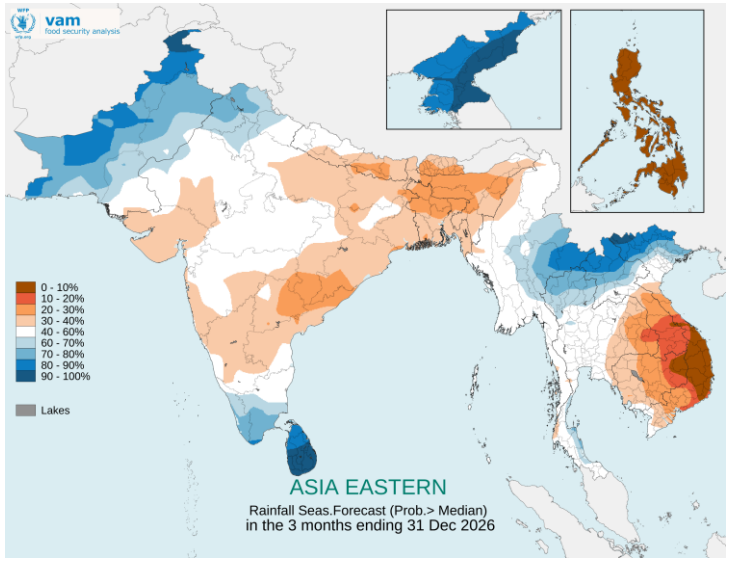
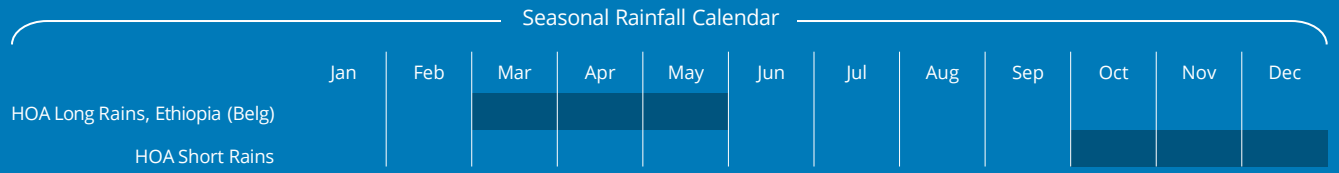


Fig 3. Rainfall forecast for the 3-month period **Oct-Dec 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

HORN OF AFRICA



Extremely Wet Conditions Expected During Oct-Dec 2026

The latest forecasts for the October-December (OND) season indicate an increased likelihood of above-average rainfall across much of the Greater Horn of Africa (Fig.1) . This outlook is driven by the development of a strong El Niño and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), resembling conditions observed during past extreme seasons and increasing the likelihood of heavy and persistent rainfall, with an elevated risk of widespread flooding.

Comparison with historical analogue years highlights the potential magnitude of this event. During the strong combined El Niño and positive IOD events of 1997 and 2023, rainfall totals in parts of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and southern Ethiopia reached up to four times the climatological average (Fig.2). These exceptionally wet conditions triggered widespread flooding, affecting up to four million people across the region, more than half of whom were in Somalia. The current forecast bears similarities to these past events, underscoring the importance of anticipatory action, close monitoring of flood-prone areas, and preparedness for potential humanitarian impacts.

With regard to agricultural and pastoral activities, forecasts indicate a higher likelihood of an early to near-normal onset of the rainy season across Somalia and central and eastern Kenya. Seasonal outlooks also favor warmer-than-average temperatures across most of the Horn of Africa. While these conditions are expected to support crop production, improve water availability, and enhance rangeland conditions, extreme rainfall events and flooding could also negatively affect agricultural production through crop damage, waterlogging, and disruptions to farming activities.

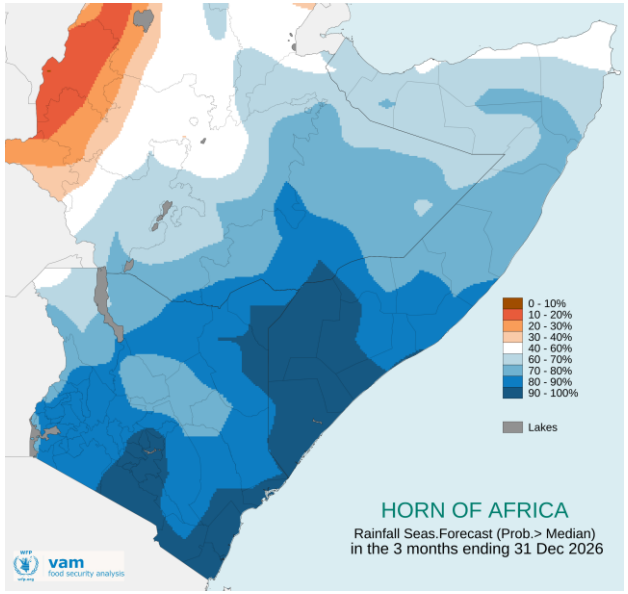
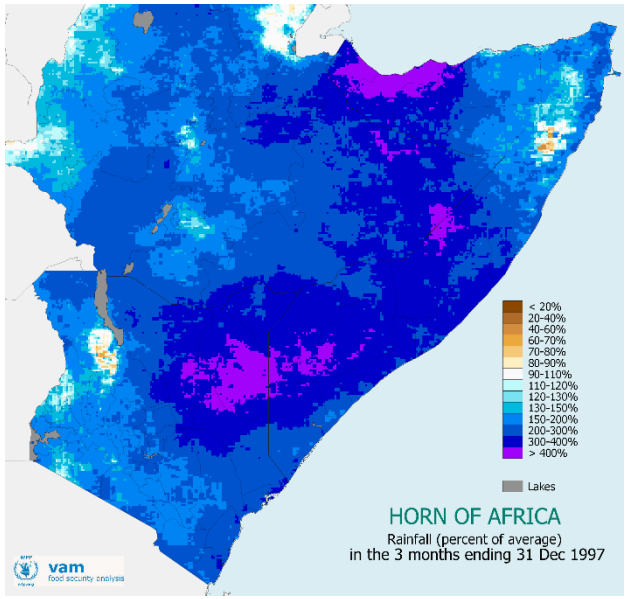


Fig 1. Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Oct -Dec 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.



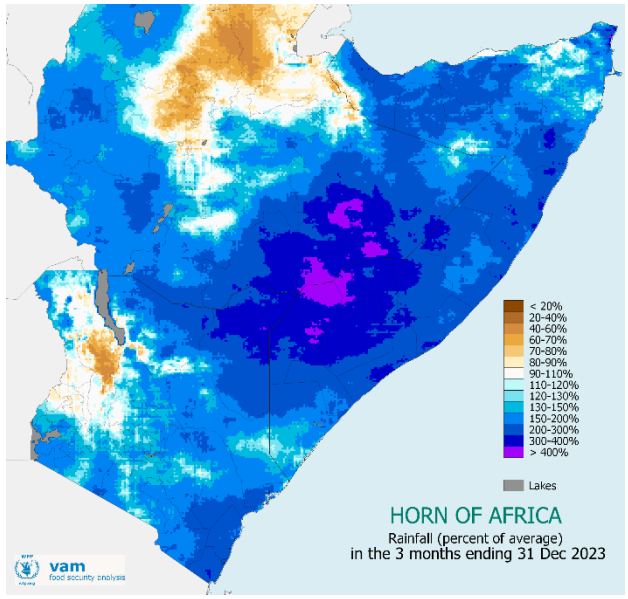


Fig 2. Rainfall anomalies during **OND 1997** and **OND 2023,** historical analogues for the forecast OND 2026 season. Analogue years represent past seasons with similar ocean-atmosphere conditions and help contextualize potential rainfall outcomes.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Southern Africa												

Dry and Warm Conditions Expected During Oct-Dec 2026

El Niño conditions are currently established in the tropical Pacific and are strengthening, with a near-certain likelihood of developing into a very strong event and reaching peak intensity during the OND 2026 period. This is occurring alongside a strong positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which is expected to develop by September 2026. Together, these two key climate drivers are expected to favor below-normal rainfall across much of the southern Africa region during Oct-Dec 2026.

Forecasts from the Southern African Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) indicate a higher likelihood of drier-than-normal conditions across much of southern Africa, including southern Angola, southern Zambia, Zimbabwe, central and southern Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, most of South Africa, Eswatini, and Lesotho. Wetter-than-normal conditions are expected in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), most of Tanzania, and the far northern parts of Zambia.

This is consistent with the typical impacts of strong El Niño and positive IOD events, which generally suppress rainfall across much of southern Africa while enhancing rainfall in the northern parts of the region, where climate responses tend to align more closely with the wetter conditions often observed in East Africa during El Niño years. The temperature indicates a high likelihood of above-normal temperatures across most of southern Africa.

While it is still too early to forecast the outcome of the full season, current forecasts suggest a stronger dry signal at the start of the season than that observed during the 2023-2024 El Niño-induced drought in Southern Africa, which affected more than 30 million people and pushed over 20 million people into crisis-level food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+). Anticipatory action and preparedness measures will be critical to mitigate potential impacts and strengthen the resilience of communities likely to be affected by the forecast hazards.

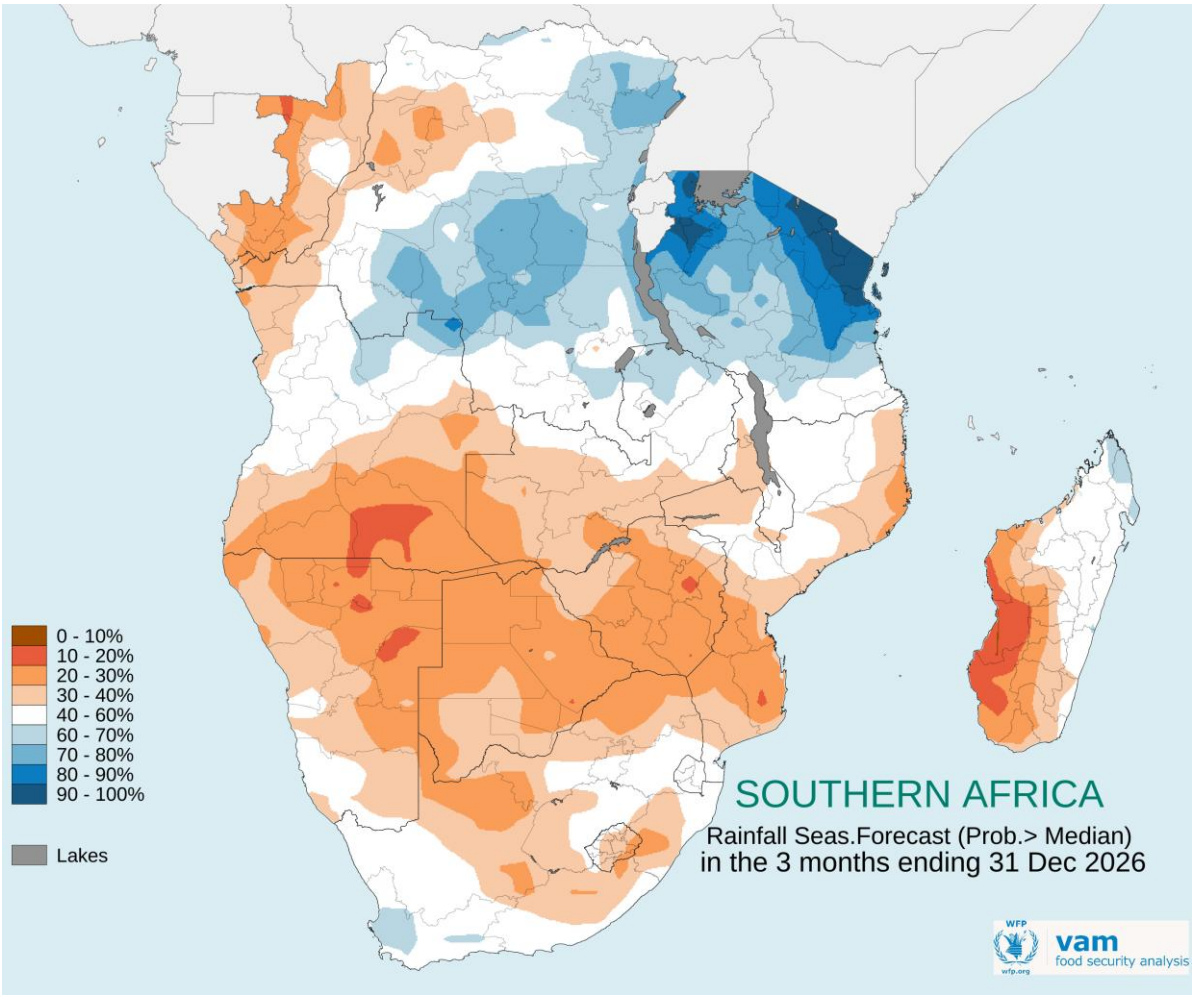


Fig 1. Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Oct -Dec 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

CENTRAL ASIA

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Central Asia												

Above-Average Rainfall Favored at the Start of the Winter Season

The region approaches the start of the rainy season with prospects for improved water availability after persistent shortages in some areas. The Oct-Dec outlook favors above average rainfall across much of the region, consistent with El Niño's influence during the coming winter season. These conditions would help improve soil moisture and support winter crop planting. However, above average temperatures are also likely across the region, particularly in Pakistan, and the timing and distribution of rainfall will remain important, particularly in rainfed areas.

Following the low snow reserves reported during the previous season in parts of the region, precipitations at higher elevations could begin rebuilding water packs useful for water supplies during the following season. However, warmer than usual conditions could limit snow accumulation at lower elevations, reducing the water stored. Nevertheless, a single wetter-than-average season would not necessarily be sufficient to ensure the full recovery of water resources, while heavy rainfall could also lead to localized flooding and associated damage.

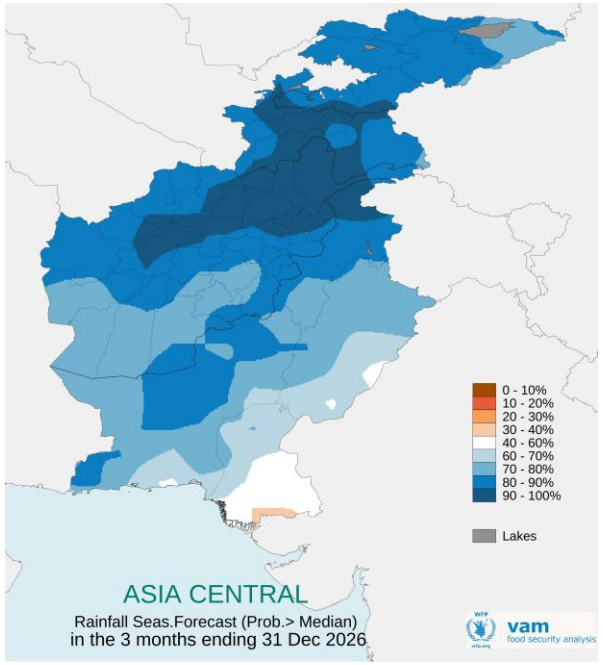


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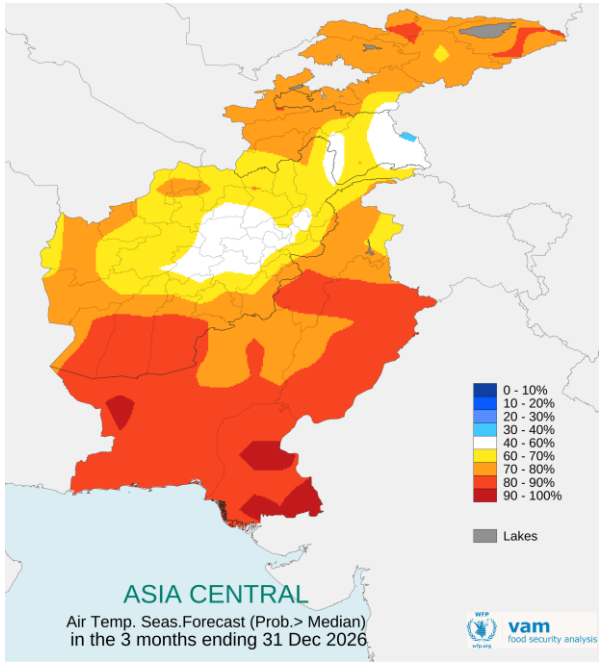


Fig 2. Temperature forecast for the 3-month periods **Oct-Dec 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely colder (hotter) than usual conditions.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTHERN AFRICA



Wetter Conditions Favored at the Start of the Winter Cereal Season

The 2025/26 winter cereal season concluded under generally favourable conditions across much of the region. Following a dry start, improved rainfall from December onwards replenished soil moisture and supported crops through key development stages. This recovery provides a favourable starting point for the 2026/27 winter cereal season.

Looking ahead, the October–December forecast indicates a strong wet signal across much of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East, particularly Türkiye, Syria and Iraq (Fig. 1). If rainfall is well distributed, wetter-than-usual conditions would support planting and early establishment of winter wheat and barley, while improving soil moisture and water availability following the dry summer period.

While the wetter outlook is favourable for the start of the 2026/27 season, periods of heavy rainfall could also increase the risk of localized flooding and waterlogging. Rainfall distribution and soil moisture will therefore be important to monitor as the season develops.

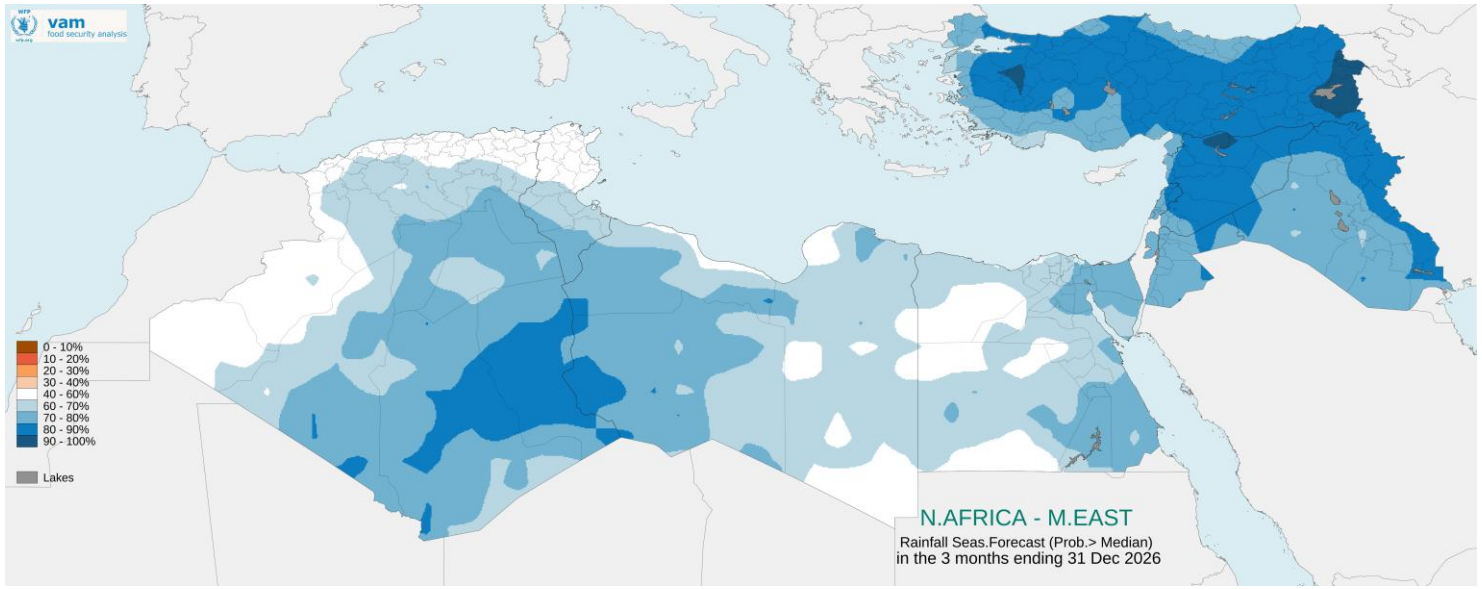


Fig 1. Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Oct -Dec 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions.

INDONESIA & THE PACIFIC

Seasonal Rainfall Calendar

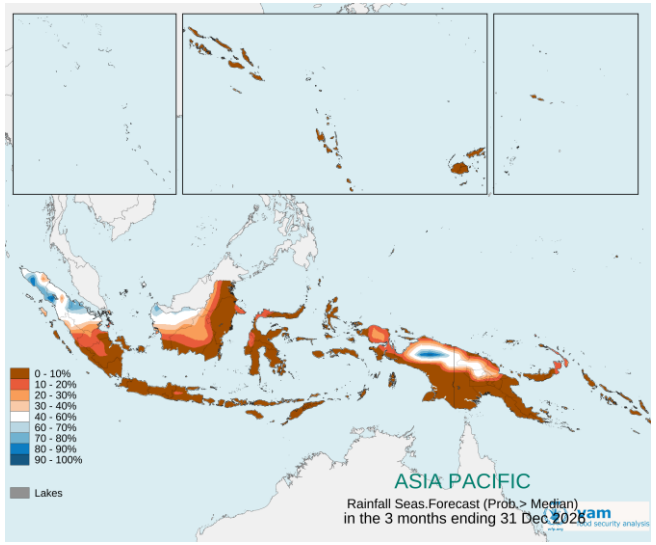
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Indonesia and Pacific												

El Niño Raises the Risk of a Dry Start to the Wet Season

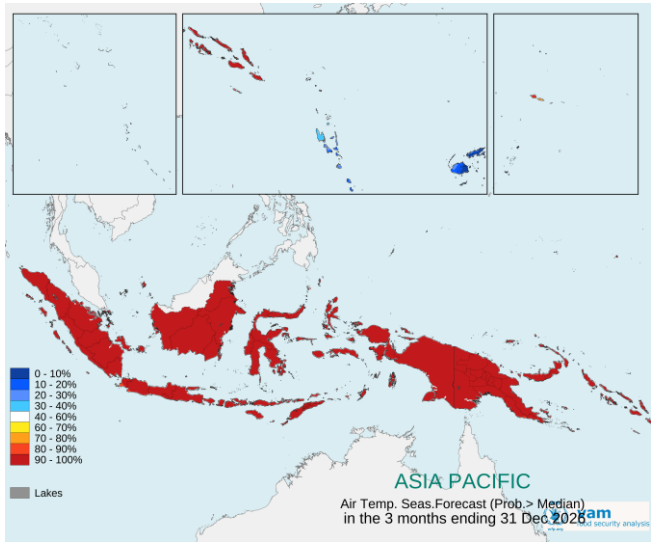
The monsoon season is expected to begin shortly. However, the October-December outlook indicates a strong and widespread signal for below-average rainfall across Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and neighboring areas, accompanied by a very high likelihood of above-average temperatures. The timing is particularly concerning, as this period coincides with the onset of the main wet season and the start of key rice and maize planting activities. Furthermore, the dry season is ending under unusually dry conditions this year, which may heighten risks to agriculture, water resources, and forest fire activity. If the forecast materializes, a delayed or weak rainfall onset could postpone planting and constrain early crop establishment. Above-average temperatures could further increase crop water demand and intensify moisture stress where rainfall remains insufficient.

Comparison with the October-December 2023 forecast shows a broadly similar spatial drying pattern to that observed during the previous El Niño event, although the 2026 signal is stronger and more widespread, particularly across the western part of the region. This underscores the importance of closely monitoring rainfall onset and planting progress as the wet season begins, as well as the potential for an increase in forest fire risk under prolonged dry conditions.

El Niño can also alter tropical cyclone activity across the Pacific. While Indonesia and Timor-Leste are expected to face predominantly dry and hot conditions, Papua New Guinea and Pacific island countries including Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji may remain exposed to tropical cyclones and associated heavy rainfall, strong winds and coastal flooding.



Rainfall forecast for the 3-month periods **Oct - Dec 2026**, as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median.Blue (orange) shades for likely wetter (drier) than usual conditions



Temperature forecast for the 3-month periods **Oct - Dec 2026** as the likelihood of exceeding the long-term median. Blue (orange) shades for likely colder (hotter) than usual conditions.

NOTES

All satellite data (rainfall, vegetation index and land surface temperature) both current and historical are stored and processed at the WFP-HQ Humanitarian Data Cube AWS cloud system.

Rainfall: Primary dekadal data (CHIRPS) from Univ California St Barbara Climate Hazards Centre (https://www.chc.ucsb.edu/data/chirps)
Various accumulations are computed on a dekadal basis and anomalies derived relative to a 25 year-long mean (1994-2018).

Land Surface Temperature: Primary data from MODIS-AQUA (NASA), cloud cleared and gap-filled, both daytime and nighttime images. Thermal amplitude derived from difference between the two. Long term averages 2002-2018 used to derive anomalies

Vegetation Index: Primary data from MODIS-AQUA and TERRA (NASA), cloud cleared and gap-filled. Long term averages 2002-2018 used to derive anomalies

Seasonal Forecast: ECMWF seasonal forecasts **(SEAS5) |** The forecast anomalies are presented as the probability of exceeding the median, indicating the likelihood that seasonal precipitation will be above the median of the 24-year climatological distribution. These anomalies are derived from a 51-member forecast ensemble and are calculated relative to a 24-year model climatology (based on a 25-member ensemble reforecast) spanning 1993–2016

What is ENSO? ENSO is a recurring climate pattern in the equatorial Pacific, alternating between El Niño, La Niña, and Neutral phases. Shifts in ocean temperatures and atmospheric pressure during these phases influence global weather, affecting rainfall, temperatures, and the risk of extremes such as droughts, heavy rains, and tropical cyclones.
(https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/)

Water level in reservoirs: G-REALM data from USDA Foreign Agricultural Service.

Flood Forecast: GLOFAS-Copernicus and GOOGLE Flood Hub

WFP World Food Programme

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