

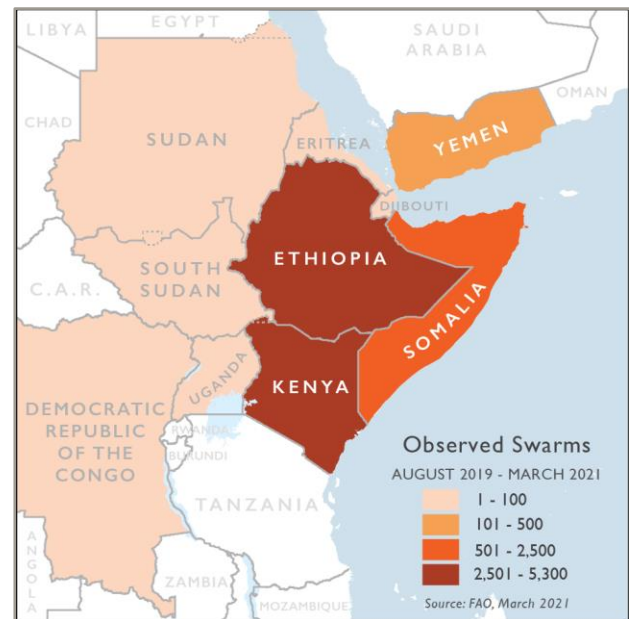
East Africa – Desert Locust Crisis

MARCH 26, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- Locust populations have steadily declined across Ethiopia and Kenya in recent months as a result of sustained control operations and limited breeding opportunities due to below-average rainfall. Swarms and hopper bands persist in northern Somalia.
- Projected below-average rainfall between March and mid-2021 will limit locust breeding opportunities and curtail the size of new locust generations in East Africa, possibly leading to a significant reduction in the current locust upsurge in East Africa.
- USAID/BHA-supported response efforts have treated more than 4.8 million acres of infested land in East Africa and Yemen since January 2020, safeguarding the food security of approximately 26.8 million people.



TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the East Africa Desert Locust Crisis Response in FYs 2020–2021	USAID/BHA ³	\$25,770,961
	USAID/Uganda	\$379,862
Total		\$26,150,823

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page ⁵

¹ Figure includes East African countries included in the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s revised regional response plan as of late December: Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan.

² Figure reflects combined estimates of populations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan currently experiencing Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3—Crisis—or higher levels of acute food insecurity. The IPC is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity.

³ USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) funding includes non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Locust Infestations Decline in Ethiopia and Kenya

The number and size of desert locust swarms in Ethiopia and Kenya decreased significantly between January and March as a result of sustained control operations and delayed locust breeding due to limited rainfall, according to FAO. Previously, immature swarms had migrated from eastern Ethiopia and central Somalia to southern Ethiopia and northern and central Kenya in December 2020 and January 2021, prompting locust response actors to scale up local control and surveillance operations to treat infested areas prior to the onset of Kenya's March-to-June long rains and Ethiopia's March-to-May *belg* and *gu* rains. Despite initial concerns that that seasonal rains could provide favorable conditions for locust maturation and breeding, below-average and erratic spring rainfall has delayed breeding, providing response actors additional time to locate and treat the swarms and significantly reducing the scale of locust infestations in East Africa. Response actors reported approximately 150 swarm sightings across East Africa in early and mid-March, representing a 70 percent decrease compared to more than 500 swarm sightings in January and a nearly 90 percent decrease from the 1,200 swarm sightings reported in June 2020, during the height of the upsurge. Dwindling swarm numbers and smaller swarm sizes have since resulted in more limited control operations. Response actors treated approximately 62,000 acres in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia during the first three weeks of March—a 90 percent decrease from approximately 625,000 acres treated in January. In addition, the rapid decrease in swarms in Kenya prompted FAO and its partners to reduce the number of active air control and surveillance assets from ten to four in early March.

Small, immature swarms persist in central Kenya between Mount Kenya and the Rift Valley, with locusts reported in Baringo, Nakuru, and Nyandarua counties as of late March. Additional swarms remain concentrated east of the Rift Valley in Arsi, Bale, and Borema zones of Ethiopia's Oromia Region; however, infestations in Ethiopia's Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) Region have declined significantly in recent days, with no swarms reported as of late March.

Projected Below-Average Rainfall Likely to Limit Locust Breeding

While parts of Ethiopia and Kenya may receive scattered rainfall in the coming weeks that could prompt locust maturation and breeding, overall projected below-average spring rainfall will likely limit breeding opportunities and reduce the size of upcoming locust generations throughout Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, FAO reports. Moreover, anticipated below-average rainfall in northeastern Ethiopia during the June-to-August *kiremt* and *karan* rains may further curtail breeding opportunities in the region, possibly leading to a significant reduction in the East Africa locust upsurges by mid-2021. However, FAO cautions that sustained control and surveillance operations are essential to detect and treat all remaining swarms, which may become more difficult to locate as the locust population decreases. Moreover, the UN agency has noted that response actors must remain vigilant and be prepared to scale up response efforts in case of unexpected heavy rainfall.

While below-average rainfall will limit locust breeding and provide response actors additional opportunities to control remaining swarms, a second consecutive season of below-average rainfall—following poor rains during Kenya's October-to-December short rains and Somalia's October-to-December *deyr* rains—will lead to limited crop and livestock production, reduced livelihood opportunities, and limited food consumption for vulnerable households, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). Food security conditions will likely deteriorate across the region in the coming months, driving Crisis—IPC 3—levels of acute food insecurity through May,

including for households in locust-affected areas of eastern and southern Ethiopia, central and northern Kenya, and northern Somalia.

Locust Populations Persist in Northern Somalia, Red Sea Coastal Areas

While infestations have declined in Somalia in recent weeks, aerial and ground control operations remain ongoing against hopper bands and scattered immature swarms in parts of northern Somalia's semi-autonomous Puntland and Somaliland regions, including areas along Somalia's border with Djibouti and Ethiopia, according to FAO. Difficult terrain in Puntland continues to pose challenges to control and surveillance operations, limiting access to swarms in remote areas; as a result, FAO notes that locust populations are likely underreported in the area. Swarms will likely disperse across Somalia's northern plateau in the coming weeks, with some swarms possibly moving into adjacent areas of Djibouti or eastern Ethiopia's Somali Region, FAO reports. Response actors have not reported substantial locust populations in central or southern Somalia—where access is limited—since January.

FAO continues to monitor locust activity in Red Sea coastal areas of Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen. Scattered hopper groups persist along Eritrea's central coast near Massawa city and limited breeding remains ongoing near Sudan's Tokar Delta, where government actors are conducting control operations against small locust populations, FAO reports. Hopper bands and adult groups continue to develop along Saudi Arabia's northern Red Sea coast, and response actors have reported numerous swarms in the country's interior between Hail Province and Saudi Arabia's capital city of Riyadh, where favorable climatic conditions have encouraged early breeding and hopper band formation. National locust response units have initiated aerial control operations to treat the infested areas.

While scattered adult locust populations are present along Yemen's Red Sea and Gulf of Aden coasts, the situation remains stable, according to FAO. However, adult locust groups and small swarms may form along the Red Sea coast in the coming weeks and move inland to the country's interior lowlands, which are suitable for breeding if rains occur, the UN agency reports.

Response Actors Control Swarms in Tanzania in February and March

Northeasterly winds pushed several small and immature swarms from southern Kenya's Taita-Taveta County into northern Tanzania in mid-February, with response actors reporting swarms in Arusha Region's Longido District, Kilimanjaro Region's Siha District, and Manyara Region's Simanjiro District, according to FAO. Within 48 hours, FAO dispatched a fixed-wing control aircraft from Kenya to northern Tanzania, where it proceeded to treat areas affected by four swarms covering approximately 1,300 acres. Response actors continued to report scattered swarms across northern Tanzania in late February and early March, and the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa and the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa conducted aerial surveillance and control operations to treat affected areas. FAO also mounted additional cross-border aerial control missions from Kenya. Swarms matured and laid eggs in northern Tanzania in late February, with response actors reporting the development of small hopper bands in early and mid-March. Ground teams treated the hopper bands in late March; no additional swarms have been reported in Tanzania in recent weeks.

Locust Response Operations Safeguard Food Security of 26.8 Million People

Locust control teams—including teams supported with USAID/BHA contributions—treated more than 4.8 million acres of infested land in East Africa and Yemen between January 2020 and early March 2021, preventing nearly 3.8 million metric tons of crop loss at harvest time—valued at more than \$1.1 billion,

FAO reports. The interventions have safeguarded the food security of approximately 25.1 million people reliant on cereal crops and protected grazing areas for the livestock of approximately 1.7 million pastoralist households.

KEY FIGURES



5

Countries receiving USAID support for desert locust control



7

Aircraft contracted with USAID/BHA support in three locust-affected countries



23

Vehicles deployed with USAID/BHA support in four locust-affected countries



4.5 Million

Acres of land treated in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia since January 2020

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

SURVEILLANCE AND PEST CONTROL

USAID/BHA funding provides critical equipment and materials—including aircraft and vehicles for surveillance and control, as well as pesticides—for response interventions in locust-affected countries. In areas where launching aerial control operations remains challenging due to ongoing insecurity, USAID/BHA is supporting qualified locust control teams to conduct ground interventions using backpack and vehicle-mounted sprayers. USAID/BHA has also supported one plane and six helicopter deployments to reinforce surveillance and control capacity in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The plane enables control operations in Ethiopia to cover long distances and spray large expanses of infested areas in a single flight. Meanwhile, the helicopters allow response teams to verify surveillance data and determine adequacy of control in hard-to-reach areas, including areas with rough, rugged terrain and with no airstrips—where planes are typically unable to land—and areas that are difficult to reach by ground transportation or on foot. In addition, two USAID/BHA-contracted aircraft treated nearly 197,000 acres infested by desert locusts in Ethiopia between late November and early February, logging 465 combined flight hours.

RESPONSE CAPACITY-BUILDING AND EARLY WARNING

To strengthen local capacity to manage infestations, USAID/BHA is supporting training on locust monitoring, detection, and control, as well as the safe handling and use of pesticides and related environmental protection for government officials, locust scouts, and other response personnel. USAID/BHA is also supporting the provision of equipment, including GPS, radios, and eLocust3 tablets—which collect and transmit field data in real-time to government officials and FAO staff—to enable response personnel to forecast locust movements and impacts, and to provide early warnings to at-risk communities to help mobilize control operations in a timely manner.

The U.S. Government (USG) continues to support FAO and other stakeholders to improve locust monitoring and forecasting systems, enabling teams to strengthen preparedness and launch more timely and effective responses. USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security—through SERVIR, a joint partnership with the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration—is bolstering FAO's global locust monitoring system, enabling the UN agency to identify targeted treatment areas by strengthening forecasting of breeding locations and swarm movements. In addition, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Air Resources Laboratory has developed a locust forecasting web application at

the request of FAO; the application generates a graphic simulation of future swarm movements, based on weather and wind forecasts, which FAO uses to provide regular situation updates to the public.

FOOD SECURITY

In response to extant humanitarian needs, USAID/BHA implementing partners continue to provide emergency food and nutrition assistance to vulnerable populations in East Africa, including in many locust-affected areas of the region. USAID/BHA partners also continue to monitor potential additional needs resulting from the impact of desert locust infestations.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- The desert locust is one of the most destructive migratory pests in the world, rapidly consuming most vegetation in its path, including crops and pastureland critical to maintaining the food security and livelihoods of populations in East Africa. Locust swarms are highly mobile and carried on the wind; swarms can travel up to 100 miles per day, and even a relatively small, 0.4 square mile-sized swarm can consume an amount of food sufficient for approximately 35,000 people in one day.
- Desert locust swarms first crossed the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea from Yemen and entered Ethiopia and Somalia in June 2019. While desert locust infestations occur seasonally in parts of East Africa, above-average rainfall in the region from September to December 2019, as well as additional rains brought by Tropical Cyclone Pawan to eastern Somalia in early December 2019, extended wet conditions conducive for breeding and generated abundant vegetation for the locusts to consume. Several successive generations of the pest formed multiple hopper bands and swarms of adult locusts, enabling several outbreaks to grow and develop into a regional upsurge, the second of three FAO levels classifying the scale of locust infestations, in late 2019.
- On November 18, 2019, U.S. Ambassador Michael A. Raynor declared a disaster due to the impact of desert locust infestations in Ethiopia. On February 19, 2020, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Brian Neubert declared a disaster for desert locust-affected areas of Somalia, and on February 25, U.S. Ambassador Kyle McCarter issued a disaster declaration in Kenya due to the impacts of the pest across the country. U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Brian Shukan also declared a disaster due to the projected impact of uncontrolled infestations across Sudan on April 13. Given the continued proliferation of swarms throughout the country, Ambassador Raynor renewed the disaster declaration for Ethiopia on October 16, 2020.

USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2021¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA²			
ETHIOPIA			
Priority Worldwide Services	Transportation - Disaster Site	Countrywide	\$2,037,000
	Program Support	Countrywide	\$37,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE			\$2,074,000

USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
ETHIOPIA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$10,778,689
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE			\$10,778,689
KENYA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$4,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE KENYA RESPONSE			\$4,000,000
SOMALIA			
Implementing Partner	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$7,092,866
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE			\$7,092,866
SUDAN			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$998,674
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE SUDAN RESPONSE			\$998,674
REGIONAL			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$481,500
	Program Support	Regional	\$345,232
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE REGIONAL RESPONSE			\$826,732
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$23,696,961
USAID/UGANDA			
UGANDA			
University of Greenwich – Natural Resources Institute	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$134,862
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Acholi, Karamoja, Lango, and Teso regions	\$245,000
TOTAL USAID/UGANDA FUNDING FOR THE UGANDA RESPONSE			\$379,862
TOTAL USAID/UGANDA FUNDING			\$379,862
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$24,076,823
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE			\$25,770,961
TOTAL USAID/UGANDA FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE			\$379,862
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FYs 2020–2021			\$26,150,823

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of January 29, 2020.

² Includes non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)