

EAST AFRICA - DESERT LOCUST CRISIS

FACT SHEET #5, FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020

JULY 14, 2020

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

9

Countries Affected in East Africa²
FAO – May 2020

26.2
million

People Already Experiencing Severe Acute Food Insecurity in Affected Countries³
FAO and FEWS NET – April 2020

4.2
million

Acres of Land Targeted for Rapid Surveillance and Control Measures
FAO – May 2020

\$231.6
million

Regional Response Funding Appeal
FAO – May 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- Swarm formation begins in Kenya, reportedly resulting in new invasions into Ethiopia
- Countrywide suspension of internet, telecommunications services hinders locust surveillance in Ethiopia
- Insecurity continues to prevent surveillance and control efforts in southern Somalia

HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020

USAID/BHA ¹	\$19,568,232
USAID/Uganda	\$134,862
\$19,703,094	

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- A new generation of the desert locust is forming swarms in northwestern Kenya's Marsabit and Turkana counties, with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) expecting new swarm formation to decline in the coming weeks. Once formed, if uncontrolled, immature swarms—the stage at which desert locusts are most voracious and mobile—will remain in Kenya for seven to 10 days, causing significant damage to crops and pasture before invading Ethiopia or migrating to Sudan through South Sudan; migrations toward Sudan were imminent as of July 14.
- New swarms have also formed in eastern Ethiopia and parts of Somalia in recent weeks, while swarms from Kenya reportedly began arriving in adjacent areas of Ethiopia in late June. Operations to control increasing bands of hoppers—immature, wingless locusts—and newly formed swarms in locust-affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia are ongoing. However, relief actors in Ethiopia have noted a dearth of locust surveillance data—which are critical for facilitating timely and effective control operations—in recent weeks. Although USAID/BHA staff based in the capital city of Addis Ababa and FAO are coordinating with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) to address gaps, a countrywide suspension of internet and telecommunications services—resulting from civil unrest in Addis Ababa and Ethiopia's Oromiya Region—has adversely impacted the collection and use of surveillance data since late June.
- FAO continues to support the Government of Sudan (GoS)'s Plant Protection Directorate (PPD) teams to survey locust-affected or at-risk areas of Sudan. While PPD teams have sufficient capacity to guard against new invasions from Kenya, FAO recommends that countries in West Africa remain on alert for possible westward migrations from Sudan during July.

¹ USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) funding includes non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

² Figure includes East African countries included in FAO's regional response plan and addendum as of late May: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania.

³ Figure reflects combined estimates of populations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda currently experiencing Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) 3—Crisis—or higher levels of acute food insecurity. The IPC is a standardized tool that aims to classify the severity and magnitude of acute food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Catastrophe—IPC 5. IPC data are not currently available for Djibouti or Eritrea.

LOCUST LOCATIONS AND SWARM MOVEMENT

- A new generation of the desert locust began forming swarms in northwestern Kenya during the week of June 15, with new swarms also forming in eastern Ethiopia and parts of Somalia in recent weeks, FAO reports. Swarm formation is expected to continue through mid-July in Kenya, with newly formed swarms remaining and devouring crops and pasture in the region for seven to 10 days before fledging and travelling towards Sudan or Ethiopia in the absence of adequate control efforts. In Somalia, southerly winds are likely to push most swarms north and east in the coming weeks, resulting in increasing migrations across the Arabian Sea and into breeding areas along the India–Pakistan border.
- While en route to summer breeding areas in Sudan’s Darfur and Kordofan regions, swarms from Kenya will traverse South Sudan over the course of one week, possibly transiting northeastern Uganda while traveling in the direction of South Sudan. Although FAO expects the swarms to cause some damage to crops and pasture in parts of South Sudan’s Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, Upper Nile, and Unity states during transit, the UN agency believes South Sudan is unlikely to experience a prolonged locust outbreak, as the dense vegetation coverage within the pests’ migration corridor is unsuitable for locust breeding.
- Although northward migrations from Kenya are imminent, the later movements begin, the more likely swarms are to find suitable breeding conditions upon arriving in Sudan, limiting the risk of onward migration to West Africa’s Sahel region. FAO has reported some rainfall in Sudan’s South Darfur and South Kordofan states in recent weeks; if the country’s June-to-October rains continue as projected, producing ideal wet conditions for locust breeding, swarms arriving from Kenya—and subsequent swarms arriving from Ethiopia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—will likely remain, mature, and lay eggs in Sudan in July and August. However, if rains are limited, resulting in dry and unfavorable breeding conditions, swarms could migrate westward to Chad—potentially moving further west into the greater Sahel region, including parts of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria. FAO expects the risk of westward migration from Sudan to decline progressively as seasonal rains continue in the coming weeks.
- Breeding continues in eastern and northern Ethiopia and central and northern Somalia, with an increasing number of swarms and hopper bands present in parts of Ethiopia’s Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, Somali, and Tigray regions, as well as parts of Somalia’s Awdal, Mudug, Nugal, Sanaag, Sool, and Woqooyi Galbeed regions—where ecological conditions are favorable for locust development, according to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional bloc of eight East African states. FAO projects that breeding will continue in Somalia through July, with a corresponding increase in locust populations expected in August. Meanwhile, swarms from Kenya have reportedly begun arriving in adjacent parts of Ethiopia; FAO expects invasions into Ethiopia to continue in the coming weeks, with locusts eventually spreading as far as the country’s northern highlands.
- Unmitigated desert locust development in Yemen, where conflict and a lack of resources are hindering control efforts, continues to pose a threat to countries in the Horn of Africa. FAO anticipates that swarms from Yemen will begin invading northeastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia during July, and recommends the two countries undertake appropriate preparedness measures to prevent the further spread of the desert locust.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

- Although impact assessments are ongoing, preliminary reports indicate that new swarms are significantly threatening food security and livelihoods in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, according to IGAD. IGAD and FAO have recorded localized crop destruction in locust-affected areas of the three countries in recent weeks, with maize and sorghum crops particularly affected as of late June.
- In Ethiopia, locust infestations will likely contribute to significant decreases in agricultural production by September, further exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition across the country, according to the UN. Individuals residing in locust-affected areas—many of whom had limited to no household cereal stocks following the below-average October-to-December *Meber* harvests in 2019—are already increasingly employing negative coping strategies to meet basic needs. For example, a February interagency assessment recorded instances of people selling livestock, as well as reducing household expenditures on seeds, tools, and other agricultural and livestock inputs. Populations in Oromiya and

Somali—among the regions where food assistance needs will peak between June and September—are among the most affected, according to the assessment.

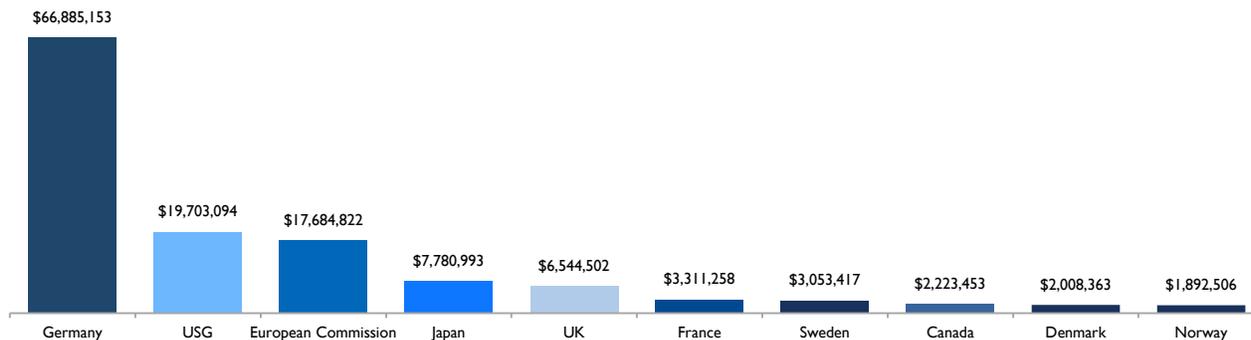
- Flood- and locust-related crop damage will likely result in a below-average *gu* harvest in Somalia during July, followed by a projected below-average *deyr* season harvest in late 2020 and early 2021, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). Assessments to determine the projected impact of below-average harvests are ongoing; meanwhile, FEWS NET estimates that up to 3.5 million people in Somalia could face Crisis—IPC 3—levels of acute food insecurity through September in the absence of sustained humanitarian assistance due to the socio-economic impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) mitigation measures, locust-related damage, and damage caused by heavy flooding during the April-to-June *gu* rains.
- While FAO continues to provide livelihood assistance to nearly 24,300 locust-affected households across Somalia, the UN agency requires additional funding to sustain activities through the *deyr* season. In a recent survey conducted by FAO, more than one-third of agro-pastoralists and pastoralists in locust-affected areas reported a total 48 and 75 percent loss of assets, respectively, as of early July. Affected populations also noted concerns about additional related impacts in the coming months, including atypical livestock migration, food insecurity, malnutrition, and displacement.
- In late June, FAO staff traveled to northwestern Kenya to meet with key stakeholders—including response personnel, farmers, and pastoralists—and monitor ongoing response interventions. During a visit to Turkana, FAO representatives observed localized locust-related damage in several sorghum fields, as well as a reduction in viable pastureland; the UN agency notes the observations are not representative of impacts across the broader region, given the localized nature of the damage.
- In conversations with farmers and pastoralists, FAO staff learned that while locust-related damage in Turkana remains limited and localized, the destruction caused by the pests reduced opportunities for affected populations to bolster household food stocks with surplus crop yields during recent harvests. Above-average harvests, though infrequent, can be critical for strengthening household resilience against environmental shocks in Kenya’s arid and semi-arid lands counties, where cyclical drought can intermittently threaten food security.
- A recent impact assessment conducted in South Sudan indicated that locusts caused damage in more than 60 percent and approximately 12 percent of assessed crop fields in the Eastern Equatoria’s Magwi and Torit counties, respectively, according to FAO. As such, populations in Magwi in particular could experience increased food insecurity due to the impacts of the pest

SURVEILLANCE AND PEST CONTROL

- Timely and effective control measures remain critical for preventing further damage to crops and pastureland in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and other locust-affected countries, according to FAO and other relief actors. Unless new swarms are adequately controlled, locusts will likely cause significant damage to crops and pasture in Marsabit and Turkana prior to migrating to Sudan and Ethiopia. The Government of Kenya (GoK) and FAO are working to control newly formed hopper bands and swarms in the two counties, prioritizing interventions in Turkana, where ecological conditions—aided by recent rainfall—are favorable for locust breeding and a high density of hopper bands, as well as one or two large immature swarms, are present. To this end, FAO is coordinating with the GoK to appropriately allocate available resources from other parts of the country, recently relocating three aircraft, two surveillance helicopters, one long-range surveillance plane, one dual-purpose helicopter, and additional pickup trucks mounted with sprayers to Turkana’s Lodwar town. Kenyan National Youth Service volunteers and other surveyors have also been deployed to Turkana to bolster surveillance.
- FAO expects that almost no locusts will remain in Kenya by the end of July due to a combination of successful control efforts, onward migration to Sudan, and remaining locusts reaching the end of their life cycle. However, the UN agency underscores the need to maintain surveillance and control capacity in Kenya, as some locusts from the current generation could remain and breed, while new generations could invade from Ethiopia, Somalia, and Yemen once wind patterns change in August.

- Although locust populations were largely controlled in southern Ethiopia during April and May, new infestations are expected to persist across the country through December. Control operations aimed at containing hopper bands and newly formed swarms in eastern and northeastern Ethiopia are ongoing, with teams recently detecting an increased number of immature swarms in Somali and new hopper bands in the highlands of Afar and Tigray, likely due to local breeding.
- Relief actors remain concerned regarding the lack of reliable surveillance data in Ethiopia, which continues to limit response teams' ability to accurately track locust locations and launch effective spraying campaigns. To support increased data collection in Ethiopia, FAO recently provided additional funding to the GoE Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, USAID/BHA staff based in Addis Ababa are collaborating with FAO to promote increased usage of eLocust3M, a mobile application that collects and transmits data on locust swarm locations and stages in real-time via satellite from the field to national locust centers. As of early July, more than 30 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Ethiopia had expressed a willingness to collect survey data through eLocust3M, and the application had more than 100 registered NGO-affiliated users. However, overall use of the application remained low as of early July.
- In an effort to strengthen surveillance capacity in hard-to-reach areas of Ethiopia, USAID/BHA recently supported FAO to deploy three helicopters to survey locust-affected areas in eastern and southern parts of the country. However, since late June, civil unrest in Oromiya and Ethiopia's capital city of Addis Ababa has resulted in a countrywide suspension of internet and telecommunications services, impacting the collection and use of surveillance data and hindering control efforts, FAO reports.
- USAID/BHA-supported control interventions against swarms and hopper bands in Somalia's semi-autonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland, as well as parts of Galgadud Region, are ongoing. However, insecurity continues to prevent teams from conducting surveillance and control activities in areas south of Galgadud. Response actors have also reported disruptions to operations in insecure areas of Sool and Sanaag.
- With support from FAO, GoS PPD teams are maintaining capacity to prevent new infestations once swarms from Kenya begin arriving in Sudan. Surveillance is ongoing, with PPD teams reporting some scattered and isolated adult locusts in parts of Kassala, Northern, North Kordofan, Red Sea, River Nile, and White Nile states as of mid-July. Although FAO assesses that current response capacity in Sudan is sufficient, the UN agency recommends that countries in West Africa remain on alert and undertake anticipatory measures to strengthen preparedness against potential invasions as a precautionary measure.
- Meanwhile, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has granted clearance for a Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa plane to operate in the country through August, though the aircraft is currently in use in Uganda's Moroto District, where a medium-sized swarm was observed in early July. Aerial and ground spraying teams have controlled the swarm in Moroto and surveillance teams continue to monitor the area for further invasions.

2020 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING* PER DONOR



*Funding figures are as of July 14, 2020. All international figures are according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service and based on international commitments during 2020, while USG figures are according to the USG and reflect USG funding in FY 2020, which began on October 1, 2019.

CONTEXT

- 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.
- Swarms of the desert locust 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, 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.
- Between October and December 2019, locust swarms multiplied and traveled further west and south within Ethiopia and Somalia, arriving in Djibouti, Eritrea, and Kenya in December. New hopper bands formed along coastal plains in Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen during the same period, with swarms beginning to threaten agricultural production and food security in rural areas of Sudan in January. Desert locusts also reached Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in February.
- Populations across East Africa continue to experience severe levels of acute food insecurity, sustained and exacerbated by recurrent drought, seasonal flooding, conflict, and displacement. As such, locust-related damage to crops and pasture could have devastating effects on the food security and livelihoods of households in the region.
- 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.

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

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA²			
ETHIOPIA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$7,800,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$7,800,000
KENYA			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$4,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE KENYA RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$4,000,000
SOMALIA			
Implementing Partner	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$7,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE SOMALIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$7,000,000
SUDAN			
FAO	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$500,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE SUDAN RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$500,000

REGIONAL			
	Program Support	Regional	\$268,232
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE REGIONAL RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$268,232
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$19,568,232
USAID/UGANDA			
UGANDA			
University of Greenwich – Natural Resources Institute	Agriculture and Food Security	Countrywide	\$134,862
TOTAL USAID/UGANDA FUNDING FOR THE RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$134,862
TOTAL USAID/UGANDA FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$134,862
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE EAST AFRICA DESERT LOCUST RESPONSE IN FY 2020			\$19,703,094

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of July 14, 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 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: www.cidi.org.
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.reliefweb.int.

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at <http://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/working-crises-and-conflict/responding-times-crisis/where-we-work>