







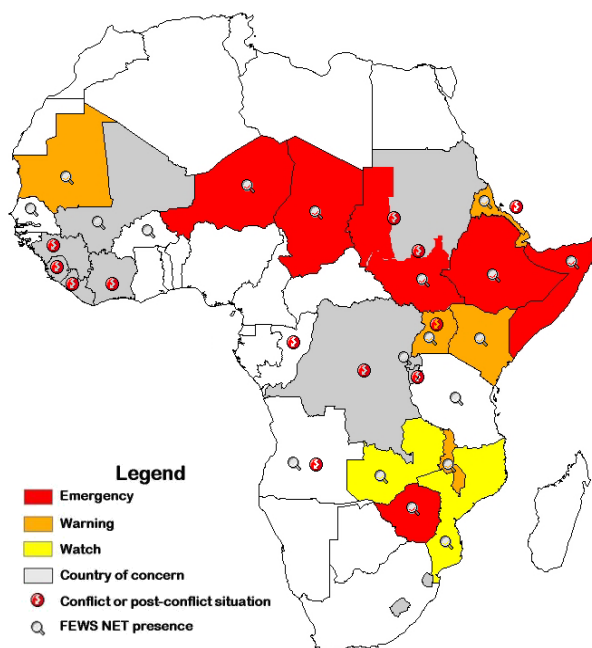
FEWS NET Alert Status

Food Insecurity in Africa

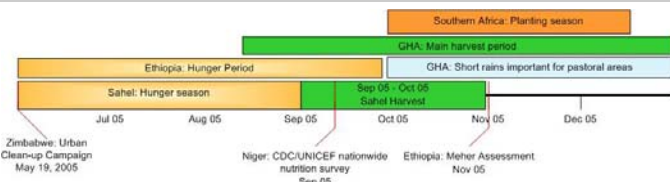
Highest Priority—Urgent Action Required

-  **Chad:** In southern Chad, refugees from CAR face an increasingly worrisome situation. Nutrition conditions are improving in refugee camps in eastern Chad, and WFP and partners are expanding assistance to the host population.
-  **Ethiopia:** Though the *meher* production outlook is good, households in some lowland areas and a high proportion of pastoralists will continue to be extremely food insecure. Record high cereal prices and pockets of acute malnutrition remain, especially in pastoral areas and refugee camps.
-  **Niger:** Food prices are declining as newly harvested crops and imported cereals reach markets, improving pastoralists' terms of trade. Heavy household debt may trigger an early start to the next hunger period. (See back page.)
-  **Somalia:** The post-*Gu* assessment (Apr-Jun) confirms that 1 million people continue to need humanitarian assistance after years of drought, flood, conflict and civil insecurity.
-  **Sudan (southern):** Although green maize and sesame are available in northern Bahr el Gazal, erratic August rains, particularly in highland areas, have delayed the main September sorghum harvest. Meanwhile, high rates of malnutrition persist across the region. (See back page.)
-  **Zimbabwe:** In urban and rural areas, poor food availability and near macroeconomic collapse undermine food security. Up to half of the rural population will not be able to meet their food needs in the hunger period (Sep-Feb).







Emergency



Significant Events Timeline





Urgent Action Required

-  **Djibouti:** Following poor August rainfall and rising prices, households face a difficult hunger season (Oct-Jun).
-  **Eritrea:** Cereal prices and malnutrition rates remain high. Good rains have improved production prospects for the main harvest, but labor inputs are limited. Eritrea will continue to rely on international aid as its major food source.
-  **Kenya:** Food security has declined in eastern pastoral, southeastern and coastal marginal districts. Funding for food and non-food aid interventions is insufficient.
-  **Malawi:** Maize prices are above average and 2002/03 levels, signaling a serious food security situation. The impact is greatest in the heavily market dependent south.
-  **Mauritania:** Successful food aid interventions and declining cereal prices ease food insecurity and improve pastoralists' terms of trade. Pockets of extreme food insecurity remain in Aftout and the southwest.
-  **Uganda:** Mortality rates in IDP camps in northern Uganda remain high, especially in Apac (1.4/10,000 per day), despite improvements in humanitarian access.




Warning

Preparedness and Monitoring Required

-  **Mozambique:** High maize prices in the south undermine household food security, and the humanitarian response in drought-affected areas has been inadequate.
-  **Zambia:** Food insecurity could worsen with poor humanitarian and policy responses, including a 15% maize duty.

Watch

Country	Population at Risk	Food Aid Beneficiaries	
		Number	
Chad	223,359 (Darfur, CAR) <115,000 (host pop.)	199,916	
Djibouti	100,000	100,000	
Eritrea	2.2 million	1.3-1.4 million	
Ethiopia	10-12 million	9.2 million (PSNP + emergency)	
Kenya	1.2 million	1.2 million	
Malawi	4.2-4.6 million	To be determined	
Mauritania	1.856 million	Over 400,000	
Mozambique	587,500	430,00 planned 99,400 actual	
Niger	2.5 million	461,308	
Somalia	1 million	228,089	
Uganda	2.69 million	2.69 million	
Zimbabwe	2.9-4.9 million	Not available	

- Key**
-  Situation improving
 -  Situation deteriorating
 -  Situation has the potential to deteriorate
- Note: The alert status of a country represents the highest level of alert found within that country. The table above provides an indication of the scale of the crisis in each country.*

Southern Sudan: Severe nutrition crisis likely to continue in the coming months

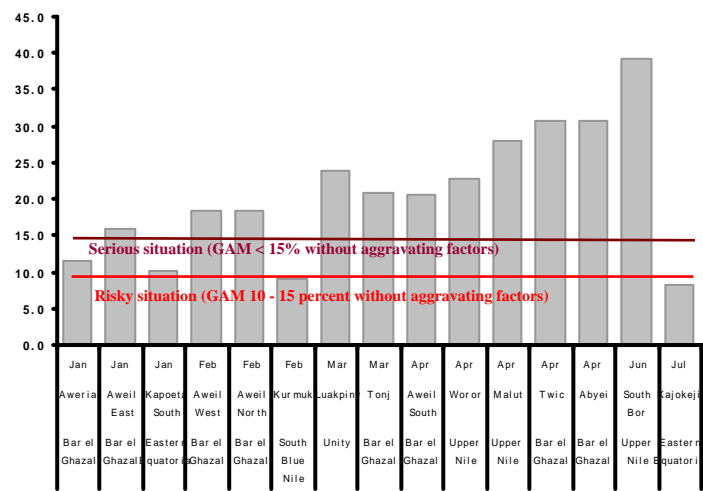
Despite the accomplishments of the peace process in Southern Sudan, the population still faces one of the worst humanitarian crises in Africa. Nutrition survey results from the first half of 2005 indicate extremely high rates of malnutrition in Bahr el Gazal, eastern Unity, and Upper Nile, reaching well above the 15 percent emergency threshold for Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) set by the World Health Organization. Action Against Hunger found emergency levels of malnutrition in about 70 percent of the surveys undertaken by NGOs in the first half of 2005 (see Figure 1). In some cases, malnutrition rates of over 30 percent (GAM), or twice the emergency level, were found.

These malnutrition rates are extremely high by international standards. At the height of the crisis this year in Niger, for example, the highest malnutrition rates were assessed at 19 percent (GAM). Unacceptable rates of malnutrition in Southern Sudan have become endemic, with similar rates consistently being detected over the last six years. The causes of malnutrition are a complex mixture of poor food access exacerbated by disease (especially malaria, diarrheal disease, measles, etc.), poor access to water and health care and poor sanitary conditions. While food aid is definitely needed to save lives, it is not enough. Significant increases in non-food assistance are also needed, especially in nutrition, water, sanitation and health. For example, only 25 percent of the children identified as severely malnourished this year are estimated to have received therapeutic feeding.

In Bahr el Gazal, erratic rains in August and flooding in July have delayed the main sorghum harvest by up to one month. This may cause reduced sorghum yields, especially in northern Bahr el Gazal. Thus, food insecurity is likely to persist even after the harvest. In contrast, earlier improvements in food aid distributions by WFP have been reversed in August by critical shortages of jet fuel and trucks, hampering deliveries when they are most needed.

Sufficient food aid and funding over the next three months must be ensured to help mitigate the food insecurity and high levels of malnutrition in Southern Sudan. In addition to adequate resources, humanitarian agencies need to improve their targeting to ensure that the limited resources are provided to those most in need. Donors and humanitarian agencies must also provide a broader array of interventions to complement food aid, addressing the underlying health, water, sanitation, nutritional, and other factors of the persistent nutritional crisis faced by the Southern Sudanese. Finally, it is imperative that humanitarian agencies prepare adequately for humanitarian needs in 2006, as conditions are expected to be similar to those in 2005.

Figure 1: Comparison of malnutrition rates in Southern Sudan, January—July 2005 against WHO nutrition benchmarks
(Global Acute Malnutrition Rates)



Sources: ACF, Concern, Tearfund nutrition surveys compiled by Action Against Hunger South Sudan

Niger: Despite improving conditions, 2006 set to be a difficult year

Food security conditions are generally improving in Niger. Food prices have started to come down, and livestock conditions have improved, resulting in higher livestock prices and a better milk supply. Though improving, terms of trade for pastoralists remain unfavorable as cereal prices are still at very high levels. Across the Sahel, crop conditions are good, and some observers are predicting a bumper crop. Yet Niger remains one of the poorest and most food insecure countries in the world. This year's crisis has severely eroded the livelihoods of many pastoralists and agropastoralists who are now more vulnerable to food insecurity. Many households have liquidated or lost productive assets, such as livestock, and accrued high levels of debt to survive this year. Farmers will be repaying their loans when grain prices will be significantly lower than at the time of the loan, implying that households will have to use a significant portion of their crop for debt repayment. As a result, many households will face early food shortages in 2006, advancing the start of the June-September hunger season by at least one month. In addition, growing demand for cereals in coastal west African countries will continue to influence prices in the Sahel in 2006, further restricting household food access. Therefore, the government of Niger, humanitarian agencies and donors need to support the recovery of affected households and respond to humanitarian needs that are likely to reemerge in 2006, as well as address the underlying causes of poverty and food insecurity such as lack of potable water and sanitation in the country.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) is a USAID-funded activity that monitors and reports on food insecurity conditions in 20 countries in Africa as well as in Afghanistan and Haiti, while strengthening regional and national early warning and food security organizations through networking and capacity development. This summary is based on FEWS NET regular monitoring and reporting and provides executive decision-makers with an overview of the food security situation in Africa, focusing on countries covered by FEWS NET as well as non-FEWS NET countries (where possible). Countries currently under 'Alert' are highlighted and prioritized for urgent action. More detailed alert statements are available for the countries in this Executive Overview can be found on the FEWS NET website at www.fews.net. For further information contact William Whelan at USAID/DCHA/FFP (202-712-5001) and Roy Stacy at Chemonics International (202-955-7595), or email info@fews.net.