

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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AADSOM Warns of Looming Humanitarian Catastrophe as Somalia's Drought Deepens

Mogadishu, Somalia – Action Against Disasters Somalia (AADSOM) warns that Somalia is facing one of its most severe drought emergencies in recent history, as failed 2025 Deyr rains and an exceptionally harsh 2026 Jilaal dry season push hunger, malnutrition, and displacement to alarming levels across the country.

The crisis has moved from early warning to a full-scale humanitarian emergency. According to the latest analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 6.5 million people, nearly one in three Somalis, are projected to face crisis levels of hunger or worse (IPC Phase 3 and above) by March 2026, including around 2 million people in IPC Phase 4, representing emergency levels of food insecurity.

Women and children are among the most severely affected. An estimated 1.8 million children under the age of five are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2026, including nearly half a million children facing severe acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of undernutrition.

Even if the April-June Gu rains perform near average, food insecurity is expected to remain alarmingly high. Current projections indicate that approximately 5.5 million people will continue to face crisis levels of hunger or worse through mid-2026, underscoring the depth and persistence of the emergency.

The Deyr 2025 rainy season failed across large swathes of Somalia, with most southern regions receiving less than 30 percent of average rainfall and severe deficits of 50-200 millimeters. This led to extreme soil moisture loss, water scarcity, and crop failure. National monitoring and joint early-warning reports documented temperatures reaching 35-40°C, continued declines in Juba and Shabelle river levels, and widespread drying of water points.

The combined influence of La Niña and a negative Indian Ocean Dipole further suppressed rainfall, while an Early Warning Alert issued on 8 December 2025 confirmed severe to extreme drought conditions nationwide and warned that the upcoming Jilaal dry season (January-March 2026) would worsen the situation.

The drought is also driving increased displacement, as families are forced to migrate in search of water, pasture, and humanitarian assistance. Displacement settlements across several regions are already reporting growing numbers of newly arrived households, many of whom have lost their primary sources of livelihood.

In November 2025, the Federal Government of Somalia declared a national drought emergency and appealed for urgent international assistance, warning that millions were already facing serious food insecurity.

Humanitarian funding gap deepens the emergency

These escalating needs are occurring amid severe funding constraints. The 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) for Somalia received only a fraction of the US\$1.4 billion required, approximately US\$370 million, forcing widespread reductions in food assistance, cash support, and essential services. As a result of these funding shortfalls, the 2026 HNRP seeks significantly less funding (US\$852 million), a reduction of about 40 percent compared with 2025, not because needs have decreased but because of constrained donor commitments. The plan targets just 2.4 million people in 2026, less than half of those in need of humanitarian assistance, leaving significant gaps in essential services.

While early action resources, including emergency allocations from pooled funds, have enabled limited scale-up, they remain far below the financing required to match the speed and scale of the crisis on the ground.

Communities exhausting their last coping strategies

AADSOM's field teams in drought-affected areas are witnessing the human impact of this gap first-hand: rising water prices as shallow wells and boreholes dry up, families selling productive assets, children dropping out of school, and growing influxes of vulnerable people into already overstretched displacement sites. In several locations, AADSOM has documented many non-functional water points and a sharp rise in new arrivals seeking assistance, indicating both deepening rural distress and mounting pressure on urban and peri-urban hubs.

"Droughts are not new to Somalia, but the frequency and severity of climate shocks are increasing," said Guled Osman, Executive Director of Action Against Disasters Somalia.

"People are skipping meals, pulling children out of school, selling their last assets, and moving in search of water. Without urgent support, the combination of failed harvests, water shortages, and shrinking humanitarian aid risks pushing this crisis beyond the point where early, cost-effective interventions are possible."

Urgent Call for Action:

Action Against Disasters Somalia calls on international donor community, UN agencies, private sector partners, and the Somali diaspora to act immediately and mobilize resources rapidly to prevent an even deeper catastrophe and avert avoidable loss of life.

AADSOM stresses that timely and coordinated humanitarian support is essential to prevent the situation from worsening. Immediate interventions are needed to support access to safe water, protect livelihoods, strengthen food assistance, and ensure the availability of essential nutrition and health services in drought-affected communities.

Without urgent action, Somalia risks sliding deeper into a humanitarian catastrophe that will be far more costly and far more difficult to reverse.

Action Against Disasters Somalia remains committed to working closely with affected communities and partners to deliver lifesaving assistance and support recovery efforts where they are needed most.

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Notes to Editors:

Action Against Disasters Somalia (AADSOM) is a national, non-profit humanitarian and development organization established to respond to both natural and human-made disasters. AADSOM works across multiple sectors, including food security and livelihoods, WASH, education, health and nutrition, protection, climate change, and disaster risk reduction, and is headquartered in Mogadishu with operations in several of Somalia's most vulnerable regions, guided by the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.