



[United Nations Humanitarian Officials Warn That Somalia is on the Brink of Famine Following the Worst Drought in Four Decades](#)

In a statement made on Tuesday, UN Under Secretary of Human Affairs Martin Griffiths painted a bleak picture for the future of Somalia, as yet another dry rainy season has been predicted between October and November. Although there can be considerable variation between regions, Somalia “normally” has four seasons, two dry and two wet. The first and longer wet season, called Gu, takes place from late March until June. The second, called Dayr, is much shorter and takes place in October and November. Starting with the Dayr season of 2020, all four rainy seasons that were supposed to take place since then have failed, with this fall’s rainy season predicted to come up short as well. These conditions have left Somalia in a state of crisis. An estimated 45% of the country’s population of 17 million is expected to be starving or worse in the coming months, with 730 kids having already died from malnourishment and another 213,000 people essentially on death’s door. When famine last struck Somalia in 2011-2012, more than 250,000 people died.

Arguably the most concerning part of the phenomenon is that these figures are persisting despite the best efforts of the United Nations. Since April, the UN has provided aid to 3.7 million people and anticipate reaching 4.5 million in the next few months. Still, it is far from enough. On top of the \$1.4 billion that has already been requested from the UN, the Somali cause still requires approximately \$1 billion more, according to experts. In theory, it is still possible to evade famine at this juncture, which can be declared when “data shows [that] more than a fifth of households have extreme food gaps, more than 30% of children are acutely malnourished, and over two people out of 10,000 are dying every day.” This was the case when Somalia again faced famine in 2016-2017, but generous donations from the international community held it at bay.

That will not be the case this year. International aid is down 70%, predominantly because many nations are instead pouring their finances into the war in Ukraine. What aid does make it to Somalia is impacted by the al-Shabab terrorist group, which dominates wide swathes of the country and does not allow aid to get to its intended destination. Additionally, the war in Ukraine is creating other dire circumstances for Somalia, which receives at least 90% of its wheat from either Ukraine or Russia. Because of the war, Ukraine has been forced to stop exporting grain almost altogether, while Russia’s capacity has been greatly reduced as well. However, Somalia is far from the only country to suffer from the lack of wheat. Together, Russia and Ukraine provide the world with over a quarter of its wheat, Russia providing 18% and Ukraine providing another 7%. Many countries in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southern Asia rely on them. For example, Egypt gets over 70% of its wheat from Ukraine or Russia. One can only hope that the war in Ukraine ends soon, as it may create emergencies in yet more countries. For the time being though, there is no denying that Somalia is suffering badly, if not worst of all, and unfortunately, there is little hope for improvement until the rainy season is supposed to hit in March of next year.