



[The United Nations Warns that Somalia is Facing the Worst Famine in Half a Century](#)

The catastrophic combination of drought, a decline in global humanitarian funding, conflict, and rising food prices has left around 8 million people in Somalia in desperate need of essential resources and aid services. This has prompted the United Nations to warn that Somalia is facing the worst famine in nearly half a century. The circumstances have seen a massive uptick in dry crop fields, animals dying of hunger and thirst, and the closest clean water sources being miles away from vulnerable civilians. Additionally troubling is the fact that children have been severely impacted by the humanitarian crisis, with many developing badly-damaged skin that is often broken by the swelling that accompanies extreme cases of hunger. Somalia has suffered four consecutive failures in its rainy seasons during the past two years which have exacerbated the crisis, and there are now fears that a fifth one is ongoing. U.N. officials expressed that funding estimates needed to alleviate the famine conditions have skyrocketed since the start of 2022, with aid agencies identifying multiple Somali regions where significant proportions of the population are in grave need.

Somalia is also facing a major climate disaster which has undoubtedly worsened the humanitarian crisis. The country is enduring its fifth successive failed rainy season. Alarmingly, even the next anticipated rainy season is projected to be below average, meaning that the drought emergency could devolve further. A disturbing two-thirds of the population has no access to drinking water, and more than 800,000 people have been forced to flee their homes due to drought since the start of last year. Somalia's drought has contributed to staggering displacement, increasing violent conflicts over water and grazing land, rising costs of basic goods, and the destruction of crops and livestock herds. The nation is one of the most vulnerable and extremely drought-impacted countries in the world, and about 1.4 million children in Somalia under the age of five – over half of this segment of the population – are severely malnourished.

Persistent internal conflict in Somalia is another factor that has exacerbated humanitarian conditions amongst its citizenry. Instability has plagued the country during the preceding three decades since the collapse of the central government. Militant groups have played a destructive role in fueling instability and poverty, with instances of people often being barred from leaving them to return to their families. This is a noteworthy trend which has had a damaging effect on humanitarian circumstances, as many of those in dire need of aid are families whose members have been torn away to fight for various armed groups.

Lastly, the ongoing war in Ukraine has had a negative impact, as 90% of Somalia's wheat imports come from Russia and Ukraine. The outbreak of conflict between these two nations has blocked critical supplies and caused prices for the products to explode. The 2022 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan highlights how the United Nations is seeking \$1.5 billion to provide humanitarian aid to at least 5.5 million people. The U.N. reports that while Ukraine's appeal for funds has been 80% met, Somalia's much smaller appeal has only been 30% funded. The overall aid funding for Somalia is less than half of last year's level despite the fact that donors have sent more than \$1.7 billion to respond to the war in Ukraine. The void in food exports to Somalia has left these items scarce and susceptible to large price hikes. Thus, like several other major contemporary humanitarian crises, the situation in Somalia has been worsened by the lack of global funding available due to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.