



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

DESERT LOCUST UPSURGE

Progress report on the response
in the Greater Horn of Africa
and Yemen

May–August 2020



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Foreword

With over seven decades of experience in detecting, reporting and managing desert locust infestations, and five decades in preventing and responding to humanitarian emergencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) works closely with affected countries, providing crucial technical support and guidance in response to the 2020 desert locust upsurge.

Since January 2020, remarkable progress has been made to counter the upsurge that slowly developed over the last two years in the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Peninsula and spread to Eastern Africa and Southwest Asia.

Thanks to strong capacities in Southwest Asia, the upsurge is almost under control, while scaled-up and sustained action in Eastern Africa has prevented a major humanitarian crisis and averted massive infestation in Western Africa.

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all our partners – from the governments of affected countries who have continued to prioritise locust control efforts while coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, to the teams and communities on the ground who have worked tirelessly to surveil and control the pests, to fellow United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and resource partners whose support has been invaluable since the onset of the crisis. I would like to commend their extraordinary solidarity, which enabled FAO to mount and scale up desert locust control operations within just a few weeks in Eastern Africa.

By the end of August 2020, the Regional Response Plan for the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen was 80 percent funded, representing one of FAO's best-funded appeals in 2020.

More than 20 partners (bilaterals, multilaterals, foundations and the private sector) responded to the call of FAO and its members and provided vital support to surveillance and control operations, environmental and health assessments, livelihoods assistance, coordination and capacity building.

This second quarterly report reflects FAO's continued efforts towards transparency in reporting against planned activities and achievements between May and August 2020, responding to common questions and concerns posed by our partners.

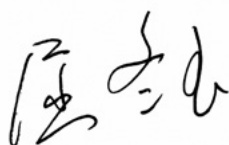
The report will be further enriched later in October 2020 with the release of the Real-Time Evaluation Phase 1 report. I am personally extremely proud of the level of accountability and transparency demonstrated by FAO since January.

October and November are critical months for desert locust operations, coinciding with a new breeding generation, the short rainy season (that extends to December) and wind directions which will shift and blow southward.

We will shortly be able to update our scenario for the remainder of the year and possibly the first half of 2021. Should the situation deteriorate once again, we will have to extend our response plan. As usual, FAO will discuss these plans with our Members and partners to ensure a coordinated effort.

The current crisis has generated an unprecedented interest in current and future capacities and arrangements to respond to transboundary pests in Eastern Africa, and refocused discussions around the systems to be upgraded or established between regions. To that effect, a series of studies is being conducted and a number of events is being prepared, with the support of the World Bank, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in particular.

It is thanks to our close working relationships that we have gotten this far in our efforts to combat the desert locust upsurge. It is incumbent on us to continue this collaboration with our Members and partners to build long-term capacity to cope with the upsurges of the future.



QU Dongyu

Director-General

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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At a glance



Over **42 million** people facing severe acute food insecurity in the ten targeted countries
(Global Report on Food Crises 2020)



760 000 ha of land controlled in the ten countries
(January–August 2020)



515 billion desert locusts killed



Livelihoods of **13 million** people saved and food security protected



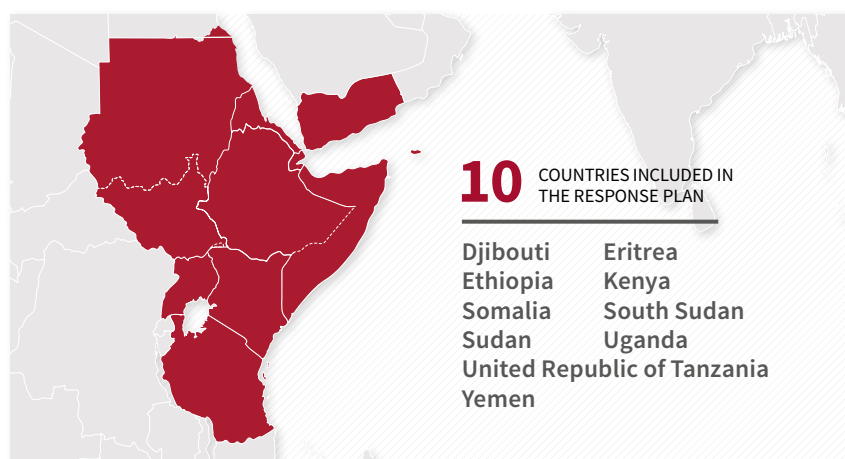
116 000 households provided with livelihoods assistance – **39%** of the revised year-end target of 298 000 households



USD 184.9 million mobilized by FAO for rapid response and anticipatory action in the ten countries from January to December 2020

By the end of August 2020, a total of USD 184.9 million has been mobilized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to respond to the desert locust upsurge in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen following the release of its first Desert Locust Upsurge Response Plan in January, the subsequent revision launched in February and the next one in May. This represents about 80 percent of the requested USD 231.64 million. Together with the governments of affected countries and the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA), through this funding FAO is able to control up to 1.5 million ha (out of 1.7 million ha included in the Response Plan) of infested farmland, rangeland and breeding grounds, protect the livelihoods of 298 000 households, and assist with facilitating coordination with stakeholders across the region.

Figure 1. Countries included in the response plan for Eastern Africa and Yemen



Source: United Nations world map, February 2019.

A recent damage assessment confirmed that control operations significantly reduced the number of people that would have been acutely food insecure otherwise.

Between January and August 2020, over 760 000 ha have been controlled across the ten countries covered by the appeal, including 657 000 ha in the worst-affected countries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. These control operations have averted the loss of an estimated 1.52 million tonnes of cereal in the region, which is enough to feed 9.88 million people for an entire year and is worth around USD 456 million. In addition, control in arid and semi-arid lands has allowed nearly 685 000 pastoral and agropastoral households to enjoy adequate access to grazing areas.

These achievements are even more significant in a region that hosts four out of ten countries suffering the worst food crises in 2019 by number of people in Crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)/*Cadre Harmonisé* (CH) Phase 3 or above) and facing a triple threat of floods, desert locust and the impacts of COVID-19.

A recent Regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG) damage assessment confirmed that control operations significantly reduced the number of people that would have been acutely food insecure otherwise. It was also confirmed that households impacted did not lose 100 percent of their crops or grazing land.

In terms of regional coordination, the FAO Resilience Team for Eastern Africa continues to co-organize monthly coordination and briefing meetings together with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). FAO and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are facilitating discussions among member states and resource partners on a medium-term preparedness plan for desert locust with a high-level conference tentatively planned for later in the year.



Background

While control has been successful in a number of countries, East Africa remains at significant risk. To avoid the possibility of re-infestation, efforts must be sustained and gains consolidated going into 2021.

A massive desert locust upsurge is underway in the Greater Horn of Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Southwest Asia.

The current upsurge developed gradually as a result of two cyclones which brought heavy rains to the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Peninsula in May and October 2018. This allowed an unprecedented three generations of breeding to occur undetected in an extremely remote area that ground and aerial teams could not reach or monitor. Over nine months, locust numbers increased 8 000-fold. Since 2019, desert locust spread in two directions: toward the Greater Horn of Africa and Southwest Asia.

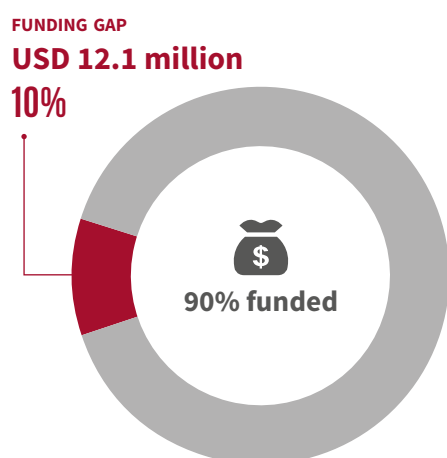
While several warnings were issued by FAO (starting in December 2018 and through 2019) and control actions launched in frontline countries (over 2 million ha were controlled in Egypt, Eritrea, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen in 2019 alone), the situation deteriorated rapidly in January 2020 given weather conditions that were unusually conducive to the spread of the pest. After Cyclone Pawan made landfall in early December 2019, flooding in the Horn of Africa created highly favourable breeding conditions for the desert locust, leading to an upsurge of a rare magnitude.

In January 2020, FAO scaled up its activities and launched an appeal to contain the upsurge in the Greater Horn of Africa and anticipate impacts on livelihoods. In view of the massive scale of the crisis, FAO developed a Global Response Plan in May to outline increasing needs in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen, scale up operations and assistance in Southwest Asia, and prepare for a potential future outbreak in West Africa and the Sahel. Calling for USD 311.64 million, the Plan outlines control needs (3.2 million ha) and livelihoods targets (313 200 households) to the end of the year.

While control has been successful in a number of countries – notably in Kenya, down to two from 29 affected counties – East Africa remains at significant risk. Now fighting the second generation of locusts in some countries and a third generation in others (Ethiopia and Somalia in particular), national governments continue to lead control and surveillance operations, supported by FAO through the provision of pesticides, bio-pesticides, equipment, aircraft and training.

To avoid the possibility of re-infestation, these efforts must be sustained and gains consolidated going into 2021. In addition, exceptionally heavy rains along the Red Sea coast of Eritrea, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Yemen could cause substantial increases in locust numbers by autumn/winter. With ongoing breeding and potential to migrate onward, desert locust activity in Yemen is of particular concern – especially considering access constraints. Immature and mature swarms persist in the Horn of Africa, which could lay eggs in the next month.

Curb the spread of desert locust



Swift and generous funding from resource partners has been critical to enabling effective anticipatory action in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen. About 90 percent of the funding requirements for this component of the appeal are met, i.e. USD 109.6 million were received or pledged, allowing FAO and partners to secure (or plan) enough pesticides to run the control campaign into the first quarter of 2021. Likewise, resources available and pledged are sufficient to sustain the current fleet (fixed-wing and rotary) until February/March 2021, assuming that no further scale-up is required before the end of 2020.

FAO's strategy to curb the spread of desert locust is based on the principle of early detection and rapid reaction as part of its commitment to anticipate, prepare for and respond to crises – and ultimately ensure that locust populations do not spread to currently unaffected areas, thereby mitigating livelihood and food security impacts.

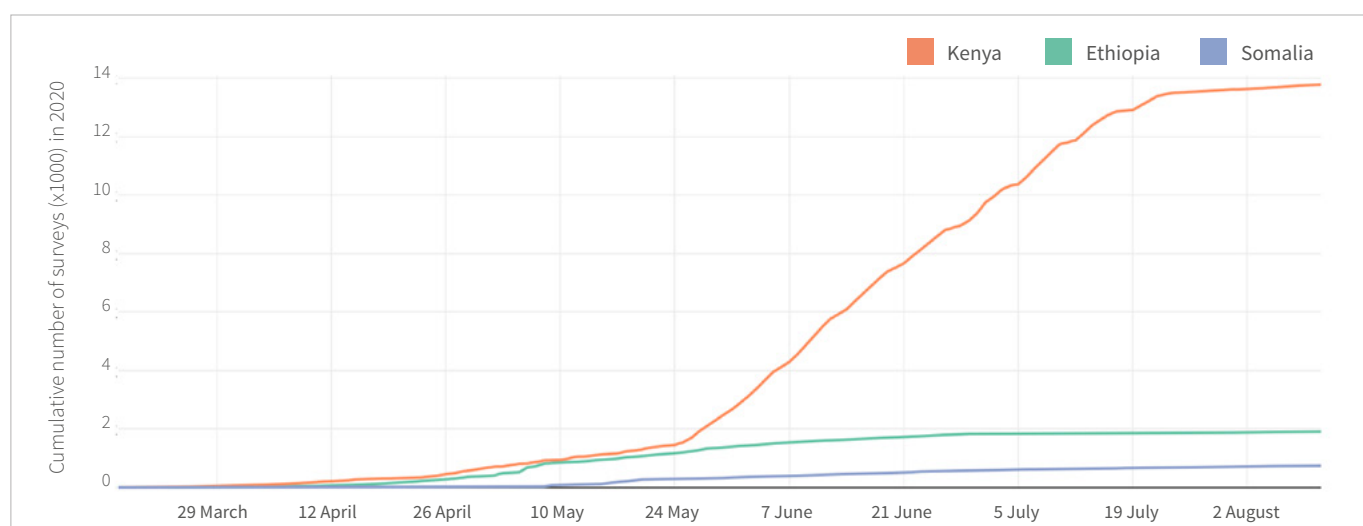
Continuous surveillance

To bolster surveillance capacities and enhance the overall detection and reporting system, a number of initiatives were undertaken with the ultimate goal of undertaking a successful control campaign and optimizing use of spraying assets.

Community-led locust surveillance has been an integral component of the response. Community scouts were trained to report sightings of locusts to government authorities and identify their life cycle stage to help inform response needs. About 1 276 local community members were trained across the region, thereby enhancing coverage.

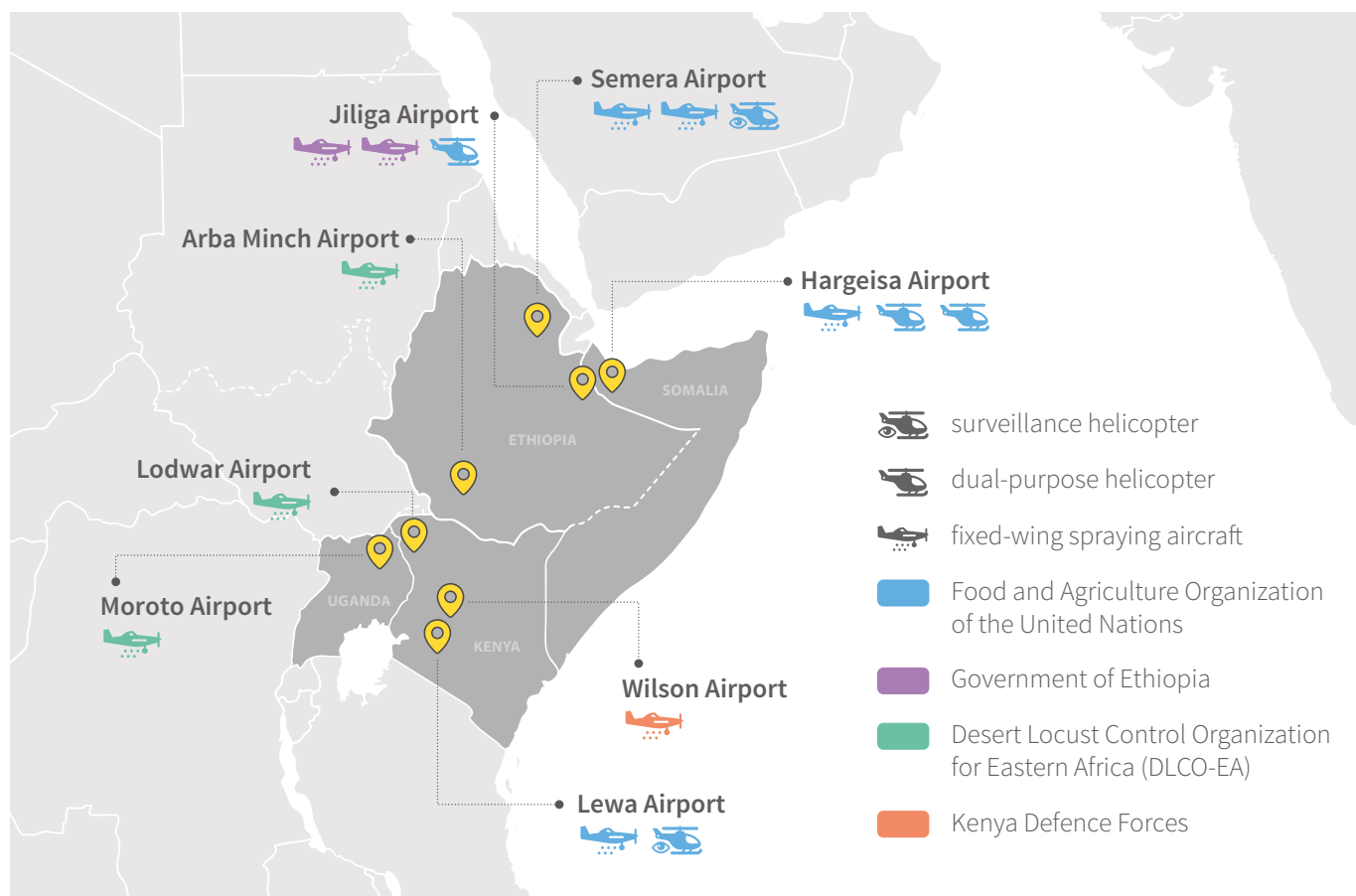
Training on surveillance methods and skills was also delivered to various field teams, including national and regional government staff as well as national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Across the region, FAO supported capacity building for about 1 400 people to improve locust detection and monitoring.

Figure 2. Scale-up of eLocust3m usage in worst-affected countries



Source: FAO, August 2020.

Figure 3. Aerial control centres (August 2020)



Source of map: United Nations world map, February 2019. Source of data: FAO, August 2020.

The crowdsourcing approach has been employed through the massive roll-out of an offline-capable tool: eLocust3m, a smartphone app developed for field teams to easily enter survey data in the field. Information gathered through the app is shared with FAO's Desert Locust Information Service in Rome and sent daily to national locust control centres across the region. While uptake has been slow in Ethiopia and Somalia, it is now well adopted in Kenya, where FAO procured 128 Android phones to support surveillance (Figure 2).

To support surveillance especially in remote areas, FAO has provided assets and equipment to support the detection of locust populations as well as verify unconfirmed reports.

FAO has procured 43 vehicles (double-cabin pick-ups) and made available 29 to enhance field teams' coverage in addition to government-provided vehicles.

In terms of aerial surveillance, helicopters are preferred in areas that are difficult to access by land, enabling survey teams to disembark to conduct surveys on foot. So far, FAO has rented seven helicopters in a flexible manner, as needs evolved at different times of the operation (two for Kenya, three for Ethiopia and two for Somalia [dual-purpose, for surveillance and control]).

Additional surveillance equipment, including Global Positioning System (GPS) units and very high frequency (VHF) and high frequency (HF) radios provided by FAO, has helped field teams pinpoint their locations and communicate findings back to control centres.

Ground and air control operations

The strategic approach to control/treatment operations is based on the combined efforts of DLCO-EA, FAO and governments to implement ground and aerial control, entailing interconnected actions that the stakeholders will continue to implement and monitor together.

Affected countries developed and used their own organizational structure based on need. Logistics were coordinated out of operational centres located in and near affected areas. Each operational centre has a coordinator and teams in charge of scouting, surveillance, ground control and aerial control, where applicable.

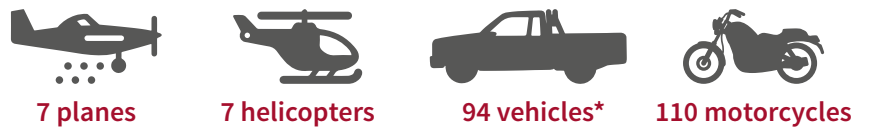
The composition of desert locust control teams varied by country. In Kenya, 501 members of the National Youth Service provided support for control activities, while in Uganda 2 045 personnel from the Uganda People's Defense Force were organized into eight control teams supervised by experts from the Plant Protection Division and FAO. In Ethiopia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen, teams were mainly composed of technicians, such as agricultural officers and entomologists.

Table 1. Desert locust control centres (August 2020)

	Ground control centres	Aerial control centres
Ethiopia	Arba Minch, Dire Dawa, Gode, Jijiga, Kombulcha, Konso, Robe, Semara	Arba Minch, Dire Dawa, Gode, Jijiga, Kombulcha, Robe, Semara
Kenya	Garissa, Isiolo, Lodwar, Marsabit, Masinga, Wajir	Isiolo, Lodwar, Marsabit
South Sudan	Juba, Kapoeta, Magwi, Torit	n/a
Sudan	Ed Damar, Suakin	Aiterba, Berti, Oko, Osaif, Suakin, Tokar
Uganda	Moroto, Soroti	Moroto
Yemen	n/a	n/a

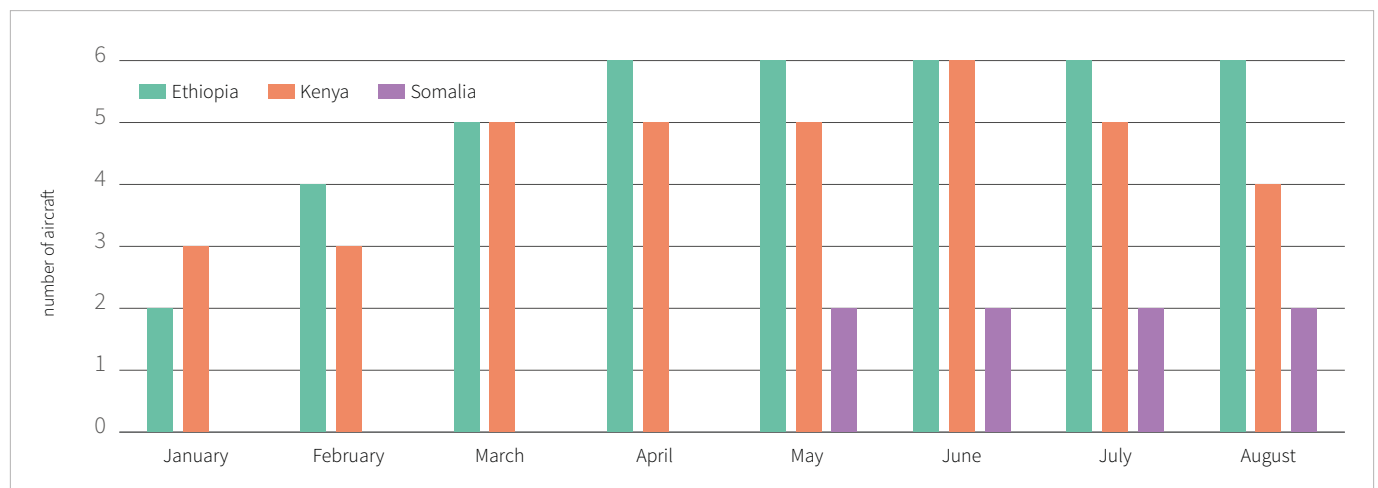
With FAO support, there are nine aircraft (fixed-wing and rotary) currently operating in the region, which will increase to 14 in October. This includes five in Ethiopia (increasing to seven in September); two in Kenya; and two in Somalia (increasing to five in September).

Since January, FAO has supported the procurement and leasing of the following assets for desert locust control in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen (at different times during the operation):



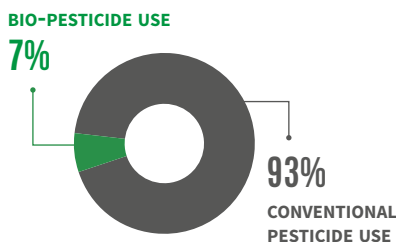
The evolution of the number of aerial surveillance and control assets acquired, combining government contributions, DLCO-EA planes and FAO-leased aircraft is detailed in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Surveillance and spraying aircraft fleet (DLCO-EA, FAO and governments) in worst-affected countries in 2020



Source: FAO, August 2020.

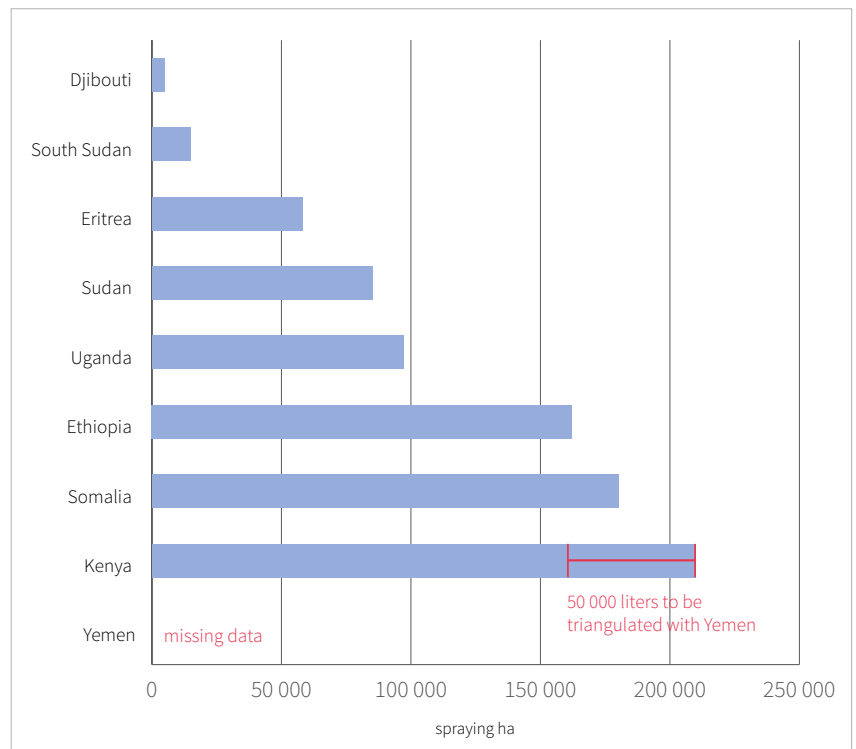
In addition, the following amounts of bio-pesticide, conventional pesticide and sprayers (vehicle-mounted, handheld and knapsack) have been procured by FAO and partially delivered to governments:



By the end of August, trained field teams have administered 710 000 litres of conventional pesticide and 2 760 kg of bio-pesticide (through both ground and air control), killing an estimated 515 billion desert locusts to date. Post-spraying assessments are conducted on a regular basis in all countries to estimate the mortality rates of sprayed insects. In East Africa, bio-pesticides were found to be 75–80 percent effective while conventional pesticides were 80–85 percent effective.

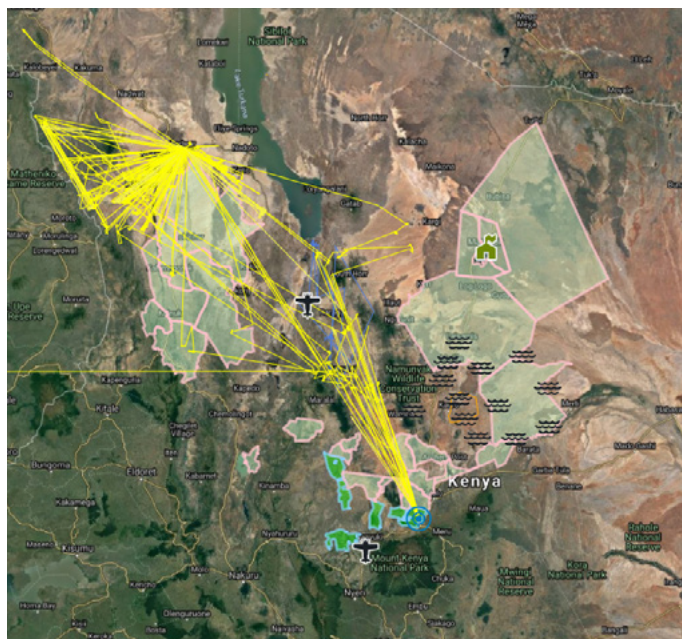
* including five trucks to support the logistics of the operation, e.g. transport of pesticides and jet fuel for aircraft

Figure 5. Pesticide and bio-pesticide stocks by end of August 2020
expressed in spraying ha



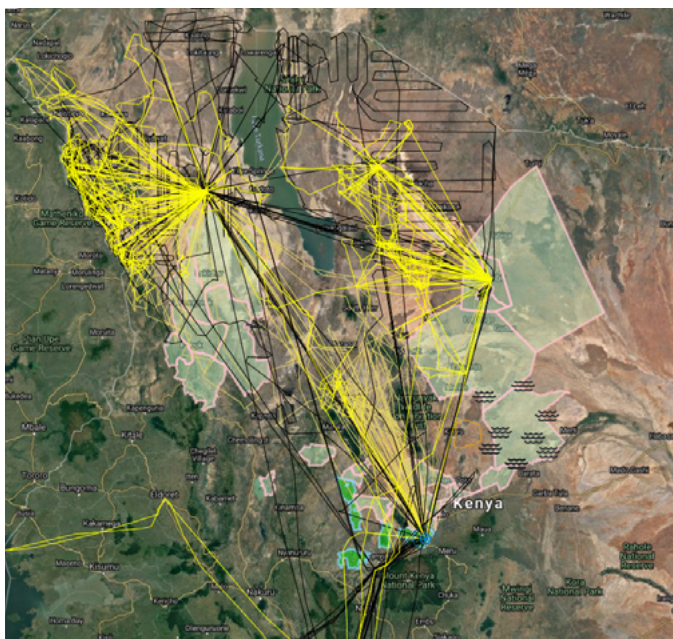
Source: FAO, August 2020.





Source: FAO Kenya, August 2020.

*Tracking air control operations in northwestern Kenya
(June to August 2020)*



Source: FAO Kenya, August 2020.

*Tracking surveillance operations in northwestern Kenya
(June to August 2020)*

Tracking of the operation

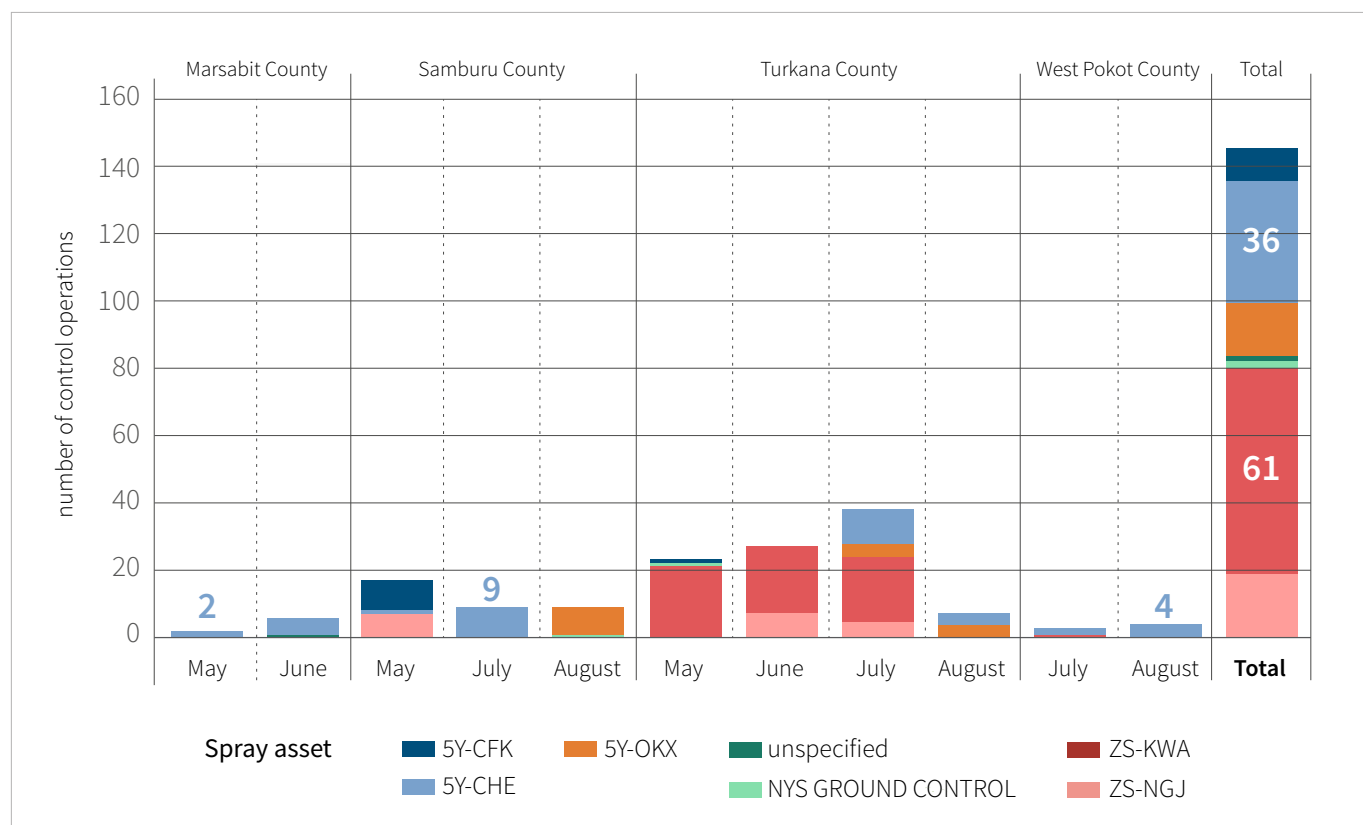
Through an initiative that started in Kenya, FAO is collaborating with EarthRanger, a software tool built by Vulcan Inc.* to integrate and display all historical and real-time field data of locusts. Started in 2015, EarthRanger is a technology solution that provides data visualization and analysis, to empower protected area managers across the world promote wildlife conservation, support positive human-wildlife coexistence, and reverse the trend in wildlife poaching.

The application to desert locust was made possible with the support of 51 Degrees and the Northern Rangelands Trust. Based on the data collected and analysed, local officers can make better-informed, real-time decisions. Additionally, more accurate forecasts can be made of locust behaviour and movement, allowing for more effective, proactive mitigation strategies.

This project is part of a larger effort by governments, conservancies, and individuals who are working with FAO to leverage technology to aid communities that have never seen locust swarms of this magnitude.

* About Vulcan: <https://vulcan.com/News/2020/Tech-Tools-Fight-Locust-Swarms.aspx>

Figure 6. Aircraft control operations from May to August 2020 in Kenya



Source: FAO, August 2020.

Table 2. Aircraft control operations from May to August 2020 in Kenya

County	Sightings	Control operations	Quantity used (L)	Treated area (ha)
Other	10	3	343	334
Isiolo	1	1	n/a	n/a
Marsabit	222	8	2 399	2 172
Samburu	102	38	8 558	8 958
Turkana	256	96	44 565	36 678
West Pokot	14	8	1 489	973
TOTAL	605	154	57 354	49 115

Awareness campaign

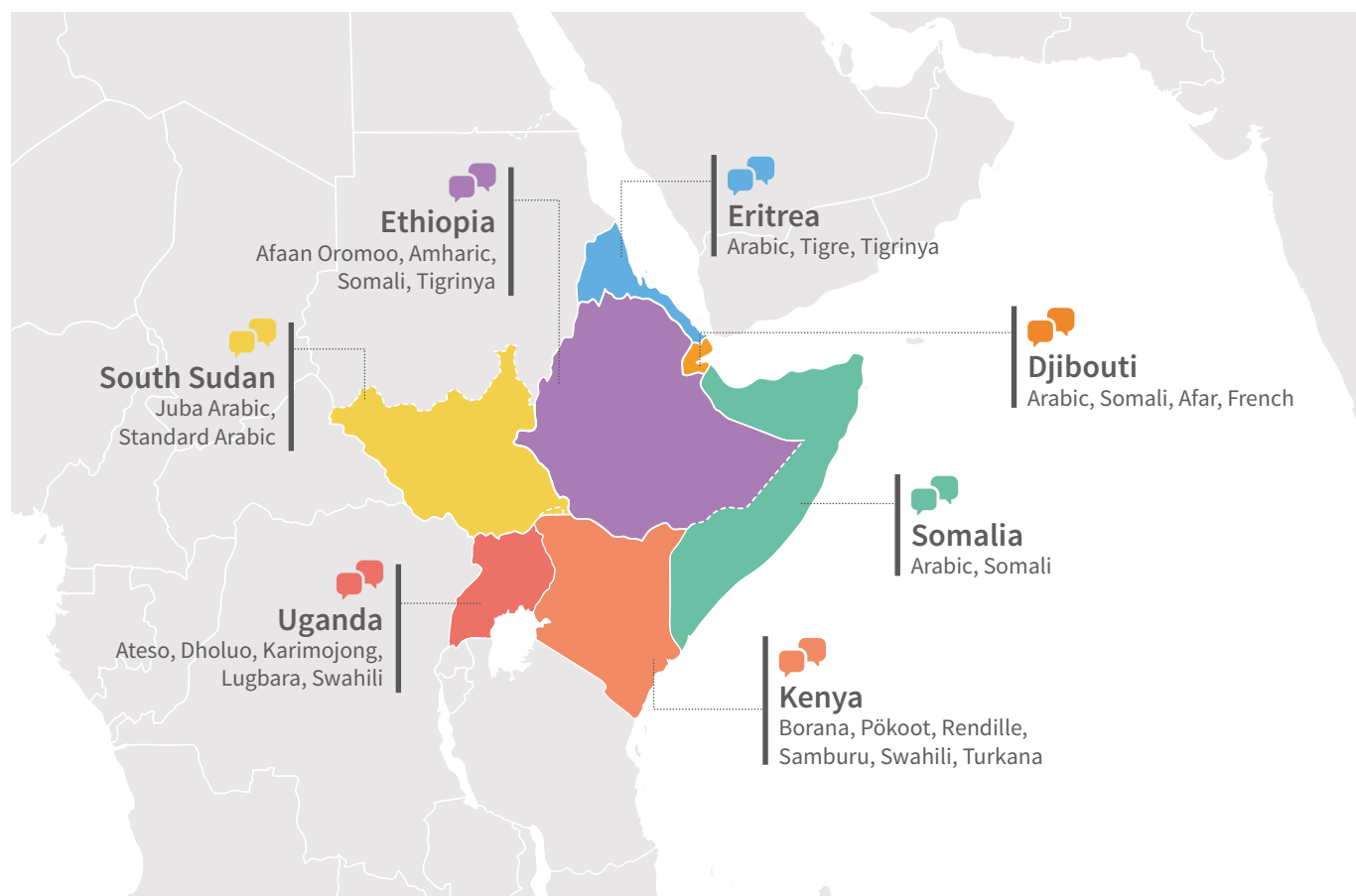
Co-chaired by FAO and OCHA, a regional desert locust Community Sensitization Taskforce for Eastern Africa was established in Nairobi in March 2020. The objective of the Taskforce is to increase public awareness and improve existing educational campaigns on desert locust control activities in the Greater Horn of Africa. Of the affected countries in the region, the focus of the Taskforce is on Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

Twenty-nine partners (including IGAD, Food Security Clusters, UN agencies, NGOs and networks) maintain regular participation in the bi-monthly online meetings. While active representation has been reduced by more than half due to the ongoing pandemic, organizations that remained in the taskforce have reported significant progress.

An estimated 7.45 million people in the Greater Horn of Africa are targeted/reached with planned or ongoing awareness-raising activities.

Various tools have been developed to raise awareness and sensitize communities on the desert locust upsurge and response, including key messages for dissemination by radio, SMS and print (e.g. flyers) as well as guidance and media (photos, videos) for use by partners.

Figure 7. Desert locust awareness campaign local languages



Source: United Nations world map, February 2019.

A community-facing key messages document was developed by FAO and translated into 14 local languages through OCHA's engagement of Translators without Borders. These messages have been disseminated for wider use by participating partners, providing information on the nature of desert locust, what is being done, advice for farmers and pastoralists on safety measures associated to locust control operations, child protection, and local contact information.

Radio texts have also been developed, translated and disseminated to NGO partners. These were further developed into localized scripts for mainstream and community radio stations in Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. Jingles were also developed for radio play.

Six flyers on the desert locust life cycle, advice for pastoralists and farmers, safety during control (avoiding pesticide exposure), handling of dead locusts, and child safety were developed and distributed. In addition, a child protection guidance note for implementing partners was developed by FAO with Save the Children.

Several lessons have been learned in the implementation of the awareness campaign. Community call-in toll-free lines have been an essential component of control centres (such as those in Somalia and South Sudan), helping to build knowledge and combat the spread of false information. Combining SMS campaigns with radio messaging and pictorial flyers has been effective in areas with high illiteracy levels and poor network availability.



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Figure 8. Sites of environmental and health impact assessments in Kenya



Source: UNOCHA Kenya map, April 2020.

Impact assessments and environment, health and safety

Pesticides used in desert locust control operations are mainly of ultra-low-volume (ULV) formulation and require technical expertise to apply. Specific trainings have been conducted for the teams, based on FAO's desert locust guidelines for survey, ground and aerial control operations. To ensure the effective facilitation of control operations, FAO conducted training on the safe administration of pesticides benefiting nearly 800 control team members.

Around 2 833 personal protective equipment kits were provided to control teams, including overalls, gloves, masks and goggles, to avoid harmful exposure to the pesticides.

An environmental and human health impact study was recently concluded in Kenya, which assessed 13 spraying sites in Turkana (eight sites) and Samburu (five sites). Conducted by an independent consultant, the assessment took place over one month – from 13 July to 15 August.

In Turkana, treatments had no significant effect on the environment, and no health issues were reported. It was identified that an impact assessment for livestock feeding on desert locust-treated pasture is necessary due to the discovery of *E. coli* in faeces.

In Samburu, there was no significant effect of treatments on the environment at most sites. However, standard operating procedures were not fully respected in one site and awareness was not adequate; this area experienced soil contamination, and pesticide applicators experienced some immediate health effects (sneezing, eye and skin irritation). There is a need to ensure full adherence to FAO guidelines.

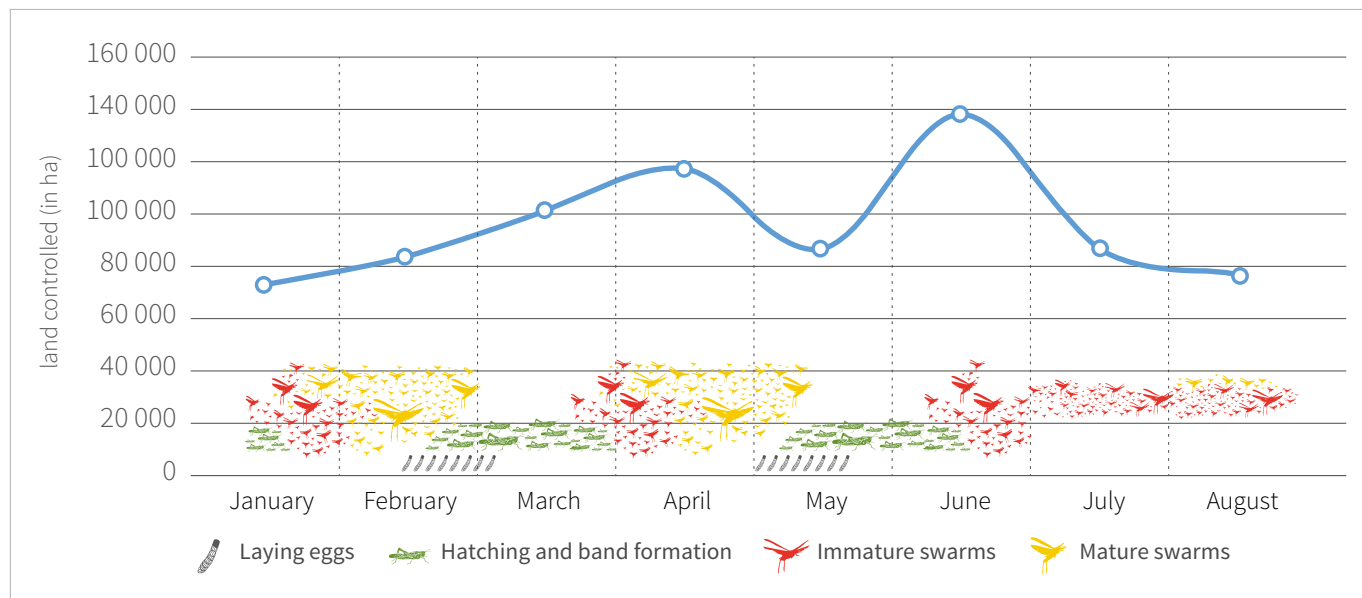
A similar environmental impact study is currently ongoing in Ethiopia, with preliminary results expected by the end of October.

Outputs and outcome under Component 1 of the programme

Between January and August 2020, over 760 000 ha have been treated across the ten countries in the region, including 657 000 ha in the worst-affected countries of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

More than 515 billion desert locusts have been killed in control activities since January. Significant progress has been made in reducing locust numbers in five countries in the region. In Kenya, desert locust are present in just two counties, down from 29. In South Sudan, all swarms that have crossed into the country have been controlled. In the Sudan, summer breeding areas are under surveillance and control, with no swarms currently present in Darfur. All crossing swarms have been controlled in Uganda, and no desert locust is present in the United Republic of Tanzania.

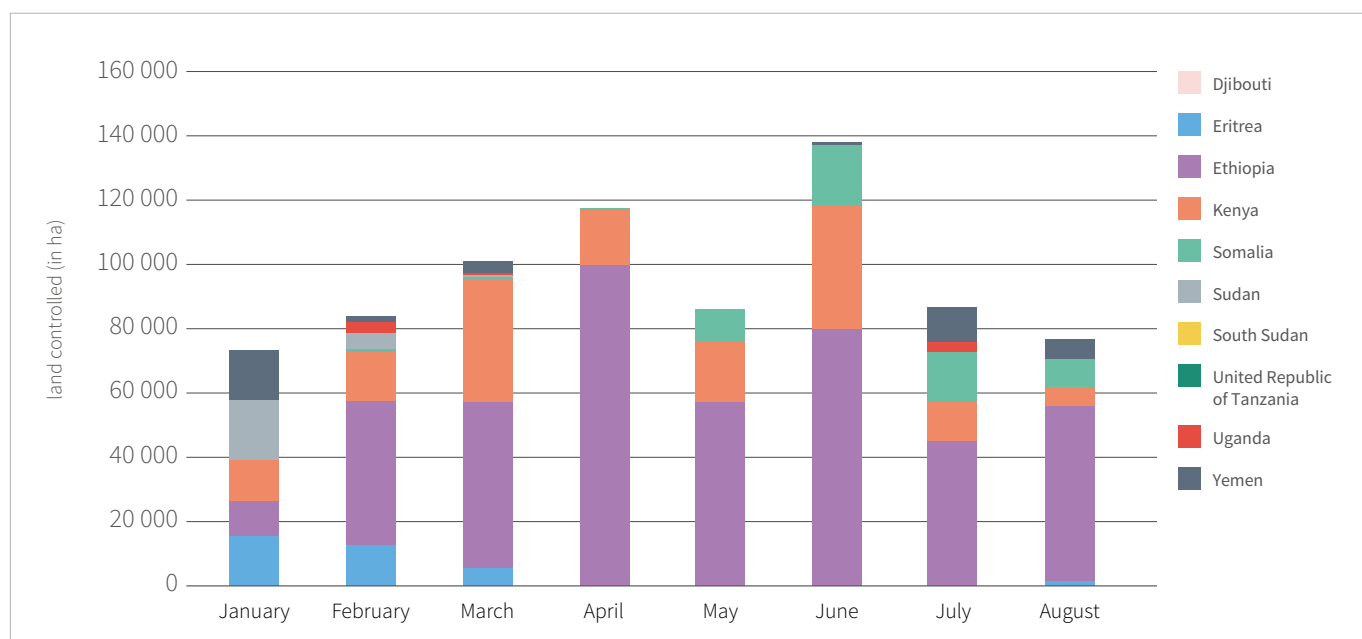
Figure 9. Monthly treatment against desert locust life cycle since January 2020



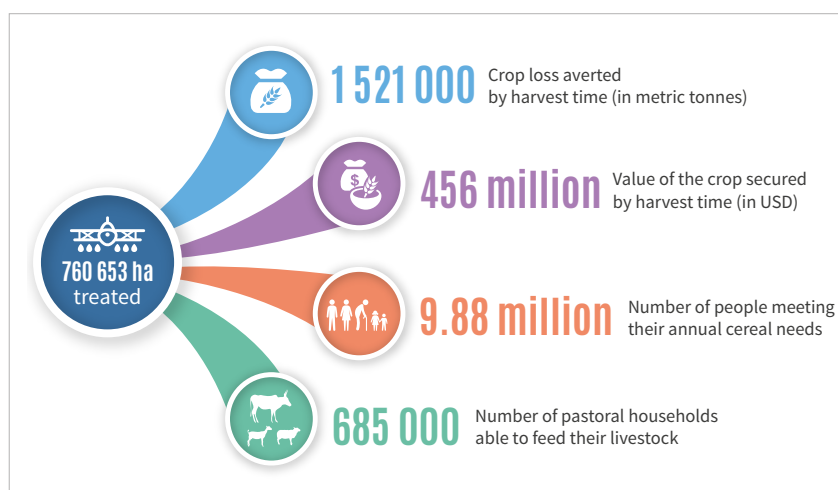
Source: FAO, August 2020.

In Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia, good progress has been made, but a high level of risk remains with a strong possibility of re-infestation with swarms from Yemen. While there is no desert locust present in southern Ethiopia, swarms were detected in northeastern and eastern areas. Since May, significant surveillance and control activities have contributed to a reduction in locust presence in Somalia. However, low numbers of immature swarms persist in the northeast of the country. Only slow progress is being made in Yemen, which faces limited access to affected and breeding areas.

Figure 10. Monthly treatment of desert locust-infested land by country since January 2020



Source: FAO, August 2020.



By conducting timely surveillance and control operations at-scale to limit desert locust populations, there are fewer farmers, agropastoralists and pastoralists in need of emergency food assistance than if no control had been conducted, according to the findings of a recent FSNWG damage assessment.

While FAO could not prevent 2.5 million people from being impacted by desert locust in the Greater Horn of Africa and Yemen, the Organization and its partners succeeded in averting a major humanitarian catastrophe and saved over 13 million people from facing food insecurity.

These control operations averted the loss of an estimated 1.52 million tonnes of cereal – sufficient to cover the food needs of 9.88 million people for an entire year. The amount of grain saved from being ravaged by desert locust is worth around USD 456 million.

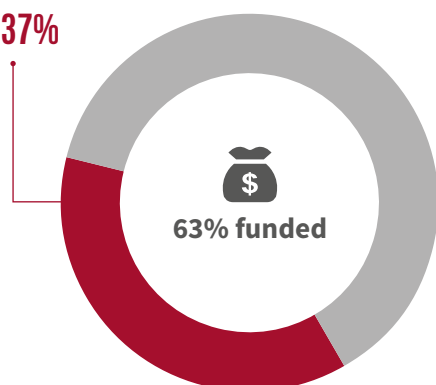
In addition, desert locust control activities in the arid and semi-arid lands have enabled about 685 000 pastoral and agropastoral households to feed their animals through adequate access to grazing areas. These achievements are particularly significant considering that four of the world's ten worst food crises in 2019 (defined by the number of people in Crisis or worse [IPC/CH Phase 3 and above]) are affected by the current desert locust upsurge. These are Ethiopia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen.

Safeguard livelihoods

FUNDING GAP

USD 36.9 million

37%



While a massive humanitarian crisis was averted by timely desert locust control, vulnerable households dependent on crops and livestock still require livelihoods support, especially in a context of multiple compounding shocks. About 63 percent of the funding requirements for this component of the appeal are met, with approximately USD 66.52 million received or pledged at the end of August 2020.

A recent FSNWG assessment found that roughly one third of respondents who either currently had crops in their fields or owned livestock experienced desert locust-related crop or pasture losses. For impacted households, desert locust losses were often substantial. About 42 percent of impacted farmers experienced high or very high losses to crops (mainly in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia), and 53 percent of impacted livestock holders experienced high or very high losses to rangeland (mostly in Somalia and Ethiopia).

The assessment also confirmed that control operations significantly reduced the number of people that would have been acutely food insecure otherwise. It also confirmed that those impacted did not lose 100 percent of their crops or grazing land. Based on these findings, FAO adjusted its livelihoods assistance packages to reflect re-assessed needs, enabling the number of targeted beneficiaries to increase from 153 000 to 298 000 households with mobilized resources.

Due to multiple compounding hazards (e.g. desert locust, COVID-19, climatic shocks), there was general pessimism among respondents (both those who were affected by desert locust and those who were not) about harvest prospects and current rangeland conditions. Given already high levels of food insecurity across the region, these challenges threaten to drive further food security deteriorations in the coming months.

Following an analysis of the assessment results and the findings of ad hoc country assessments, FAO adjusted the composition of the livelihoods assistance package to address emerging needs and tailored it to each country's context. The original package envisioned in May included cash interventions over a six-month period; in the revised plan, cash support will generally not exceed four months (with the exception of Somalia). No cash interventions are foreseen for Eritrea and South Sudan, and cash activities are in the planning stage in the Sudan.

Table 3. Planned cash interventions by country

	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Kenya	Somalia	Uganda	Yemen
Duration of assistance	3 months	2 months	2 months	3 to 6 months	3.5 months	3 months
Value of cash intervention per month	USD 110	USD 45	USD 50	USD 62	USD 50	USD 90
Number of households targeted with cash intervention	2 000	70 000	9 500	18 450	9 000	1 000

Table 4. Revised targets by country

	Households reached	Households targeted
Djibouti	200	19 000
Eritrea	9 130	20 000
Ethiopia	21 470	70 000
Kenya	950	39 230
Somalia	24 295	72 500
South Sudan	60 000	60 000
Sudan	n/a	n/a
Uganda	–	12 000
Yemen	–	5 500
TOTAL	116 045	298 230

The value of cash assistance in Kenya and Somalia is variable according to the areas of intervention; the figures in the above table represent an average of the different rates.

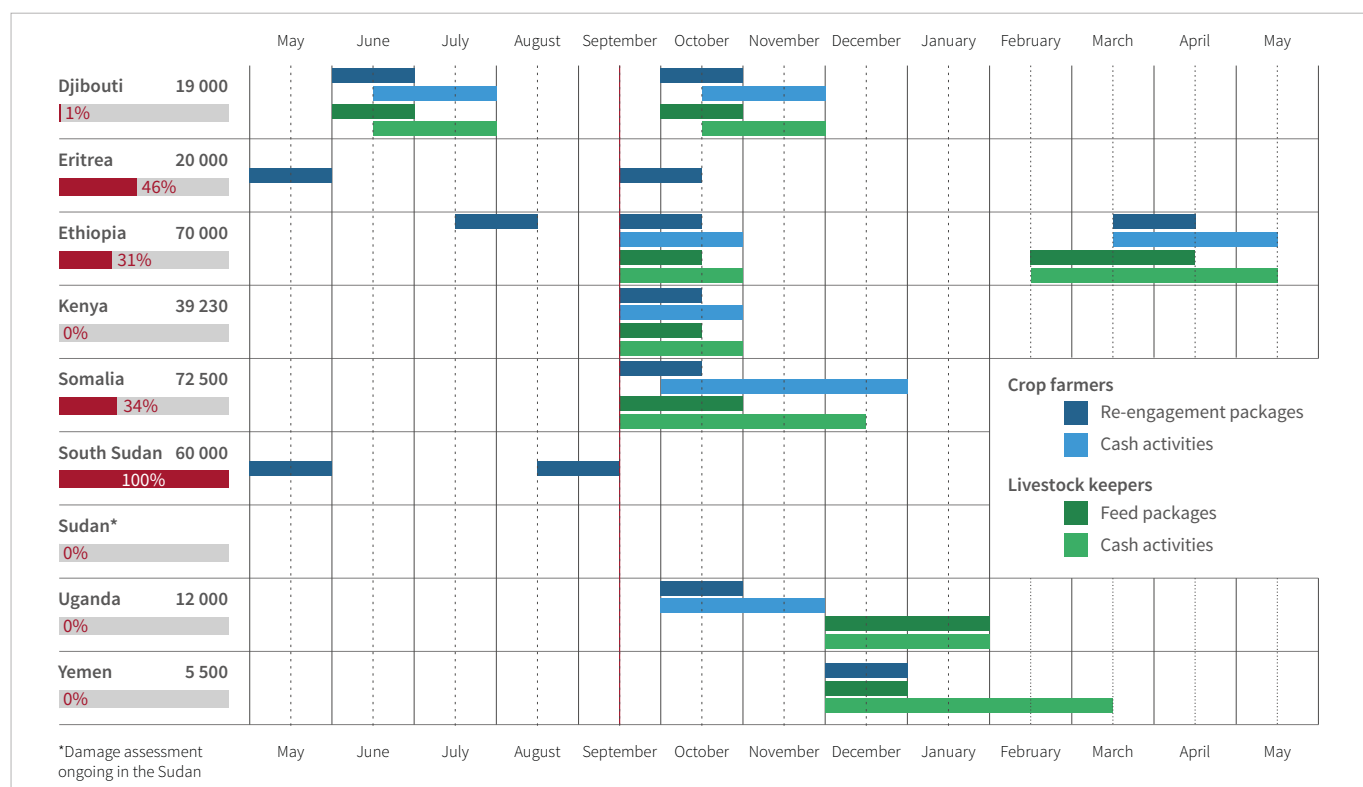
This adjustment in the programme has allowed FAO to increase the number of beneficiaries to be reached; from 153 000 households to 298 000 households with mobilized resources. About 65 percent of this target is farming assistance while the remaining 35 percent will support livestock-based livelihoods.

This new target of 298 000 households will allow FAO to reach about 60 percent of the people estimated to be directly impacted by the desert locust upsurge in the region. NGOs and other partners will complement FAO assistance with additional resources in order to address the remaining needs. Coordination of these efforts is managed at country level through existing coordination mechanisms (e.g. Food Security Clusters) and at regional level through strong dialogue established with the Regional Desert Locust Alliance group and OCHA, among other partners.

Outputs and outcome under Component 2 of the programme

Of the revised funded target, FAO has so far reached 116 048 households with cropping inputs and cash distribution. The remaining number of households to be assisted will be reached ahead of the short rains for areas with bimodal rainfall systems, and during the forthcoming dry season for areas with unimodal rainfall systems.

Figure 11. Calendar of livelihoods support interventions (2020–2021)



Source: FAO, September 2020.

Coordination and preparedness

The coordination and preparedness component of the regional appeal is fully funded and no additional funding is immediately required. Under this component, a total of USD 12.45 million were received or pledged.



Deploy rapid surge support

While additional deployment since April 2020 has been compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was essential to maintain expertise in the region for as long as necessary, through the extension of contracts for consultants and experts. This principle has been applied in Kenya and Ethiopia in particular, while Somalia and Yemen benefit from the support of a permanent plant protection officer with good knowledge of desert locust management. South Sudan and Uganda received technical support at the beginning of the operation, and no further deployment was possible after April.

At subregional level, three staff deployed on surge capacity to the resilience hub in Nairobi, Kenya since January 2020 are still supporting regional coordination. One additional staff provides remote support from FAO headquarters, while two programme formulation staff deployed in February returned to their duty stations in April.

The four reinforcement staff still attached to the resilience hub include:

- an information management officer, deployed through CANADEM, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- an operations officer, deployed by FAO from within the subregion;
- a procurement and logistics officer, deployed by FAO from within the subregion; and
- a reporting and programme development officer, teleworking from the United States of America.

Facilitate regional partnerships and collaboration

Coordination of assessments

The regional Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, co-led by FAO and IGAD, continued to play a critical role in providing a framework and technical means for harmonized impact assessments across four countries in the region. The recent FAO-IGAD impact assessment was conducted in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, and interviewed 10 831 agricultural respondents in desert locust-affected areas of the region in June/July 2020. The results of the impact assessment have been key to guiding livelihoods response activities.

Coordination of awareness campaigns and key messages

Co-chaired by FAO and OCHA, the regional desert locust Community Sensitization Taskforce for Eastern Africa has been critical to raising awareness and harmonizing desert locust messaging across the region. With 29 contributing members, the Taskforce includes representation from UN agencies, NGOs, Food Security Clusters and civil society.



Coordination of the livelihoods response strategy

In terms of livelihoods response, the Regional Desert Locust Alliance has been an important forum for coordinating response to the desert locust crisis and promoting advocacy. This group of national and international NGOs is working to ensure livelihoods response is tailored and localized while avoiding overlap and gaps.

Intergovernmental collaboration

Furthermore, IGAD is leading ministerial briefings on desert locust and discussions will soon result in the development of a mid- to long-term preparedness and capacity building plan, for which FAO, DLCO-EA and the Commission for Controlling the Desert Locust in the Central Region are providing strategic and technical support.

Enhance regional advocacy and national-level coordination

Regional briefings and global accountability

Based in Nairobi, the FAO Resilience Team for Eastern Africa continues to co-organize monthly coordination and briefing meetings for stakeholders, together with OCHA. Initiated as a monthly briefing for Nairobi-based regional partners, the format evolved to become virtual, as a result of COVID-19-related confinement, thus allowing for a more inclusive, global approach. FAO also developed and shared the link of the Desert Locust Response Dashboard as early as mid-February as part of its effort toward global accountability.

National coordination

National coordination fora, including Food Security Clusters in countries where they are activated (Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen), have played a crucial role in raising awareness among stakeholders and in guiding the planning of livelihoods interventions to ensure maximum coverage and harmonized approaches where feasible.

Strengthen regional and national capacities and enhance preparedness

Review of country and regional preparedness and capacities

FAO has launched a real-time evaluation of the response, to rapidly learn from ongoing efforts, identify shortcomings and apply course correctors. This will run from July 2020 to June 2021. FAO and IGAD are in discussions with the World Bank and the French Development Agency (AFD) to ensure complementarity with their ongoing and upcoming rapid assessments and reviews. To support the process, a high-level regional conference on desert locust is being tentatively scheduled for the end of the year. Following data collection and a review of the findings and recommendations, these efforts will define the actions needed to build a sustainable and efficient governance system to enhance regional and national response capacity and preparedness.

Regional capacity to act

It is paramount to support DLCO-EA in upgrading its control capacity. FAO is already engaged in this endeavour through technical support, and will complement this through the provision of additional assets for aerial control. Serving all countries in the Greater Horn of Africa region, a minimum of one new plane will be fully equipped with ULV sprayers and navigation equipment to rejuvenate the fleet of DLCO-EA. The supply of additional planes is under discussion with resource partners.

Innovation that supports response tracking and decision-making

As indicated under Component 1, FAO recently developed a comprehensive and proven solution for the conduct and management of desert locust control operations in Kenya. This solution entails a fully functioning command centre managed by trained and experienced operators, supported by a senior management team. The system provides operational managers with a single platform to capture, view, analyse, store and share data to enable better planning and coordination of desert locust control operations, making the best use of available resources. This also bolsters accountability towards conducting control operations and provides a comprehensive database from which to enable post-event activities and analysis.

It is envisioned that FAO will introduce the system to other countries of the region, especially those significantly affected by the upsurge (e.g. Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen). In the region, capacity building has continued on topics related to the use of eLocust3m for surveillance crowdsourcing.



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What to expect in the next quarter

There are initial signs of improvement in parts of East Africa. Nevertheless, conditions remain serious in Yemen and other areas in the Horn of Africa. The developing situation is being watched closely along both sides of the Red Sea, where it could deteriorate as a result of swarm breeding.

In Kenya, only a few immature swarms remain in northwestern counties where aerial control operations continue. A small third generation of breeding is likely to commence in October but may be limited due to below-normal short rains predicted for this year.

In northeast Ethiopia, numerous hopper bands are present mainly in the Afar Region due to substantial breeding. Although aerial control operations are in progress, new swarms are likely to form in the coming weeks.

In Somalia, aerial control operations using bio-pesticides are making good progress against immature swarms on the northern plateau in Somaliland and Puntland. Further south, an increasing number of adult groups were reported in the central region of Galguduud in the past week.

In Yemen, hopper bands and swarms continue to be present in the interior and are spreading to coastal areas in the south and on the Red Sea. Limited control operations were undertaken in some areas.

There is concern that early swarm breeding is likely to commence on the Red Sea coastal plains of Yemen, Eritrea and Saudi Arabia, and perhaps the Sudan, where good rains fell in early and late August. Intensive monitoring and vigilance are required.

Against this background of remaining swarms and an expected new breeding generation, FAO and partners must maintain surveillance and control capacities. Current resources and stocks of pesticides are sufficient to run the operation as it stands (with the current number of aircraft) until February 2021.

The current seasonal weather forecasts indicate that the region is likely to be drier than normal for the period of October to December, thus impacting vegetation and biomass and creating less favourable conditions for desert locust.

In the scenario that farmers and herders are severely affected by significantly below-average rainfall, livelihoods support would be required to mitigate the impact of that shock. However these needs would not be captured by the Desert Locust Response Plan and should be addressed through Humanitarian Response Plans where they exist or through ad hoc appeals if required.

If the situation deteriorates, subsequently requiring a significant change in the number of hectares surveyed and treated monthly, the stock of pesticides would deplete rapidly and the number of leased aircraft would need to be re-assessed.

In the worst case scenario, damage to crops and rangeland could also be significant and would call for additional livelihoods support towards the end of the short rains season or before the long rains in 2021. In this case, FAO would likely call for a no-cost extension of the current appeal, while in full consideration of the World Bank Emergency Locust Response Programme and in consultation with concerned governments, requesting partners to generously fill current funding gaps (around USD 47 million under Components 1 and 2 combined).

Saving livelihoods saves lives

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