

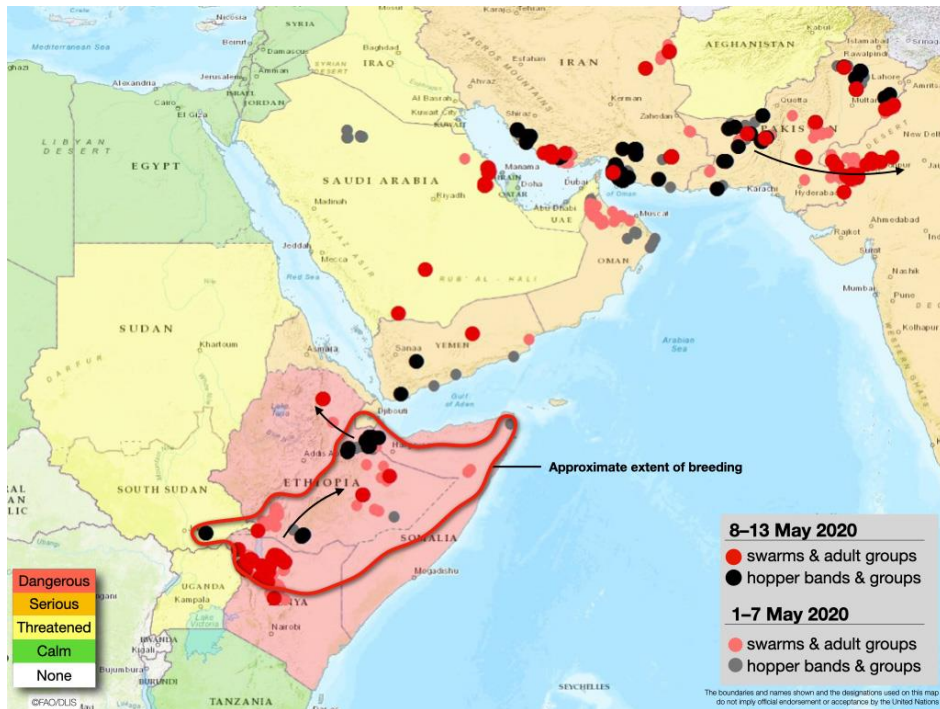


Desert Locust Emergency in Somalia

UPDATE 4 | 18 May 2020



Current situation



Regional resources & communications tools

Desert Locust Situation Update, 13 May
<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>

UN continues support for Desert Locust fight, interview with Etienne Peterschmitt
https://unsom.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unsom_quartely_newsletter_issue_14.pdf

Helicopters conducting aerial spraying in Puntland
<https://twitter.com/FAOSomalia/status/1261924028173950978>

Locust hub
<https://locust-hub-hqfao.hub.arcgis.com/>

FAO Desert Locust Crisis page
<http://www.fao.org/locusts>

The Desert Locust situation in Somalia is now classified as **Dangerous** with bands of hoppers reported in the breeding grounds in Galmudug, Somaliland and Puntland. Swarms are laying eggs that will soon hatch as the fourth generation of breeding in Somalia. In the coming weeks, another wave of adults may invade Somalia from across the Gulf of Aden which could result in further breeding and an escalation of the current crisis. The impact of the swarms is being assessed while air and ground control operations are ongoing to prevent a further increase of Desert Locusts in Somalia.

Despite these efforts, locust populations remain high in parts of Somalia with young nymphs (hoppers) reported at the Somaliland border with Ethiopia, the coastal region of Somaliland and the north east of Puntland.

Forecast

Conditions remain favourable for the continued development of the Desert Locust and the hopper bands reported in Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug have the potential to develop and form new swarms if not controlled. This is likely to be supplemented by new swarms arriving from Kenya after mid-June.

The weather forecast for June to August show higher than normal rainfall in northern Somalia. These ecological conditions would be suitable for a new generation of locusts to develop.

Control operations will likely extend beyond the first half of 2020 in order to target new eggs laid in May and June.

Impact on food security in Somalia

Desert Locust continues to pose a direct threat to current *Gu* season crop production and may also threaten pasture availability and crop cultivation across Somalia through the following 2020 *Deyr* (October-December) season. Eggs will soon hatch as the fourth generation are likely to affect livelihoods. FAO, working with partner NGOs, is closely monitoring the developments with a plan to intervene and enable farmers to quickly replant their crops where still possible.

Somalia now faces a triple threat of Desert Locust, *Gu* flooding and COVID-19, while many struggle to recover from past shocks. Between April and June 2020, an estimated 2.7 million people across Somalia are expected to face Crisis or worse (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC] Phase 3 or higher) without humanitarian assistance. The situation is expected to deteriorate further between July and September 2020 when 3.5 million people are projected to face Crisis or worse. Humanitarian assistance must be scaled up through September 2020 to prevent crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Emergency (IPC Phase 4) outcomes for up to 3.5 million people.

Ongoing efforts

As of 15 May, Government with the direct support of FAO have sprayed a total of 3 415 hectares. Puntland has reported the treatment of 20 000 additional hectares. Government surveys have confirmed egg laying swarms reported in Somaliland, Galmudug and Puntland indicating that another generation of Desert Locust should be expected. Control operations have scaled up in May, using biopesticides, to manage the reported hopper bands and swarms by aerial and ground based equipment.

Government Desert Locust field teams will rely on a number of inputs procured and delivered by FAO in order to spray hectares on the ground. FAO has procured a total of 30 vehicles for the ground control operation, 54 back mounted motorized sprayers and 22 vehicle mounted sprayers. Two helicopters were delivered to Somalia on 14 May each with the ability to spray 1 000 hectares daily, and commenced spraying (see [video](#)). The helicopters will both support survey operations to ensure identification of even the most remote breeding areas and continue spraying.

As of mid-May, the majority of control operations in Somalia are being undertaken using *metarhizium* biopesticide. FAO has already delivered 4 000 kg with a coverage of 80 000 ha. Procurement and delivery for additional biopesticide to cover the targeted 180 000 ha is ongoing.

In parallel to control operations, FAO is also working with government to protect livelihoods. 24 300 farming households across 152 villages in northern and southern Somalia are receiving livelihood inputs and services for the ongoing *Gu* season, including replanting packages where conditions permit. Rangeland cubes are being purchased to supplement scarce feed resources in locust affected pastoral areas during the dry season. This is part of wider UN/NGO efforts to protect lives and livelihoods during this critical time.



Two helicopters arrive in Mogadishu (May 2020)

Additional support required for Somalia

With a fourth generation of Desert Locust developing in Somalia and new swarms coming in from neighbouring regions, FAO's control operations and livelihood response actions need to be fully supported through the end of 2020. The FAO and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation joint Desert Locust Crisis – Somalia Action Plan seeks USD 56.9 million and is 45 percent funded at USD 25.5 million.

Planned activities in the second half of 2020 include further control operations. Livelihood activities will provide integrated livelihood and cash assistance to farming, agropastoral and pastoral households severely impacted by locust damage during the *Gu* season.