



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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Addendum

DESERT LOCUST CRISIS

Appeal for rapid response and anticipatory action in the Near East and North Africa January–December 2020



21.7 million

people face severe acute food insecurity in the Sudan and Yemen



450 000 ha of land targeted for rapid locust control in the two countries



70 700 households targeted for rapid livelihoods protection and recovery support in the two countries



USD 15.2 million

additionally required by FAO for rapid response and anticipatory action in the Sudan and Yemen from January to December 2020

Crisis overview

Desert locust breeding is underway along both sides of the Red Sea. In the Near East and North Africa, the pest poses a serious threat to crop and livestock production in countries that are already highly food insecure and facing economic crises.

Present in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and Yemen, desert locusts are at various stages of development (hoppers, immature adults) and forming groups and bands. This is likely to lead to the formation of swarms, which are highly mobile, capable of completely stripping an area's vegetation and can cause large-scale environmental and agricultural damage.

Several immature swarms have moved from the coastal plains to the interior of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, while at least one swarm reached Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Control operations are ongoing in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan, but remain limited in Yemen. There is a significant risk of the current desert locust upsurge becoming a plague, which could lead to further suffering, displacement and conflict. The potential for destruction is enormous.

For response in the Sudan and Yemen, USD 15.2 million is urgently required by FAO to support control measures, safeguard livelihoods and promote early recovery. This is in addition to the appeal calling for USD 138 million for rapid response and anticipatory action in the Greater Horn of Africa.

The Sudan

Despite control measures, the situation in the Sudan has rapidly deteriorated since the end of 2019. Desert locust swarms have invaded from neighbouring countries. An increase in rainfall along the Red Sea coast drastically improved the ecological conditions for breeding and formation of mature and immature desert locust groups, in addition to hopper bands. As a result of declining vegetation in the northern part of the Red Sea coast, it is expected that current swarms and groups will migrate and spread to winter cropping areas in the northern and River Nile states.

Rapid response and anticipatory action (January–December 2020)

Activities	Yemen	Sudan	Total
1. Curb the spread of desert locust	2 800 000	7 300 000	10 100 000
Ground and air control operations	2 000 000	6 300 000	8 300 000
Ground surveillance and impact assessment	800 000	1 000 000	1 800 000
2. Safeguard livelihoods and promote early recovery	3 200 000	1 500 000	4 700 000
Farming re-engagement packages (including cash)	1 700 000	800 000	2 500 000
Livestock-based livelihoods packages	1 500 000	700 000	2 200 000
3. Coordination	200 000	200 000	400 000
	Total initial funding required		15 200 000

The Government has been leading the response, with surveillance conducted on 1 million hectares and ground and aerial control operations treating about 300 000 hectares. To-date, FAO has mobilized USD 300 000 from its own resources and received an allocation of USD 250 000 from Saudi Arabia for the desert locust response.

Intensive surveillance of locust breeding areas as well as effective ground and aerial control operations are urgently needed in order to detect and reduce locust populations, prevent more swarms from forming and avoid the spread of the pest to crop and pasture areas. Unless sustained control operations are carried out, significant agricultural losses are likely. This would exacerbate already high levels of food insecurity (5.8 million people are facing IPC Phase 3 and above [June–August 2019]), particularly in rural areas.

Yemen

In southern areas of Yemen – particularly dry and coastal areas – desert locust populations are present at various degrees of concentration, according to the Desert Locust Monitoring and Control Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Yemen is a key frontline country for desert locust, as its winter breeding areas along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden coasts have been the source of devastating plagues in the past. Swarms are likely to continue breeding in Yemen's interior for one or two months, and winter rains could

foster further generations of breeding until around March, each multiplying the population 20-fold.

Current surveillance and control operations are extremely limited due to the prevailing security and political situation. To-date, FAO has released USD 680 000 of internal funding to support control and surveillance efforts, and received an allocation of USD 100 000 from FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA) and USD 300 000 from Saudi Arabia.

Especially considering that 15.9 million people in Yemen are severely food insecure, every effort must be made to mitigate desert locust swarm formations and their spread to other areas. If locust swarms continue unimpeded, this will have serious implications on rangeland availability and crop production in the coming primary planting seasons of March/April in summer breeding areas and October/November in winter breeding areas.

Contact

FAO Regional Office for the
Near East and North Africa
Cairo, Egypt | RNE-ADG@fao.org

FAO Plant Production and
Protection Division
Rome, Italy | AGP-Director@fao.org

FAO Emergency and Resilience Division
Rome, Italy | PSE-Director@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
www.fao.org/emergencies
www.fao.org/resilience



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