

# SITUATION REPORT

## BY THE NUMBERS

**2,500,000+**

people affected

**50**

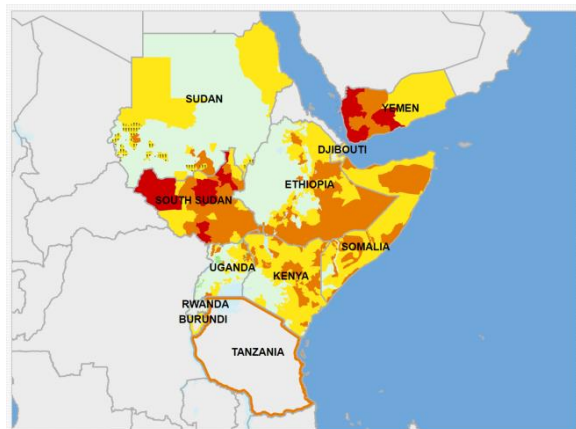
percent reduction in maize crop production

**25 – 200**

millimeter rainfall deficit



Crops in Kenya that should be ready for harvest have withered in the field due to a lack of rainfall.



Food security situation in May 2017. IPC Phase 2 – Stressed (yellow); Phase 3 – Crisis (orange) and Phase 4 – Emergency (red). (Source: fews.net)

## EAST AFRICA DROUGHT

February 21, 2017 | No. 1

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

Lutheran World Relief is currently active in Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan and Uganda in East Africa. Due to the dual phenomena of El Niño, which began in 2015, and ensuing La Niña, many areas of East Africa have experienced shortened and erratic rainfalls, leading to reduced crop production, poor rangeland conditions in pastoral areas and food insecurity. The January harvest of maize, a staple food crop in the region, was expected to be 50 percent below normal. As a result, many areas of these countries are predicted to experience IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) conditions by May 2017, meaning families are engaging in coping strategies such as skipping meals or reducing portions, looking for off-farm labor opportunities, or selling household assets, including livestock, to support food consumption.

On February 10, 2017, the President of Kenya declared the drought a national disaster in 23 counties.<sup>1</sup> The Kenyan government projects that about 1.3 million people are currently affected by the drought and in need of immediate support. This number is estimated to increase to 2.4 million people by April 2017.

On February 20, 2017, the Government of South Sudan declared portions of Unity State in famine or high likelihood of famine due to war and a collapsing economy. Approximately 100,000 people are currently facing famine with an additional 1 million on the brink of famine.<sup>2</sup> A formal famine declaration means that people have already started dying of hunger. Urgent action is needed to prevent additional deaths.

### INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE EFFORTS

Most international attention to date has been placed on Nigeria, Yemen, South Sudan and Somalia, which face a credible risk of famine (IPC Phase 5) this year due to the multiplier effects of drought, insecurity and economic instability. While the needs in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are expected to be great, it is unclear at this time if additional support will be provided in these countries this year.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.president.go.ke/2017/02/10/government-declares-drought-a-national-disaster/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_South\\_Sudan\\_Key%20Messages\\_Feb2017.pdf](http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_South_Sudan_Key%20Messages_Feb2017.pdf)

## LWR – ACTIONS TAKEN AND NEXT STEPS

Lutheran World Relief has committed an initial \$120,000 for an emergency response to implement cash-for-work programming in Kenya to help communities affected by drought rebuild water infrastructure. This will allow those experiencing crop loss to purchase food in the short-term and increase their ability to respond to drought in the long-term.

LWR is currently exploring efforts to support Lutheran World Federation to address the food security needs of affected populations in South Sudan.

## LWR IN EAST AFRICA

LWR has been working in East Africa since 1961 to help communities living in extreme poverty adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being. LWR currently has projects in South Sudan, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda and collaborates with local community-based organizations, church partners, and national and county government departments on programs to improve food security, livelihoods of communities, climate change adaptation and to respond to emergencies. With support from the United States Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), LWR and Lutheran World Federation/South Sudan are improving the protection, resilience and psychosocial well-being of children in refugee camps in Unity State and Upper Nile State, South Sudan.



A woman standing in her field in Kenya. The maize crop has dried up as a result of the drought.



With the riverbeds completely dry, farmers in Kenya are having to work harder to find a water source. Pictured here, farmers dig deep into dry riverbeds, hoping to access at least a small amount of water.

For additional information about LWR's response to emergencies around the world, please visit [lwr.org](http://lwr.org). You can also join the conversation about how LWR is assisting those affected and how you can help at [facebook.com/LuthWorldRelief](https://facebook.com/LuthWorldRelief) or [twitter.com/LuthWorldRelief](https://twitter.com/LuthWorldRelief).



The information in this document may be copied, distributed and adapted for non-commercial purposes. Lutheran World Relief should always be cited as the author.