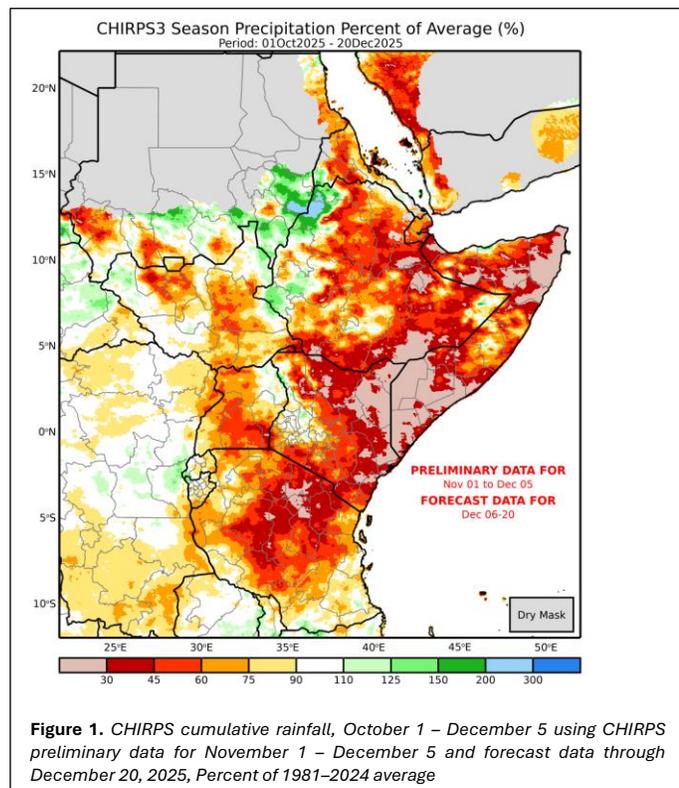


Widespread Severe October–December 2025 Rainfall Deficits Across the Eastern Horn of Africa

KEY MESSAGES

- Severe dry conditions experienced across **eastern Kenya, southeastern Ethiopia & southern Somalia**, with substantial rainfall deficits across much of the region.
- Less than 60% to less than 30% of average October to mid-December rainfall is expected (Figure 1), marking it as one of the **driest short-rains seasons on record** in several areas.
- Delayed and below-average short rains in most parts of **Uganda**, parts of **Rwanda** and **Burundi** leading to limited germination of early cultivated crops.
- The **Government of Somalia** declared a national emergency on 10 November following severe, countrywide drought conditions driven by an extremely poor Deyr rainfall season, which typically contributes over 40 percent of the nation’s annual cereal output. The drought has occurred during the main season and has affected the country’s breadbasket regions of Bay, Bakool, and Shabelle zones.
- After a delayed onset, periods of extreme mid-season rainfall led to localized flooding and crop damage, resulting in mixed harvest outcomes across the Kiremt/main season growing areas of Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan. In addition, socioeconomic pressures and conflict-related access constraints particularly in Sudan, South Sudan, and parts of Ethiopia limited agricultural operations leading to shortfalls in production.
- Favorable outcomes in the unimodal areas of **Western Ethiopia, Kenya’s North Rift, and Karamoja in Uganda** have been recorded following a generally above-average season.
- Current forecasts indicate that the drier and hotter-than-average conditions across the eastern sector of the region are likely to persist into early 2026. A transition toward near-normal rainfall is expected later in the season consistent with projections of a short-lived La Niña and a return of the Indian Ocean Dipole to neutral conditions. Temperatures are forecast to remain above average limiting any recovery.



SEASONAL PROGRESS

MARCH – NOVEMBER

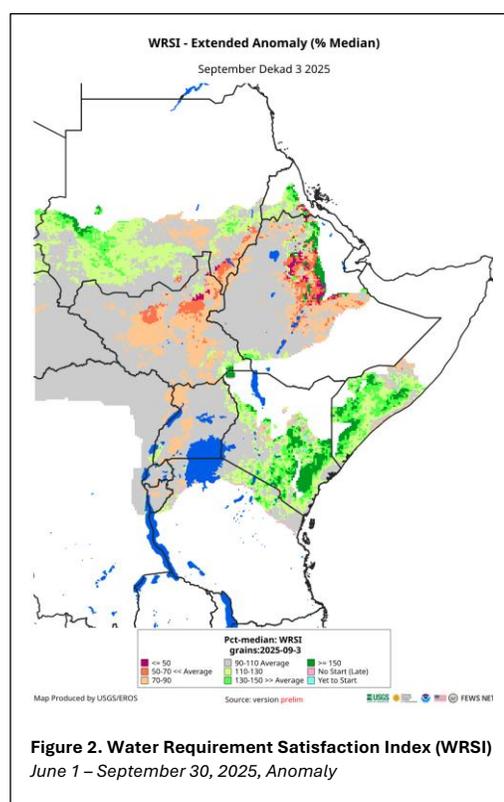
Context: *Between March and November, the following are the areas and names of the rainy seasons underway in parts of East Africa: Gu rains in Somalia; long rains in unimodal Uganda and Rwanda, and unimodal and bimodal Kenya and Burundi; belg rains (mid-February to May) in Ethiopia, as well as the diraac/sugum rains in the northern pastoral areas and gu/genna rains in the southern and southeastern pastoral areas of Ethiopia; and the first season rains in the bimodal areas within southwestern Ethiopia, southwestern South Sudan, and northern Uganda. This also marks the start of the October–December season.*

Across the western sector of the region, the long rains season running from March–November in North Rift **Kenya** including **Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu** and **Nakuru** counties as well as **Moroto, Nakapiripirit**, and parts of **Kotido** in the **Karamoja** region of **Uganda** experienced average to above-average rainfall throughout the season leading to favorable conditions for the long cycle crop. Satellite-derived indices such as NDVI and WRSI show consistently positive anomalies throughout the season. Harvesting is complete and national reports indicate average to above-average production.

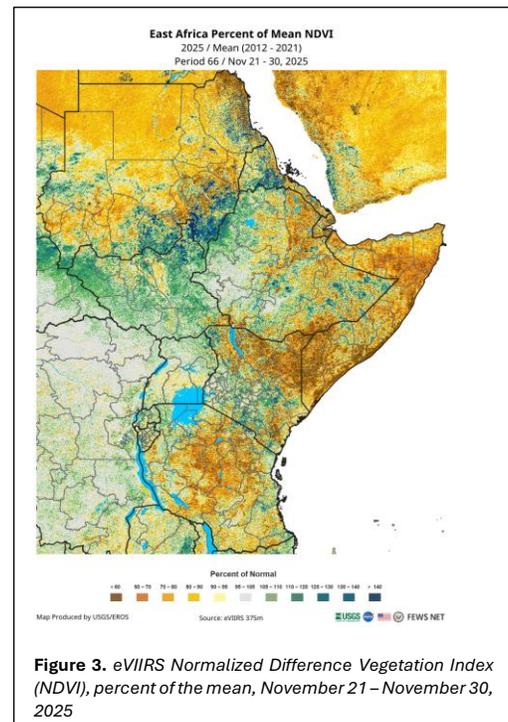
JUNE – SEPTEMBER

Between June and September, the following are the areas and names of the rainy seasons underway in parts of East Africa: Kiremt rains (June to September) in western, central, northern, and eastern Ethiopia; main rainy season (June to September) in the unimodal zones of South Sudan and Sudan; long rains in unimodal Uganda and Kenya; Karan/Karma rains (July to September) in northern pastoral areas of Ethiopia, Sitti and Fafan zones of Somali (Ethiopia) and the northern sector of Somalia; and second rains (July to November) in South Sudan bimodal zone.

Overall, **western Ethiopia**, including **western Amhara, western Oromia, Gambella, and Benishangul-Gumuz** experienced an average Kiremt season leading to generally favourable crop conditions (Figure 2). In contrast, much of the **central, southern, and eastern Kiremt-dependent regions** recorded a mixed season, marked by a delayed onset followed by intense mid-season rainfall. These extreme rainfall events triggered flooding and landslides in several areas, particularly across **South and North Gonder, Awi, and West Gojjam zones** in **Amhara, West and East Wollega, West Arsi, Bale highlands**, and parts of **Borena** in **Oromia**, and **Gamo, Gofa, Wolayita**, and highland areas of **Sidama** in the **former SNNPR** region. In low-lying parts of **Gambella**, rising water levels along the **Baro-Akobo Basin** led to extended inundation, while localized flash floods were also observed in parts of **Tigray** and **eastern Amhara**. These conditions resulted in localized crop damage. Overall, the indications are that national production has been average. In **Sudan**, the 2025 main-season harvest has yielded a mixed outcome, which reflects the impacts of a delayed onset, followed by exceptionally heavy mid- to late-season rainfall. While cumulative seasonal rainfall was above average in many areas, early-season deficits affected key producing states such as **Gedaref, Sennar, and White Nile**, reducing crop establishment. The subsequent surge in rainfall from July onwards led to extensive flooding, particularly in the **Darfur states, eastern areas**



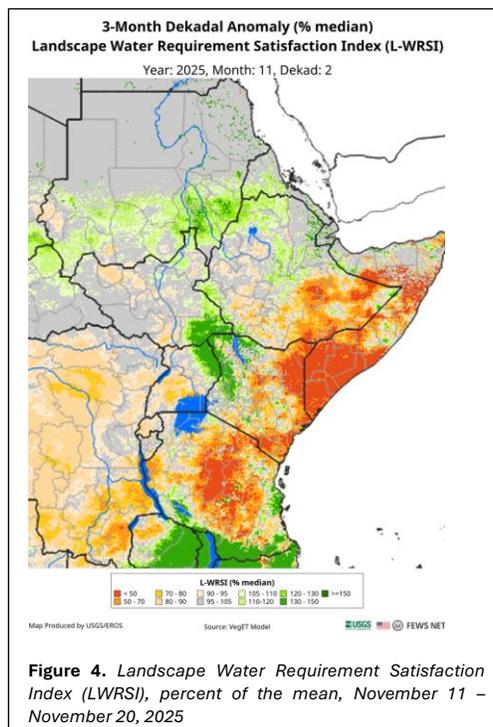
near **Port Sudan**, and parts of **Blue Nile** as well as flash floods in **Al Jazirah, Khartoum, River Nile and Gedaref states**, leading to field access constraints, and localized crop losses. Despite the improved vegetation conditions as seen in satellite derived indices, ongoing conflict, high input prices, and reduced mobility of farmers severely limited agricultural activities. The total planted area is not well documented, however it is expected to be below-normal given the conflict and socioeconomic-related factors. Similar conditions were observed across **South Sudan**, where the season began with **early rainfall deficits of up to two months** in several regions before shifting to **above-average mid-season rains** in many unimodal cropping zones. Although the intensified rainfall improved vegetation conditions in parts of **Unity, Lakes, and Western Bahr el Ghazal**, it was insufficient to fully reverse early-season moisture stress in areas such as **Upper Nile and Jonglei**, where delayed planting and poor early crop development had already reduced yield potential. According to **UNOCHA**, floods driven by high upstream lake levels, elevated Nile River flows, intense rainfall over short periods, and already saturated soils within the **Sudd wetland** affected approximately 1.34 million people, with inundation peaking in September before gradually receding. These flood events damaged fields, displaced households, and limited access to agricultural labour. Additionally, insecurity challenges that have persisted since early 2025, including renewed tensions and restricted mobility, further constrained agricultural operations and reduced the area cultivated. Overall national harvest outcomes are expected to be below average. In **northwestern Somalia** the Karan/Karma rains performed poorly due to both poor rainfall distribution and low seasonal totals limiting pasture regeneration and water availability. Similar conditions were observed across the Xagaa growing regions of **northeastern Somalia** with limited soil moisture to support pasture and water availability despite some mid-season storms.



OCTOBER – DECEMBER

Context: *Between October and December, the following are the areas and names of the rainy seasons underway in parts of East Africa: Short rains (October to December) in northern, northeastern, southern and coastal Kenya; Burundi; Rwanda; northern, eastern, central, western and southern Uganda; Deyr rains in Somalia; Deyr/Hageya rains in southern and southeastern Ethiopia.*

Currently, **eastern Kenya**, **southeastern Ethiopia**, and **southern Somalia** are experiencing severe rainfall deficits, with many areas receiving less than 30% to 60% of their average October to mid-December (OND) rainfall. Preliminary CHIRPS for November 1st through November 30th and forecast data through December 20th indicate rainfall deficits of up to 50–200 mm, ranking 2025 OND season as one of the driest on record in several regions. Satellite-based vegetation indices show significantly below-normal vegetation cover (Figure 3), signalling widespread crop wilting, rapid rangeland deterioration, and significant water stress across pastoral and agro-pastoral areas (Figure 4). The **National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)** in Kenya reported abnormally long dry spells in **Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Tana River, and Kitui**, with communities already relying on emergency water trucking. Similarly, the **Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC)** noted worsening water shortages and decline in livestock body conditions in **Liben, Afder, and Dawa zones**. In **southern Somalia**, the **Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM)** system recorded significant reductions in river flows along the **Shabelle and Juba rivers** due to the exceptionally low Deyr rainfall, the country is currently facing a severe countrywide drought, culminating in a national emergency declaration on the 10th of November 2025 by the Federal Government. The declaration was driven by the near-total failure of the 2025 Deyr rains, which typically account for over 40% of Somalia's annual cereal production, according to FAO-GIEWS. The Somalia Humanitarian Country Team and UNOCHA reports highlight that the Deyr season produced widespread crop germination failure, particularly in major producing areas such as **Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, and Bay**. Pastoral zones in **Gedo, Lower Juba, Sool, Sanaag, and Togdheer** are experiencing acute water shortages. Across the western sector of the region, in parts of **Uganda** including **Teso and Acholi** districts, and parts of **Rwanda** and **Burundi**, the OND 2025 rains experienced a delayed onset of 2–4 weeks, followed by below-normal rainfall totals through the end of November. According to ICPAC, the delayed onset was driven by suppressed convection across the equatorial region linked to the prevailing La Niña and warm western Pacific SST patterns as well as cooler-than-average western Indian Ocean SSTs associated with a negative Indian Ocean Dipole. This has led to below-average soil moisture at the start of season, which resulted to delayed land preparation and weak initial crop establishment and germination rates. These conditions have led to increased pest risks, and anticipated below-normal harvests.



AGROCLIMATIC OUTLOOK

Short-term forecasts of up to two weeks from the NOAA GFS indicate light showers in parts of the region including the extreme deficit areas of **eastern Kenya** and pocket areas of **southern Somalia** (Figure 5). However, this is unlikely to improve current cropping, vegetation, or water resources, as the season is already two-thirds complete. Ensemble forecasts from ECMWF and ICPAC indicate suppressed rainfall and hotter-than-normal temperatures through January.

Long-term forecasts indicate that rainfall will gradually transition to average as we head into the March–May season, this is due to a projected shift toward ENSO neutral conditions by early 2026. However, given the severity of the ongoing dry conditions, combined with above-average temperatures that are likely to persist well beyond January, crop, pasture, and surface water recovery remains unlikely.

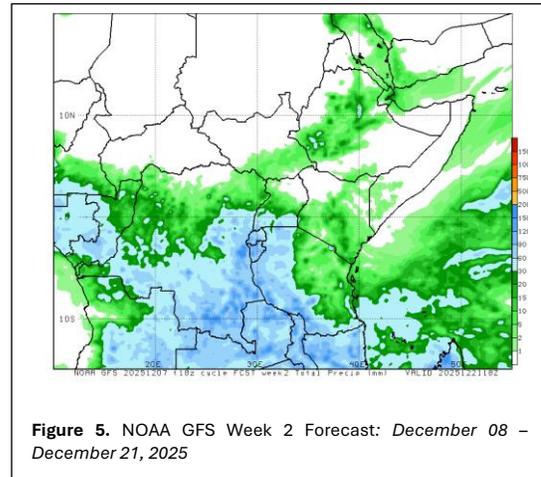
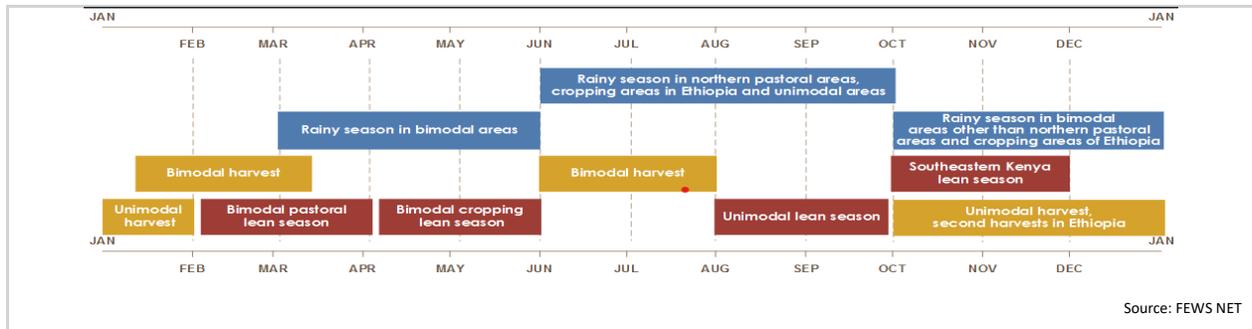


Figure 5. NOAA GFS Week 2 Forecast: December 08 – December 21, 2025

Seasonal Calendar for a Typical Year



Source: FEWS NET

Recommended citation: FEWS NET. East Africa Seasonal Monitor October 2025: Severe OND 2025 Rainfall Deficits and Delayed Seasonal Onset Across the Eastern Horn of Africa

