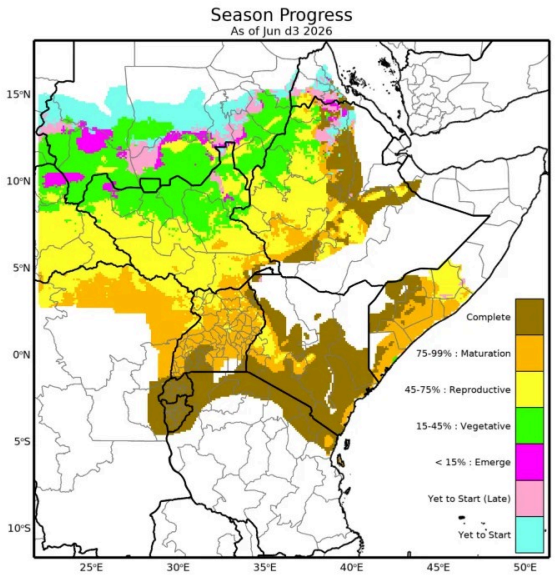
Deepening concerns across East Africa following severe June rainfall deficits and forecast below-average July–September rains

Key Messages

- Harvest has begun across select bimodal regions of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and parts of the Belg cropping areas of Ethiopia.
- Pasture and surface water conditions remain generally favorable across much of pastoral regions of Kenya, however, poor conditions are observed across much of Somalia and southeastern Ethiopia following in season rainfall deficits.
- Severe rainfall deficits have intensified moisture stress across unimodal cropping zones in Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Sudan, and Kiremt rainfall regions of Ethiopia.
- Below-average agricultural production is increasingly likely across unimodal Kenya and Uganda, with reduced harvests also expected in parts of Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and agropastoral regions of northwestern Somalia.
- Strengthening El Niño and a forecast positive Indian Ocean Dipole increase the chances of extreme high rainfall during the October–December season.

Figure 1

Season Progress as of June Dekad 3 2026



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

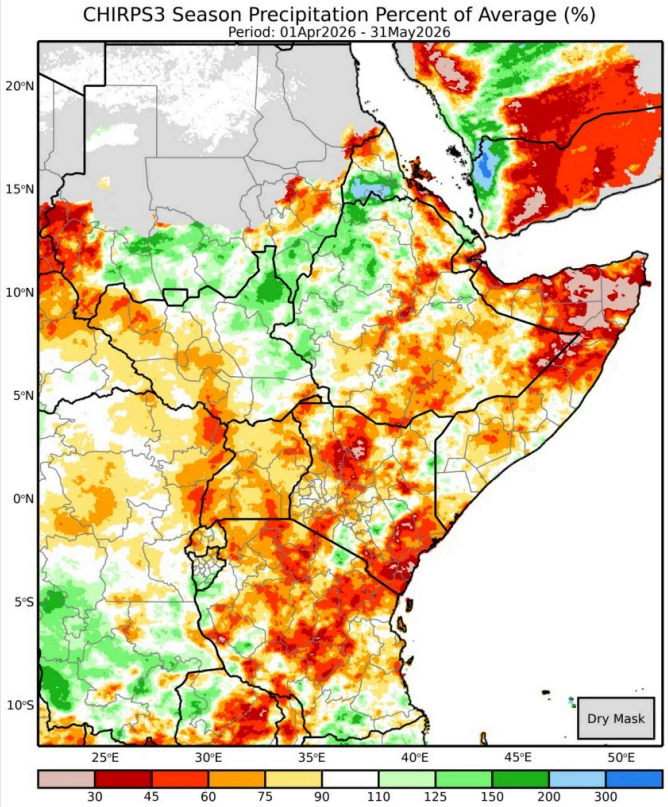
March – May Season

Context: Between March and May, 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 (Karamoja) that extends to September and Kenya (areas of western Kenya) that extends to November; bimodal Kenya and Uganda; Season B rains (mid-February to May) in 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 Uganda.

FEWS NET East Africa
eastafrica@fews.net
fews.net/east-africa

Figure 2

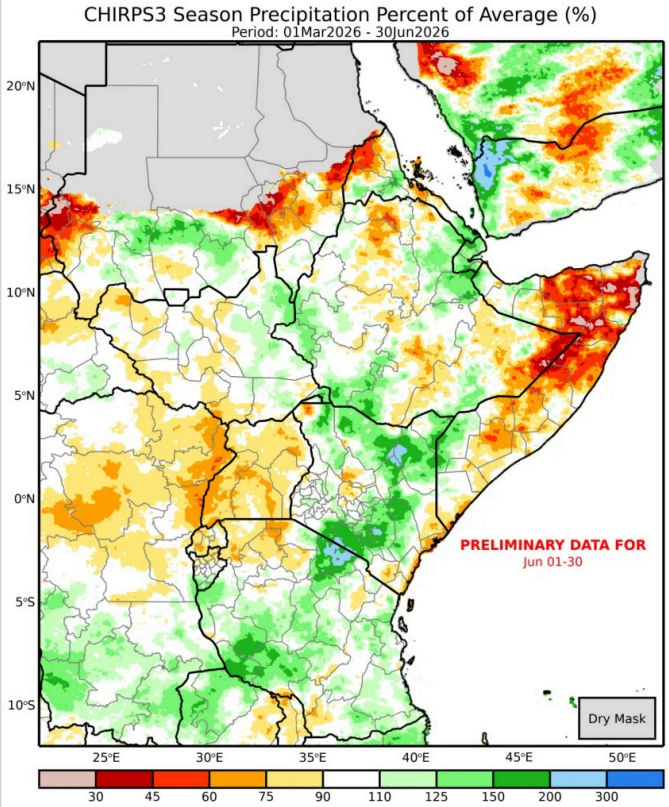
Rainfall Percent of Average (April 01 – May 31) 2026



Source: UCSB/FEWS NET

Figure 3

Rainfall Percent of Average (March 01 – June 30) 2026



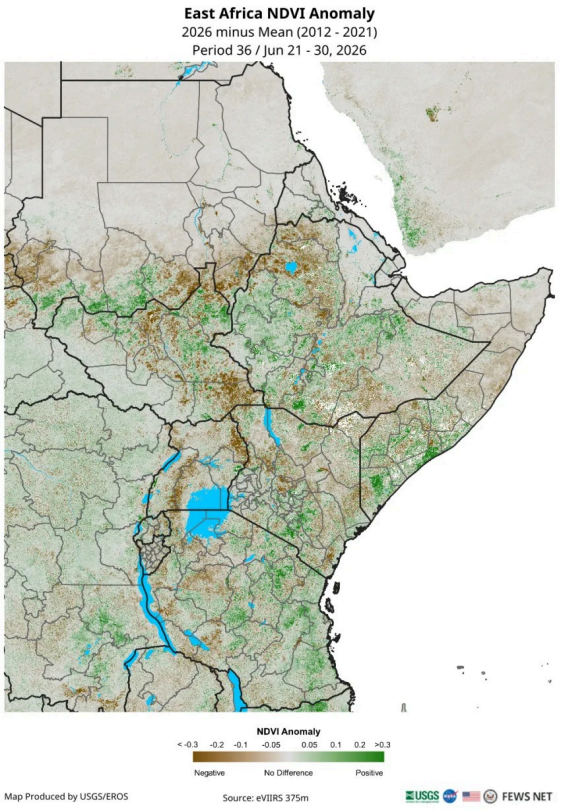
Source: UCSB/FEWS NET

Most early cultivated crops are in reproductive and maturation stages with some regions already harvesting green to fully mature maize crop (Figure 1). This includes select counties in western, southwestern and southeastern Kenya, most of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as the Belg-producing regions of Ethiopia and bimodal regions of southern South Sudan. The current production is expected to be average to below-average across these regions following poor rainfall distribution and a prolonged dry spell in April and May (Figure 2) which occurred during critical crop development stages. Furthermore, Somalia has been the hardest-hit by the poor seasonal rains (Figure 3) with parts of Bay and Bakool regions reporting almost total failure of the maize crop.

Pasture conditions remain generally favourable across most pastoral areas of Kenya, southern Somalia and southeastern Ethiopia following sufficient seasonal rainfall that supported pasture regeneration (Figure 4). Surface water conditions across Kenya are generally average and are expected to sustain throughout the lean period of June–September. However, water conditions in Somalia and southeastern Ethiopia remain of concern as March to May seasonal rains were insufficient to fully replenish surface water resources. Northeastern Somalia experienced the worst conditions in the region based on rainfall deficits of between 30 to 60 percent below average. Observed and forecast hotter-than-normal temperatures since June are likely to further deteriorate water and rangeland resources in southeastern Ethiopia and southern Somalia.

Figure 4

NDVI Anomaly (June 21 – June 30) 2026



Source: USGS/FEWS NET

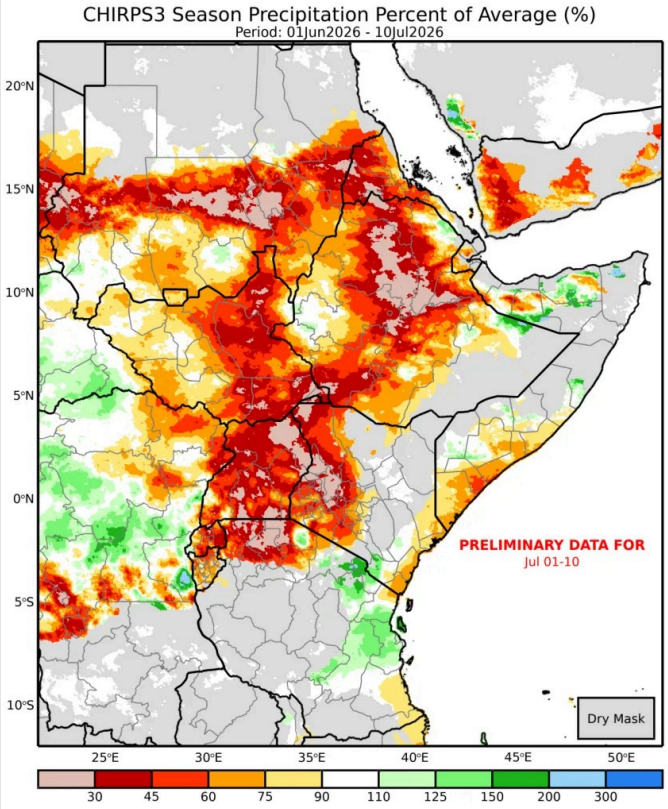
June – September

Context: 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), the northern sector of Somalia and Djibouti; and second rains (July to November) in South Sudan bimodal zone.

Below-average agricultural production is increasingly likely across the unimodal areas of western and North Rift cropping zones of Kenya, including Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru counties which are generally regarded as high production areas. Based on local media **reports**, approximately 50,000 acres of maize crop in Trans Nzoia out of a possible 250,000 is likely to fail due to prolonged in-season dry spells. In Karamoja, Uganda, an exceptionally below average rainfall in April forced farmers to replant. However, persistent below-average rainfall in May and June is expected to lower yields in September. In northwesterSudan, South Sudan and the Kiremt regions of western, central, northern and northeastern Ethiopia, the critical June–September rainfall season has been characterized by an erratic onset. Except for localized areas in western Ethiopia and southern Sudan, June and early July rainfall was below average. Severe deficits were observed in many of these areas with June 1 to July 10 rainfall less than 45 percent of average (Figure 5). The rainfall deficits have severely depleted soil moisture and limited favourable germination and crop establishment. Below-average rains are forecast to persist across much of western and northern East Africa during July.

Figure 5

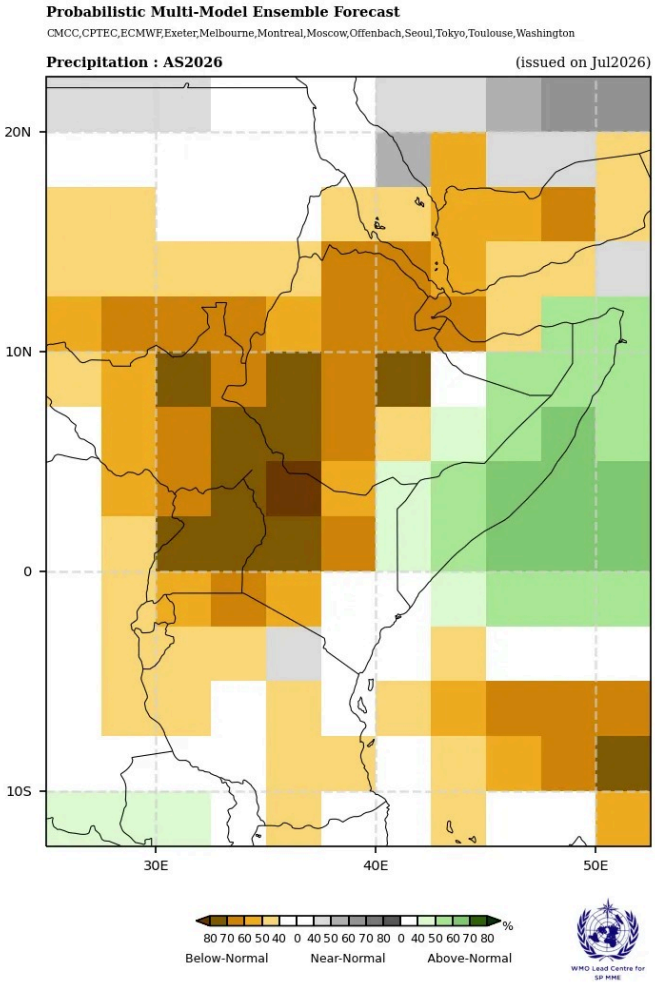
Rainfall Percent of Average (June 01 – July 10) 2026



Source: UCSB/FEWS NET

Figure 6

Seasonal Forecast (August – September) 2026



Source: WMO

El Niño conditions are currently established and are expected to strengthen and persist through January 2027, according to the June 2026 outlook by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center. El Niño conditions typically suppress the June–September rains in western and northern areas of East Africa. According to several multimodel ensemble forecasts, there are high chances of below-average rains persisting through August and September (Figure 6). Temperature is also forecast to be hotter-than-normal during this period. Above-normal temperatures and below-average rainfall are likely to accelerate evapotranspiration and depletion of soil moisture. According to **forecasts** from NASA land surface models, soil moisture is expected to be below average with the largest deficits forecast in western Kenya, northeastern Uganda, southeastern South Sudan, and southwestern and central-northern Ethiopia. Crop development is likely to be negatively impacted leading to crop losses across the June–September production regions. Pasture conditions may also deteriorate, particularly in areas such as northeastern Ethiopia and pastoral regions of northern Somalia.

Parts of western Ethiopia including sections of eastern Gambella and western Oromia have received near-normal rainfall amounts in June and off-season rains in May. Short-term forecasts as of July 10 indicate high chances of average to above-average rains within the next 15 days across Benishangul Gumuz, western Oromia and western Amhara which is likely to improve the soil moisture and support crop development. Overall, prevailing climate conditions and forecasts from physical models indicate uncertain short-term outcomes in western Ethiopia, and so

attention must be paid to developments across these regions. In contrast extreme deficits are likely to continue across much of Ethiopia including eastern Amhara, eastern Oromia, Gambella and the southern region that largely benefit from the June–September rainfall.

October – December

Strengthening El Niño conditions coupled with a forecast for positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), is expected to enhance rainfall during the October–December season generally across most areas of East Africa. The current monthly outlooks indicate rainfall is likely to begin in September across Somalia, eastern Kenya and southeastern Ethiopia. This will bring a much-needed reprieve and is likely to improve soil moisture, replenish water resources, and support pasture regeneration following current dry conditions in most areas. However, extreme rainfall totals and episodic storms will increase the risk of flash floods during the earlier part of the season given that the soils will be hydrophobic following prolonged dry conditions. The risk of riverine flooding downstream is elevated especially along the Juba and Shabelle in Somalia, the Nyando, Athi, and Tana rivers in Kenya. The risk of landslides is also high across susceptible highland areas. Urban flooding is also anticipated across major cities such as Nairobi, Kampala, Mogadishu and Addis Ababa. Enhanced rainfall during the October–December season is likely to spread beyond its typical footprint of eastern East Africa to regions such as western Ethiopia and parts of Sudan and South Sudan.

Recommended citation: FEWS NET. East Africa Seasonal Monitor July 14, 2026: Deepening concerns across East Africa following severe June rainfall deficits and forecast below-average July–September rains, 2026.

Seasonal Monitor

FEWS NET's Seasonal Monitor reports are produced for Central America and the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa, Central Asia, and Somalia every 10-to-30 days during the region's respective rainy season(s). Seasonal Monitors report updates on weather events (e.g., rainfall patterns) and associated impacts on ground conditions (e.g., cropping conditions, pasture and water availability), as well as the short-term rainfall forecast. Find more remote sensing information **here**.