Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Somalia Rainfall Outlook for Gu 2019

Issued: 19 February 2019

Normal 2019 Gu season rainfall expected in most parts of Somalia

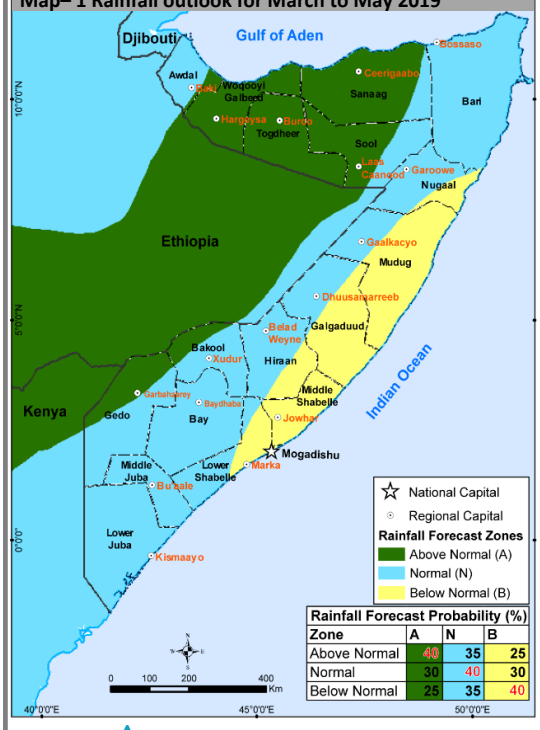
Gu (April-June) is the primary rainy season in Somalia because it is more dominant in terms of quantity and reliability. Approximately 75 percent of the annual rainfall in Somalia is recorded during the *Gu* season. The Gu rains typically start in March/April and ends at different times throughout the country depending on the movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) which is responsible for driving the rainfall. According to the recently issued consensus climate outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa (GHACOF51), the 2019 *Gu* rainy season in Somalia is expected to be near normal to above normal in most areas with warmer than normal temperatures across the whole country. There is increased likelihood of above normal to near normal rains (green shaded areas as shown on Map 1) with 70 percent probability of experiencing above normal to normal rains in Somaliland. The Ethiopian highlands whose rainfall contributes about 90 percent of the river flow in Juba and Shabelle rivers inside Somalia are also expected to record enhanced *Gu* season rains.

The southern parts of Somalia, including large parts of central regions and Puntland will likely receive near normal rainfall (blue shaded areas on Map 1). The coastal and adjacent parts of Nugaal, Mudug, Galgadud, Middle and Lower Shabelle Regions are expected to receive depressed rains with a higher percent probability of below normal to near normal rains (yellow shaded areas on Map 1).

The forecast near normal to above normal rains are expected to boost crop production and replenishment of pasture and water in most parts of the country. Communities, government and partners should take advantage of the forecast rains for seasonal agricultural activities and to harvest rain-water for future use. Flash floods are likely to occur in these regions. Normal to above normal 2019 *Gu* rains will bring relief to many parts of the country which recorded below average rains during the 2018 *Deyr* (October-December) season. The below normal rains forecast in the coastal areas of the central and adjacent northern and southern regions could lead to further and/or faster depletion of pasture and water resources in these regions. Replenishing of the surface water points may be minimal and therefore communities should use the available resources sparingly. These areas are currently experiencing abnormally dry conditions following the poor performance of the 2018 *Deyr* season rainfall. Conflict over the scarce resources cannot be ruled out in these regions.

Riverine flooding along the Juba and Shabelle rivers is also likely given the forecast within the Ethiopian highlands. The areas expected to be affected include middle and lower reaches of the two rivers where there still exist open river banks and weak river embankments.

Map– 1 Rainfall outlook for March to May 2019



Rainfall Forecast Probability (%)			
Zone	A	N	B
Above Normal	40	35	25
Normal	30	40	30
Below Normal	25	35	40

Following below average 2018 *Deyr* season rainfall, there is clearly deterioration in pasture and water availability in northern and central regions. However, dry pasture is still available; deterioration of livestock body condition reported is typical of what usually occurs during the dry/ *Jilaal* (January-March) season; there have been no abnormal livestock migration neither death reported (livestock migration mostly confined to usual migration areas). As the dry/*Jilaal* season progresses, livestock are concentrating around water points. Therefore, drought condition have already developed in some of the worst affected areas in northern Somalia.

Whether the current drought condition deteriorates to a full-fledged drought or improves will depend on the timeliness, amount and distribution of the forthcoming *Gu* season rainfall.

FAO, through SWALIM and its technical partners will keep updating this forecast for shorter lead time periods and share updating information throughout the rainfall season. A list of open river breakages will be shared soon.

SWALIM
Somalia Water and Land Information Management

This update is produced by the: FAO - Somalia Water and Land Information Management—SWALIM Project.
For more information please contact SO-hydro@fao.org or visit http://www.faoswalim.org

FAO SWALIM Technical Partners:
unicef
FSNAU
FEWS NET FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS NETWORK
JRC EUROPEAN COMMISSION

SWALIM is Managed by FAO and Currently Funded by:
UKaid from the British people
AGENZIA ITALIANA PER LA COOPERAZIONE ALLO SVILUPPO
USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC