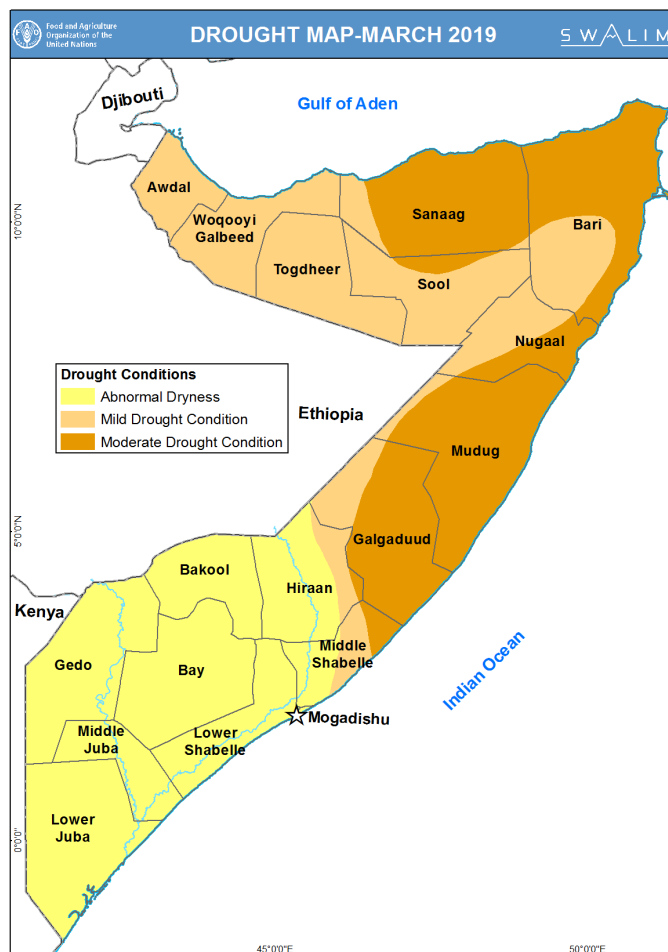




Summary

- The northward movement of the rain bearing rain zone - Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) has been delayed by the existence of cyclonic systems in Mozambican channel thus delaying the onset of rains in the East African countries including Kenya and Somalia.
- More cyclones are anticipated in the South Indian Ocean with Cylone Idai having made landfall while Cyclones Veronica and Joaninha are developing. This may further delay the rains in the country. The systems are believed to reduce the moisture influx into the East African countries.
- Mild to moderate drought conditions are now imminent in many parts of northern Somalia following a sustained dry period due to poor rains during the last Deyr season, southern areas of Somalia are experiencing persistent abnormal dryness
- Water resources and pasture conditions have deteriorated further triggering more livestock migration and increasing competition among pastoralists on the already limited resources.

Map-1: Drought Conditions Map



Situation Update

Sunny and dry weather conditions characterized by higher than average daytime temperatures prevailed over most parts of the country since December 2018. The unusually dry period is as a result of the poor rainfall season in many parts of the country. The amounts of rainfall received during the 2018 Deyr season were not sufficient to sustain pasture through the harsh weather conditions of January to March 2019.

The latest consensus statement from the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF51) indicates greater likelihood of near normal to above normal rainfall in most parts of Somalia between March and May 2019.

This Forecast is likely to have a change owing to the local developments of tropical cyclones in the Indian Ocean which are influencing the current state of weather. Close monitoring is required.

In the areas in northern and central Somalia that have been affected by poor rainfall during the 2018 Deyr (October-December) season, the worst affected areas are currently experiencing mild to moderate drought conditions, leading to severe water shortages and earlier than normal water trucking at high prices. The local authorities in these areas have initiated water tracking activities with Sanaag, Bari, Nuugal and Mudug areas being worst affected by the water shortage.

The Juba and Shabelle river levels are very low at this time of the year. Parts of the middle and lower reaches of the Shabelle River are reportedly dry leaving insufficient flow to support irrigation along the river.

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

Drought Conditions Classification

Abnormal Dryness	Prolonged unusual dryness
Mild Drought Conditions	Prolonged dry period leading to initial stages of water shortages among most communities, declining ground water levels and some water trucking
Moderate Drought Conditions	Crop or pasture losses; water shortages prevalent; increased water trucking; dry berkad and shallow wells; immigration of livestock

Update on the Juba and Shabelle Rivers

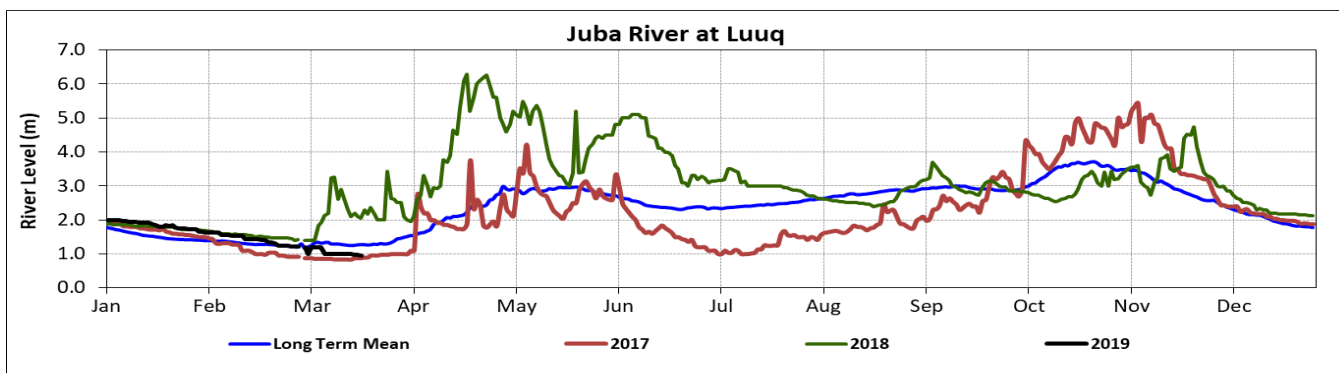
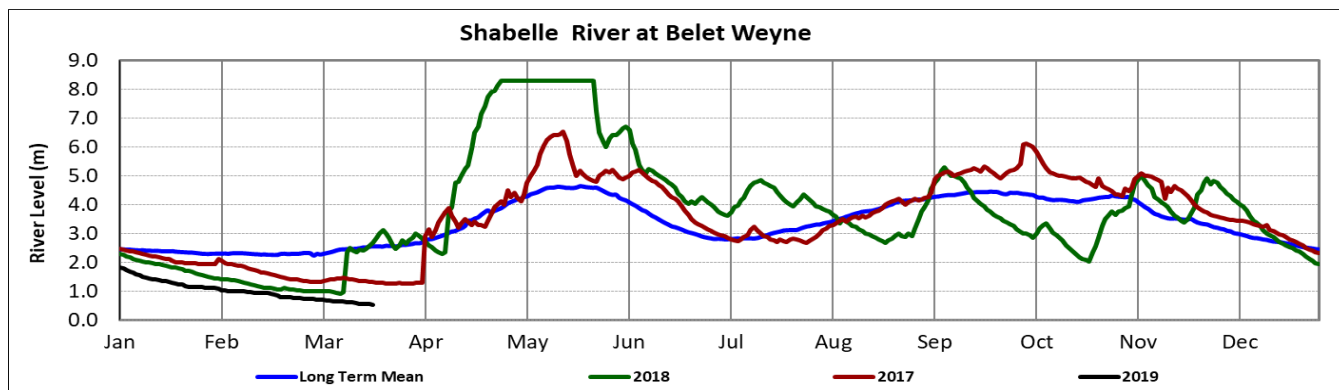
Observed river levels are currently at alarming level during this time of the year and are expected to remain low until the onset of much expected Gu rainy season. The graphs in below show comparison of current and long term average levels for both the Shabelle and Juba Rivers at Belet Weyne and Luuq stations, respectively. The lower areas of the two rivers that depend on irrigated agriculture have been affected seriously by these low levels which are not enough to support irrigated agriculture. Most parts of the Shabelle River are reported to be dry. This now the fourth consecutive January to March period of dry river beds along the river.

The river levels are updated on a daily basis and can be found in this link:

<http://systems.faoso.net/frims>



Dry riverbed at Jowhar along the Shabelle River
Source: WOCCA



Potential Impacts

Water resources and pasture conditions have significantly deteriorated in February, triggering water trucking, increased live-stock migration and increasing water prices, particularly in key pastoral areas. This trend is observed in all pastoral livelihoods in the north and Central (Hawd, Addun, Cowpea Belt, Sool Plateau, Nugaal Valley and Gabi/Dharoor/Karkaar Valley livelihood zones). Water availability in these areas and particularly in Puntland and central areas have deteriorated due to high concentrations of livestock and no replenishment during the *Jilaal* dry season. Similarly, water and pasture declined significantly in Somaliland, with unusual water trucking ongoing in most regions.

Off-season cereal production in Juba riverine areas is also affected by lower than usual soil moisture, hence the production is expected to be low in March 2019. Similarly, irrigated farms in Hiran and Shabelle regions are also affected by low river levels and high tractor hour costs, which impeded cultivation of cereals and cash crops in *Jilaal* season.

Dry and hot conditions are expected to continue across most parts of the country during this dry *Jilaal* (January-March) season. The negative trends are not expected to reverse until the arrival of Gu season rainfall in April 2019.

Reduced riverine irrigation is also expected along the two rivers due to reduced river flow which cannot support pump irrigation during the *Jilaal* period .

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