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WFP: Topic #1 - Climate-Induced Hunger Crisis in Somalia

YUNMUN XXXVI

Each drought in Somalia deepens one unrelenting question: how can one survive when even the land itself has stopped providing? From where can one feed their children when there is nothing to give? Somalia's hunger crisis is one of the largest hunger crises in the world today; yet fewer than one in ten people in need are receiving food assistance due to a lack of funding.¹

This is not the first time the region has experienced such hunger. In 2022, a drought-produced famine was declared in Somalia, which has been recorded as the longest in the region. This climate-induced famine caused widespread crop failure and left millions facing starvation. As a result of WFP's intervention, this famine was narrowly averted through humanitarian-led efforts. Despite this past endeavor, the famine has persisted with recurrent droughts and floods, displacing families and heightening these dire needs of food and shelter.² Currently, out of a population of 19.3 million, 4.6 million Somalis are dealing with food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+), and 1.8 million children under the age of five are at risk of acute malnutrition.³

But behind the starvation itself lies a multitude of critical issues facing the Somali people: climate shocks, insurgencies, and displacement. Focusing first on climate shocks, the country has endured recurring droughts that have devastated crops and livestock, which has stripped families of their resources. To make matters worse, these prolonged dry spells were followed by severe floods in 2023-2024, which destroyed farmland and degraded soil, making recovery even more difficult.⁴ As a result of these climate-induced disasters, harvests have been reduced, food prices remain high, and millions of Somalis continue to face extreme vulnerability.⁵

¹ [WFP to slash emergency food assistance to Somalia over funding gap](#)

² [Somalia | World Food Programme](#)

³ [ibid.](#)

⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/drought-conflict-and-high-food-prices-risk-pushing-44-million-people-hunger-federal-government-somalia-and-un-warn>

⁵ [Drought, conflict and high food prices risk pushing 4.4 million people into hunger, Federal Government of Somalia and UN warn | OCHA](#)

A second major factor driving Somalia's tragic hardships is the cycle of prolonged conflict that has persisted since 1977. From the Ogaden War with Ethiopia (1977-78) to the civil war and state collapse (1988-91), the era of warlordism in the 1990s, the rise of Islamist movements in the 2000s, and the ongoing Al-Shabaab insurgency since 2007, Somalia has endured decades of unrest. These continuous waves of violence have diverted attention away from basic needs, restricted access to essential resources, disrupted agriculture and markets, and made humanitarian operations both dangerous and unpredictable.⁶

Both climate shocks and rising insurgencies are significant contributors to the hunger crisis in Somalia. As a result, Somalia now faces one of the world's largest internal displacement crises.

Right now, WFP delivers life-saving food assistance in Somalia through rations, cash transfers, and structured nutrition for vulnerable groups, while simultaneously assisting farmers, retailers, and governments, strengthening livelihoods, and future resilience. Beyond emergency aid, WFP extends to policy advice, infrastructure projects, anticipatory action, and essential logistics such as the UN Humanitarian Air Service and nationwide supply networks.

What happens in Somalia is not isolated; it is a warning of how climate change, conflict, and fragile governance can combine to push millions to the brink of famine.

Some questions to engage in your research:

- ❖ What measures can WFP implement to strengthen Somalia's resilience against climate shocks that undermine food security in Somalia?
- ❖ Does your country face challenges from insurgent or extremist groups, and what strategies have proven effective in addressing them or quelling these uprisings?
- ❖ What steps should be taken to support displaced Somalis and reduce the risk of further displacement caused by conflict and climate shocks?
- ❖ Beyond emergency aid, what long-term strategies should be prioritized to help Somalia break the cycle of hunger, conflict, and displacement?

⁶ Hoff, Samuel B. *Somalia Conflict*. Research Starters, EBSCO, 2022.
<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/somalia-conflict>.

Keep in mind that these questions are meant to guide your preparation, not limit it. A few important reminders:

1. You are representing your country's position, not your personal views (though I'd be glad to hear your own perspectives outside of session!).
2. Use reliable, credible sources to support your research.
3. All papers will be submitted through Turnitin, and plagiarism and AI usage is strictly prohibited.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns as we approach the conference, please don't hesitate to reach out. I would be so happy to help in any way, or even if you just want to introduce yourself, I would also love to hear from you! You may reach me at afried21@mail.yu.edu.

I am very much looking forward to hearing all of your creative ideas and meeting all of you in person at the conference! Let's make it the best one yet.

Warmest regards,

Ayelet Friedman

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