

SOMALIA GU 2026 CLIMATE OUTLOOK UPDATE

Issued on 3 March 2026

This is an update to the Gu 2026 Climate Outlook Bulletin issued on 7 February 2026. It incorporates National Climate Outlook Forum (NCOF) outcomes, latest IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) rainfall forecast, Post Deyr IPC Analyses released on 24 February 2026, and community feedback received in mid-February 2026

Highlights

- Updated outlook indicates improved rainfall prospects in parts of southern, central and northern Somalia, but localized below-normal risks persist in Bari and parts of Bay and Woqooyi Galbeed, with high spatial variability
- Above-normal temperatures are forecast across most of the country; however, normal to below-normal temperatures are expected over Gebiley district and southern Hargeisa (Woqooyi Galbeed), parts of Owdweyne (Togdheer), and central highland areas of Ceerigaabo (Sanaag). While heat will intensify drought impacts nationally, these localized cooler conditions may moderate evapotranspiration and slightly ease drought stress in those highland areas
- Recent food security analyses signal a marked deterioration in household conditions during Feb–Mar 2026, reflecting cumulative drought impacts, water shortages, livestock losses, and weakened coping capacity
- Even under a near-average Gu scenario (Apr–Jun), only partial improvement is anticipated, indicating that rainfall gains may not translate into significant recovery
- Gu 2026 should therefore be treated as a stabilization window—not a recovery season, requiring sustained drought response, flexible anticipatory action, and close monitoring

Updated Gu 2026 Rainfall Outlook

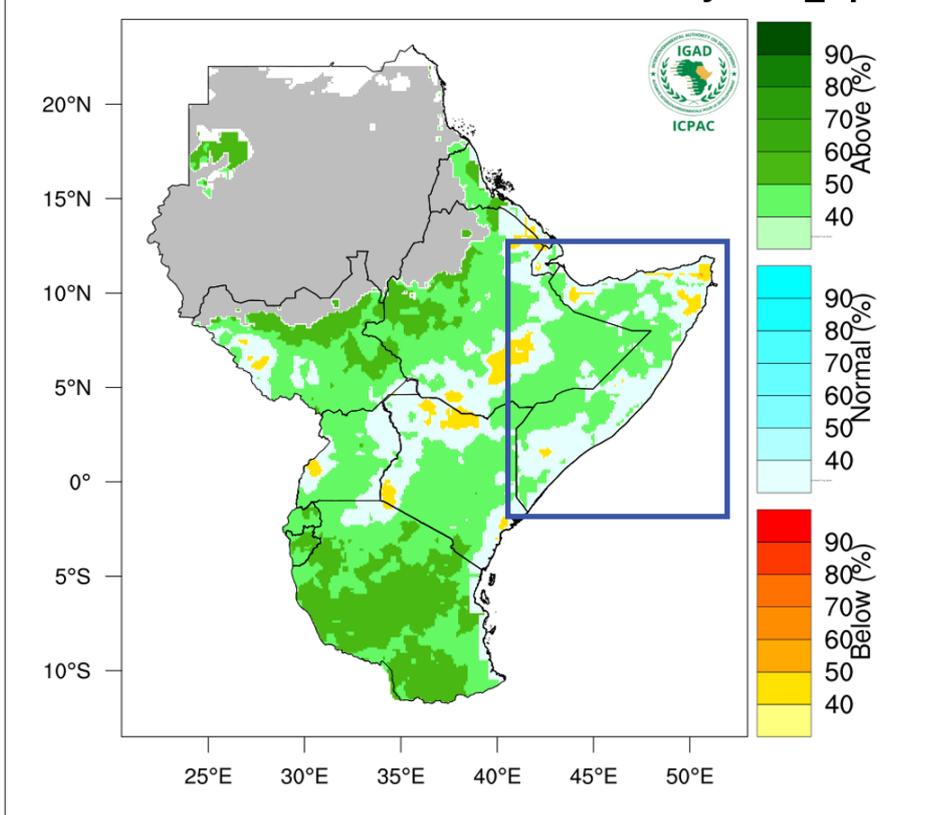
Keeping in mind more uncertainties related to forecasts for Gu season rainfall compared to Deyr, the updated rainfall outlook for the 2026 Gu season (Map 1) indicates a shift toward higher probabilities of above-normal rainfall in some parts of the country, while below-normal conditions remain likely in localized northern and northeastern areas.

Above Normal Rainfall: The following areas are expected to receive above-normal rainfall: Lower Juba, Bakool, Hiraan, Nugaal, Togdheer, Sool, and Sanaag regions, Dollow and Luuq districts in Gedo region, and Zeylac district in Awdal region

Below Normal: There is a high chance that rainfall over the following areas will be below normal: Bari region, and parts of Sanaag region (coastal parts of Laasqoray district), and parts of Woqooyi Galbeed region (central parts of both Gebiley and Hargeisa districts) and Bay region (Dinsoor district)

Near-Normal Rainfall: Elsewhere, near-normal rainfall remains most likely, particularly across much of south and central Somalia

Rainfall Probabilistic Forecast for Mar – May 2026_Update



Map 1: Updated Gu 2026 rainfall probabilistic forecast for Somalia

Implication: While prospects for improved rainfall have increased in parts of Jubaland, Gedo, Bakool, Hiraan, and some northern regions, significant spatial variability and heightened chances of prolonged dry spells could still lead to the persistence of drought in some areas.

Gu 2026 Temperature Outlook

Temperature forecasts (*Map 2*) indicate that **above-normal temperatures** are likely across most of Somalia during the Gu 2026 season. Elevated temperatures will accelerate depletion of pasture and water resources, increase crop water demand, intensify livestock heat stress and mortality risk, and delay drought recovery even where rainfall is near-normal or above-normal.

However, **localized normal to below-normal temperatures** are forecast over: Gebiley district and southern half of Hargeisa district (Woqooyi Galbeed region); Parts of Owdweyne district (Togdheer region) and Central highland areas of Ceerigaabo district (Sanaag region). Over these areas, relatively cooler conditions may: reduce evapotranspiration rates and slightly improve soil moisture retention thus supporting better pasture response if rainfall performs favorably

Nevertheless, these localized cooler anomalies are not sufficient to offset broader national heat-driven drought risks

Intensification of Drought Impacts

Despite emerging above-normal rainfall probabilities in some areas during Gu season, drought conditions are worsening during the January to March 2026 harsh and dry Jilal period. Accordingly, current humanitarian distress signals remain severe and widespread, particularly in southern and central Somalia

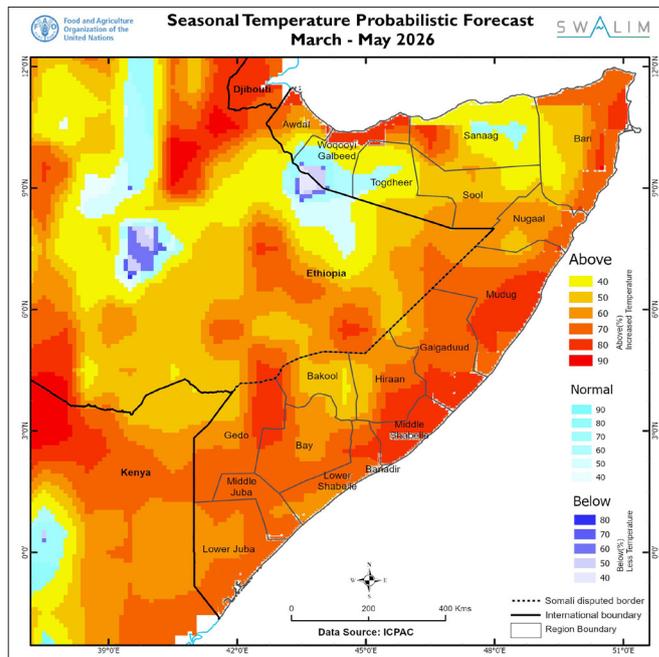
The following are key reported impacts:

- Widespread livestock deaths and diseases (CCPP, FMD, cowpox, botulism)
- Severe water shortages in Galgaduud, Mudug, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Bay, Gedo, Lower Juba, Puntland, and Somaliland
- Drying wells (El-Gal, Hiraan; Lasanod, Sool; Sahil region)
- IDPs in Daryel and Kaharey (Dollow) reporting loss of livestock, food and water scarcity
- Conflict compounding drought impacts (Baidoa, Galgaduud)
- Only isolated light rainfall reported (e.g., Guriel)

Implication: Drought conditions remain acute, with exhausted coping capacity. Even where above-normal rainfall is forecast, recovery will not be immediate due to cumulative impacts. These include herd size reduction due to livestock death and abnormal off-take, low livestock births and milk availability, limited capacity among poor households to take advantage of Gu season rainfall due to lack of seeds for Gu season planting, etc.

Updated Risk Interpretation

Drought Recovery Outlook: Above-normal rainfall in Lower Juba, Gedo, Bakool, and Hiraan could support localized pasture regeneration and crop recovery. However, in these areas, partial recovery will depend on onset timing, rainfall distribution, and dry spell behavior. Areas forecast for below-normal rainfall (Bari, Laasqoray, Dinsoor) face continued drought risk



Map 2: Gu 2026 temperature probabilistic forecast for Somalia

In localized areas of Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, and Sanaag where normal to below-normal temperatures are forecast, recovery prospects may be comparatively more favorable if rainfall is well distributed. Reduced evaporative stress in these zones could support rangeland regeneration. However, recovery remains dependent on rainfall timing and distribution

Dual Risk Scenario Strengthened: Above-normal rainfall in parts of Lower Juba, Gedo, and Hiraan may increase the risk of riverine flooding in late April particularly if the forecast heavy rainfall is observed in the upper catchments in Ethiopia. Moreover, there is a risk of flash flooding in the degraded and prone landscapes. Meanwhile, northeastern coastal areas may see continued hydrological stress

Humanitarian Baseline Remains Degraded: The updated rainfall outlook does not change the critical starting point: Severe water stress, high livestock mortality, declining river levels, and rising food prices. IPC analyses indicate that 6.5 million Somalis face IPC 3+, including 2 million in IPC 4 in February-March 2026, driven by worsening drought impacts, high food and water prices, conflict/displacement, and reduced humanitarian assistance. With near-average but highly variable Gu 2026 rains, Apr–Jun 2026 conditions may bring only partial and lagged improvement

Sectoral Implications

Agriculture

- In above-normal zones: opportunity for crop recovery but monitor flood and erosion risks
- In below-normal zones (Bari, Dinsoor): high crop failure risk
- Maintain staggered planting and seed timing advisories

Livestock

- Immediate veterinary response required due to disease outbreaks
- Water and fodder support critical in Galgadud, Mudug, Bay, Bari, and IDP-hosting areas
- Above-normal rainfall may improve pasture, but heat stress and disease risks remain high, and livestock already weakened due to drought could die in large numbers due to hypothermia

Water & WASH

- Borehole functionality critical, especially in Puntland & Somaliland
- Continue water trucking in severe hotspots
- Monitor river gauges closely from late April onward

Key Message for Decision-Makers:

- The updated rainfall outlook shows improved rainfall prospects in some regions, but localized below-normal risks persist in the northeast and Bay
- Heat remains a major countrywide risk multiplier with IPC projections showing severe deterioration in Mar with only partial easing Apr–Jun even if Gu is near-average. However, localized cooler conditions in some northern highland areas may modestly moderate drought stress if rainfall performs well
- Given the severe drought baseline and ongoing livestock and water crisis reported across the country, anticipatory action for further deterioration, sustained drought response, and scenario-based planning remain essential
- Prepare for further deterioration where dry conditions persist
- Gu 2026 offers potential for partial drought recovery in some regions, but recovery will be uneven, fragile, and highly dependent on rainfall performance and timely interventions

Nutrition & Protection

- Gu season represents a peak season, both in terms of disease outbreak, childhood illnesses, and acute malnutrition.
- Warmer conditions and Gu rainfall may increase waterborne disease and malaria risks in riverine/low-lying areas. IPC projections anticipate increased malnutrition admissions and disease outbreaks, with higher risk in drought-affected and displaced populations
- There is risk of deterioration despite any rainfall improvement because of constrained coverage of food, nutrition, health and WASH assistance because of reduced funding

SWALIM is a multi-donor project managed by FAO and currently funded by The European Union, UKaid, SDC, GCF, The World Bank, Canada and Government of Sweden

