

Debate Pack

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Hunger in the East and Horn of Africa

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1

Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on hunger in the East and Horn of Africa is scheduled for Tuesday 25 April 2023, from 9:30-11:00am. The debate will be led by Patrick Grady MP.

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Background

The Horn of Africa is experiencing [one of the longest and most severe droughts on record](#). The region has experienced five consecutive failed rainy seasons, and the World Food Programme has [warned of the risk of famine](#) in parts of Somalia if the March to June 2023 rainy season also fails. [Unprecedented floods are also affecting South Sudan](#). Humanitarian agencies warn another failed rainy season “[would have devastating consequences for communities](#)” and the “sheer scale, severity, and magnitude of suffering” means the region will take many years to fully recover.

The drought has [weakened people’s ability to grow crops, raise livestock and buy food](#). Conflict and insecurity have also contributed to the humanitarian situation, both from localised violence and food and energy price increases as a result of the war in Ukraine. Competition over scarce resources may also be a driver of intercommunal violence. Internal displacement has separated people from their land, further limiting opportunities to produce food, while also increasing demand on humanitarian agencies. Millions are displaced internally and across borders. UNHCR, the UN’s refugee agency, is [appealing for \\$137 million to support populations affected by the drought](#).

The House of Lords Library published an In Focus article on [projections of a famine in 2023 in the Horn of Africa](#), in January 2023, from which some of the material below is drawn.

What is famine?

To determine the level of food (in)security and declare a famine, certain conditions need to be met.

The [International Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#) is an international framework used to assess the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition. The IPC contains five phases of hunger crisis, ranging from phase 1 (minimal/none) to phase 5 (catastrophe/famine). Each phase has its own set of criteria, with urgent action required for phases 3 to 5. [The box illustrates the IPC phases and associated criteria](#).

In this framework, [famine occurs when at least 20% of the population in a given area face extreme food shortages](#), more than 30% are suffering from acute malnutrition, and at least two in every 10,000 people die every day from hunger.

The World Food Programme and other agencies will often cite IPC estimates for the numbers of people experiencing or likely to experience high levels of acute food insecurity.

The five phases of the International Food Security Phase Classification system		
Phase name	Technical description	Priority response objectives
Phase 1 Minimal/None	Households are able to meet essential food and non-food needs without engaging in atypical and unsustainable strategies to access food and income	Action required to build resilience and for disaster risk reduction
Phase 2 Stressed	Households have minimally adequate food consumption but are unable to afford some essential non-food expenditures without engaging in stress-coping strategies	Action required for disaster risk reduction and to protect livelihoods
Phase 3 Crisis	Households either have food consumption gaps that are reflected by high or above-usual acute malnutrition or are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies.	URGENT ACTION REQUIRED to protect livelihoods and reduce food consumption gaps
Phase 4 Emergency	Households either have large food consumption gaps which are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality or are able to mitigate large food consumption gaps but only by employing emergency livelihood strategies and asset liquidation.	URGENT ACTION REQUIRED to save lives and livelihoods
Phase 5 Catastrophe/ Famine	Households have an extreme lack of food and/or other basic needs even after full employment of coping strategies. Starvation, death, destitution and extremely critical acute malnutrition levels are evidence. For Famine Classification, an area needs to have extreme critical levels of acute malnutrition and mortality.	URGENT ACTION REQUIRED to revert or prevent widespread death and total collapse of livelihoods

The five phases of the International Food Security Phase Classification system

(Source: The International Food Security Phase Classification Global Partners, '[Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Technical Manual Version 3.1](#)', August 2021)

2.1

Five consecutive failed rainy seasons

[Rainfall in Africa is concentrated in two rainy seasons](#): one in March to May, and one in October to December. Analysis by NASA's earth observatory shows that a combination of human-induced warming, Indian Ocean sea surface temperatures, and La Niña have contributed to consecutive dry rainy seasons. This is reportedly [the longest and most severe drought on record](#) for the region.

This debate is being held during the sixth consecutive rainy season (March to May 2023).

In February 2023 the [World Meteorological Organisation forecast below-normal rainfall in most parts of the region](#). The WMO said should this happen, it would be “unprecedented sixth poor season for the worst hit countries – Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia”. This warning was echoed in a [joint alert by meteorological agencies and humanitarian partners](#), including the WMO, issued on 16 February 2023 of the need for immediate humanitarian assistance in the Horn of Africa. The alert also warned of the possibility of heavy rainfall later in the year, which could add additional shocks such as flash floods and water-borne diseases.

2.2

Countries affected by hunger in East Africa

Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan are the most affected countries in the Horn of Africa. The [IPC warns there is a risk of famine in some areas of Somalia](#) between April and June 2023.

The World Health Organisation estimates 46 million people are in IPC phase 3 (crisis) or above across seven countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. In a funding appeal issued in March 2023, the [WHO called for \\$178 million to support humanitarian assistance](#) in 2023.

Much of the following is taken from IPC country forecasts. These figures are used in a [Horn of Africa drought situation appeal](#) by the UNHCR, published on 28 February 2023, and by the World Food Programme in their publications on the region.

Somalia

The World Food Programme warns [Somalia faces “catastrophic hunger”](#). The IPC [estimates 223,000 people could be in IPC phase 5](#) (catastrophe) in the most affected areas across Somalia through the middle of 2023. The IPC warns that while projected famine in Baidoa and Burhakaba districts between October and December 2022 was averted, there is still a [strong possibility of famine between April and June 2023](#) (PDF) if the next rainy seasons fails, if humanitarian assistance is not sustained and conflict intensifies.

Ethiopia

[Millions of people remain in need of food assistance](#) in the northern regions of Tigray, Afar and Amhara following a two-year conflict (November 2020 to November 2022). Many more are affected by drought in the southern Somali region. Across the country, [nearly 12 million people are facing severe hunger](#) due to drought.

Kenya

Kenya declared a national disaster in September 2021 because of the drought. The World Food Programme [estimates 3.5 million people are in urgent need of food assistance](#), with the drought resulting in close to 2.4 million livestock deaths. The IPC warns of a “likely unprecedented deterioration in Kenya’s food security situation”, with a 43% increase in population in IPC phase 3 or above in February 2023 compared to October to December 2022; an estimated 4.4 million people are facing IPC phase 3 or above. Over a quarter of these people live in Kenya’s arid and semi-arid lands areas. The IPC says “[urgent action is required to reduce food gaps, protect their livelihoods, and prevent and treat acute malnutrition](#)”.

Food insecurity in Kenya is [primarily driven by a fifth successive below-average rainy season](#), resulting in below-average crop production, poor livestock conditions and higher exposure to livestock disease.

Sudan

The ongoing unrest and insecurity in Sudan could affect people’s access to food. The World Food Programme has [temporarily suspended operations in the country](#) after three staff members were killed in clashes on 16 April.

Andrew Mitchell, the Minister for Development and Africa, condemned the attacks in an [an oral statement on Sudan](#) in the House of Commons on 17 April 2023.

The situation in Sudan remains fluid, information in this briefing is correct as of the time of writing.

The World Food Programme [estimates 15.8 million people are food insecure](#) in Sudan. The [price of staple goods has increased by over 150% in 2022](#).

South Sudan

The World Food Programme [estimates over two-thirds of the population – over 7.7 million people – are facing crisis](#) or worse levels of hunger. The WFP says this surpasses the number seen at the height of the civil war.

The WFP says that [parts of South Sudan are experiencing “an unprecedented flooding crisis”](#) while other parts grapple with “devastating drought”.

2.3

Responses and humanitarian appeals

In November 2022 a group of 16 organisations, including the WHO, UNHCR and IPC, issued an [immediate call to action to help vulnerable communities in the Horn of Africa](#) (PDF). At the time, they estimated nearly 21 million to be

highly food insecure (IPC phase 3 and above). They also warned that regardless of the next season's rain "recovery from a drought of this magnitude will take years".

The same organisations issued a further call on 16 February 2023, describing the Horn of Africa as "[facing an unprecedented three-year drought](#)" (PDF) with another forecasted poor rainy season as likely to have "devastating consequences for communities."

The [International Development Committee heard from regional experts on hunger in the Horn of Africa](#) in November 2022. Michael Dunford, the regional director for the World Food Programme, told the committee at the time that without further action from the UK and the international community, there will be famine in the Horn of Africa and "[people will die at levels that we have not seen in recent history.](#)"

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Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[UK spends three times amount of overseas aid in Britain than in Africa](#)

The Independent
Sam Blewett
5 April 2023

[Horn of Africa hunger emergency: '129,000 looking death in the eyes'](#)

UN News
10 March 2023

[22 million people at risk of hunger in horn of Africa due to drought](#)

Africa News
31 January 2023

[Former development secretaries urge Sunak to increase east Africa aid amid drought](#)

The Guardian
Patrick Wintour
6 December 2022

[Hunger has taken hold across Africa. We need a new approach to tackling its causes](#)

The Guardian
President Alassane Ouattara
5 December 2022

[Horn of Africa drought places 22 million people at risk of starvation, says UN](#)

The Guardian
22 August 2022

[Famine: Everything You Need to Know](#)

Global Citizen
Tess Lowery
13 July 2022

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Press releases

[Foreign Secretary sees UK aid making real difference in Ethiopia](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

8 December 2022

Over 1 million Ethiopians have been supported since April 2021 with £90 million of UK aid.

[UK Minister for Development visits Somalia and commits vital UK aid in response to the growing risk of famine.](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

2 December 2022

UK announces urgent support to Somali people facing famine.

[UK announces humanitarian assistance for 150,000 women and children suffering drought and conflict in Ethiopia](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

19 October 2022

A new £14 million UK funding package is expected to reach up to 150,000 people with comprehensive health, water sanitation, hygiene and nutrition services.

[Humanitarian crisis in East Africa: Minister Ford statement](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

22 July 2022

Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, made a statement on the humanitarian crisis in East Africa.

[UK steps up support as famine looms in Somalia](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

26 April 2022

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford announced a new £25 million aid package for Somalia which will support over a million people battling drought across the country.

[New \\$10 million UK support to tackle impact of drought in Somalia](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

17 January 2022

The funding is expected to support almost 500,000 people in Somalia to access clean water and afford food supplies.

5

PQs

Horn of Africa: Migration

03 Apr 2023 | HL6645

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent trends in population migration in the Horn of Africa, given the famine in that region.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Across East Africa levels of displacement are increasing due to the humanitarian impacts of conflict and climate change. For example, the International Organisation for Migration estimate that, in 2022, 2.8 million people were displaced by drought across Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Armed violence continues to cause significant displacement including of 2.2 million refugees from South Sudan who are currently hosted in the region.

East Africa: Malnutrition

29 Mar 2023 | 170637

Asked by: Margaret Ferrier

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to help tackle malnutrition in East Africa, in the context of commitments made in the Integrated Review Refresh 2023, published in March 2023.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The 2023 Integrated Review (IR) Refresh builds on existing policy, including for East Africa as set out in the IR 2021. IR 2021 provided a comprehensive articulation of the UK's national security and international policy in the context of a world moving towards greater competition and multipolarity. The IR Refresh published in March 2023 sets out the continuing priority the UK places on engagement with Africa and elsewhere.

The UK's humanitarian support in East Africa, totalling at least £156 million this financial year, is providing millions of people with essential services and supplies to help tackle malnutrition and other concerns. The UK's work in East Africa will be a key part of the campaign referenced in the IR Refresh to improve global food security and nutrition. We will increase the availability, affordability and quality of malnutrition treatment and prevention products to do this. Efforts to develop anticipatory action on famine risk and resilience

building are other components the IR Refresh that the UK will progress in Africa to help address undernutrition.

Kenya: Droughts

28 Mar 2023 | HL6474

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what support they are providing to Kenya to alleviate the effects of famine caused by drought in that country.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In response to the ongoing drought in Kenya, 30,500 children have received life-saving nutritional assistance due to the UK's support. UK supported programmes have also reached over half a million people in Kenya in drought-prone areas. Programmes such as the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) are bolstering the use of cash-based safety nets and have had a demonstrable impact in mitigating some of the worst effects of the drought.

Hunger Crisis in East Africa

14 Mar 2023 | 729 c677-679

Asked by: Nick Smith

What recent discussions he has had with international partners on the hunger crisis in east Africa.

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

East Africa currently represents the world's largest and most severe humanitarian crisis. We have allocated £156 million in life-saving aid across the region this financial year.

Asked by: Nick Smith

Oxfam estimates that one person is likely to die every 36 seconds in east Africa owing to food insecurity, but the "Integrated Review Refresh", published yesterday, failed to acknowledge this unfolding crisis. Drought and famine have displaced nearly 2 million people in Ethiopia and Somalia recently. What further action can the Government take to support people on the ground and ensure that they can return home safely?

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I am sure that when the hon. Gentleman has time to study yesterday's "Integrated Review Refresh" in detail, he will see that it contains much to be welcomed in respect of the future of Britain's international development leadership. However, he is right to talk about the intense humanitarian needs that exist in the area that he has mentioned. In Ethiopia we are helping to

deliver humanitarian support to 8 million people, alongside efforts to promote water conservation. In Sudan, £320,000 vulnerable people are receiving food support thanks to British assistance. In South Sudan, 200,000 are receiving emergency food and nutrition, and in Somalia—which I visited in December—4.4 million people have received water, sanitation and hygiene support from Britain since 2018, and 3.2 million have received emergency food. The hon. Gentleman can therefore rest assured that we are absolutely on the case, and are doing everything we can to support the international effort to counter what may well be the fifth year of drought.

Asked by: Mike Kane

The £156 million of aid to which the Minister referred is five times less than the amount provided by the UK Government six years ago to deal with a milder crisis. In a week when we are talking about displaced people, we are facing an exodus of biblical proportions in east Africa. What more can the Government do to help those communities to stay in their homes?

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The hon. Gentleman is right, in that the aims of British development policy are to help people to remain in their own homes and be safe and secure and, indeed, prosperous. What we are seeing in the horn of Africa is an immense crisis of extraordinary proportions to which the whole international community must respond, not only with money but with skill and expertise, and British leadership is at the forefront of that.

Asked by: Sir James Duddridge

There is much talk about the deaths on the battlefield in Ukraine, but what assessment has the Department made of the impact of grain prices caused by grain not going into east Africa from Ukraine? It is quite possible—and I should be interested in testing this assertion—that more people have died in east Africa as a result of the war in Ukraine than have died within the confines of that country.

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I cannot comment on the hon. Gentleman's last point, but he is right to suggest that, as a result of Putin's illegal brutality and invasion of Ukraine, there have been disruptions to food supplies in the Sahel in particular, but also in east Africa. Those disruptions are causing rising inflation and food shortages, and Putin stands condemned for the effect of his actions in that respect as well as every other.

Asked by: Maggie Throup

I refer the House to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of visiting Kenya and meeting students who described to me graphically the impact that drought caused by climate change is having on their lives and on their food supply. That is due to failed crops and boreholes that are drying up, but it is also having an impact on their education. What more does my right hon. Friend think can be done not just to address the current crisis, but to introduce mitigation measures in the longer term so that climate change does not have such a drastic impact on those communities?

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We discuss resilience and climate adaptation frequently with the Kenyan Government. I was there in December. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary was also there and he spoke to President Ruto. My hon. Friend may rest assured that our relationship with Kenya, which is extremely close, deals not only with humanitarian, trade and investment issues but with drought and the other issues she has raised.

Asked by: Ms Lyn Brown

Across east Africa, 48 million people are facing crisis levels of hunger, yet east Africa has been taken out of the integrated review. Even the Minister's own colleagues understand that the fundamental issues in east Africa are climate adaptation and real partnership. What are the Government going to do to address the fundamental causes of this cycle of crises?

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The hon. Lady is wrong about it being taken out of the IR, and if she has the chance this weekend to study it in detail, she will see that that is the case, but she is right to say that an estimated 72 million people will require humanitarian assistance in 2023 due to conflict, drought and flooding. On all those issues, Britain is working with its allies across the international community to do everything we can to stop it, recognising that this is the fifth consecutive season of failed rains across the horn of Africa.

[East Africa: Humanitarian Situation](#)

09 Feb 2023 | 137755

Asked by: Ms Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine's capacity to co-ordinate the civil society and multilateral response to famine in East Africa; and what assessment he has made of potential steps to help improve the Task Force's capacity to manage a co-ordinated response in East Africa.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is committed to working with our partners to mobilise international action to avert famine in East Africa. The High-Level Task Force (HLTF) on Preventing Famine has advocated for famine prevention resources and improved access to people in need. We are working with partners to explore ways the HLTF can be reinvigorated to address the risk of famine.

Sahel: Malnutrition

24 Jan 2023 | 125297

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what estimate he has made of the number of (a) adults and (b) children at risk of preventable malnutrition-linked death in the Sahel.

Answering member: Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In 2023, over 25,000 people in the Sahel are expected to face famine conditions, and close to 1 million people are expected to face emergency levels of food insecurity which is one step away from famine. In 2022 it was estimated that over 1.2 million children in the Sahel suffered from severe acute malnutrition, the most dangerous form of malnutrition. Similar levels are expected in 2023. The UK is a committed donor to the Sahel; in the past year alone, we provided over £300 million in total to the region. I will attend the Africa Food Summit in Dakar this week [25-27 January].

Africa: Droughts and Famine

08 Dec 2022 | 102982

Asked by: Bell Ribeiro-Addy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to support (a) Ethiopia, (b) Kenya, (c) Somalia and (d) South Sudan with the effects of (i) drought and (ii) famine.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is a sizeable humanitarian donor to East Africa. Since 2019 the UK has allocated more than £1 billion towards humanitarian operations, including across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan, helping to reach tens of millions of people with life-saving aid. Final humanitarian allocations for FY 22/23 are currently being reviewed.

East Africa: Famine

06 Dec 2022 | HL3725

Asked by: The Earl of Sandwich

To ask His Majesty's Government what plans they have to support interventions by non-governmental organisations to prevent famine in (1) Ethiopia, (2) Kenya, (3) Somalia, and (4) South Sudan.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) play a central role in delivering UK funded humanitarian support in East Africa. The Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund, which the UK supports, reached 3.2 million people in 2021 with life-saving aid with more than 30 national and international NGOs involved in delivery. In Somalia nine NGOs have responded to critical needs and have taken action to promote long-term resilience under the UK funded Building Resilient Communities in Somalia (BRCiS) consortium. In South Sudan, the UK has delivered financial support, life-saving nutrition supplies as well as activities to address gender-based violence through a consortium of five NGOs. In Kenya humanitarian support is delivered via UN agencies.

Somalia: Famine

28 Nov 2022 | HL3498

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian

To ask His Majesty's Government, in the light of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report Somalia: Famine Review of the IPC Analysis, published on 5 September, which found that "the world has a narrow window of opportunity to act in order to prevent what could otherwise become a full-fledged famine in a few months", what steps they have taken, together with international partners, (1) to increase funding, and (2) to ensure safe access, for humanitarian aid providers in the (a) Baidoa, and (b) Burhakaba, regions of Somalia.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is playing a leading role in Somalia to build strategic partnerships to channel additional funding for the famine response. On 21 September, the former Minister for Development announced a £22.8 million package of assistance for Somalia to alleviate the impact of drought and address the risk of famine, which included support for both UN and Non-Governmental Organisations delivering food, nutrition, health and water assistance for populations in Baidoa and Burkhaba in South West State. Linked to that announcement, on 21 November, the Minister for Development signed a new match funding arrangement with Saudi Arabia of £1.7 million to deliver emergency food assistance through the World Food Programme.

FCDO officials met South West State officials both bilaterally and together with other international humanitarian donors since the release of the latest famine risk assessment data in September. We continue to raise the importance of safe and principled humanitarian access.

Ethiopia: Famine and Food Supply

09 Nov 2022 | 76108

Asked by: Marsha De Cordova

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the reduction of the foreign aid target on the UK's ability to help address (a) the risk of famine in Tigray and (b) the millions of people severely food insecure due to drought in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

In Ethiopia, the population in need of humanitarian food and nutrition assistance has reached record levels in 2022, driven by ongoing insecurity and climate shocks that are likely to result in continued high needs into 2023. The UN estimates that over 20 million people are food insecure in Ethiopia, of which 13 million people require food assistance as a result of the conflict in the north.

In the last eighteen months the UK has provided almost £90 million of humanitarian support to people affected by crises throughout Ethiopia. Our support has reached civilians in Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Somali and Oromia and also eastern Sudan. This includes critical food aid, safe drinking water, medical care, sanitation and nutritional supplies.

Somalia: Hunger

08 Nov 2022 | 722 cc100-101

Asked by: Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi

What assessment he has made of trends in the level of hunger in Somalia in the last 12 months.

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The humanitarian situation throughout Somalia is grave and has worsened significantly over the past 12 months. The number of people affected by drought has more than doubled since January, with more than 7.8 million people—almost 50% of the country—now in need of humanitarian assistance. More than 300,000 people are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.

Asked by: Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi

Mortality and malnutrition are at alarming levels, with 300,000 people expected to face famine in Burhakaba and Baidoa. Sadly, children in Somalia are bearing the brunt, with half a million needing treatment for severe acute malnutrition, and they are much more likely to die of diarrhoea and measles. As families make desperate survival decisions, women and children will face gender-based violence and child marriage. Rather than continuously, callously cutting aid budgets, what will the Government do to honour their commitment to protect women and girls before it is too late?

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Under the category 5 definition—those people who are on the brink of starving to death—there are nearly 1 million people in the world today, and 300,000 of them are in Somalia. There is, therefore, no question at all about the need. I hope to go to Somalia before too long to see for myself what more we can do, but I should emphasise that UK-funded programmes are ensuring that emergency cash transfers, which are very important, are reaching 310,000 people. On the hon. Member's specific point, in terms of water and sanitation, we are helping 483,000—

Asked by: Mr David Davis

I warmly welcome my right hon. Friend's much overdue return to the Front Bench. His return is to the Government's advantage but also to the advantage of millions of men, women and children who rely on Britain's leadership in aid, which he has been singularly forthright in pursuing.

May I bring my hon. Friend back to the issue raised by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Edgbaston (Preet Kaur Gill) about the resources available for aid? Yesterday, the front page of *The Times* told us that millions if not billions of British money is being diverted from aid, saving the lives of children in north-east Africa, to the Home Office—

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I thank my right hon. Friend very much for his kind remarks. He knows a great deal about this area, and the House benefits from his judgment and experience on it. In respect of *The Times* yesterday, all I can tell him is that these matters are very much the subject of discussions between the Foreign Office and the Treasury.

Asked by: Ms Lyn Brown

I also welcome the Minister to his post. Across east Africa, somebody is dying of hunger every 36 seconds. One hundred people will die in the time that Ministers are at the Dispatch Box. At COP, countries such as ours are urged to cover the cost of adapting to global heating in extremely vulnerable nations, but, despite soundbites from No. 10 about helping countries with the

existential threats that they face, our Government are cutting support for countries such as Somalia. Will he demonstrate that he understands the real human cost of climate change by promising immediate assistance for food and climate support in Somalia?

Answered by: Mr Andrew Mitchell | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I thank the hon. Lady for her kind remarks. The international community is scaling up in Somalia and in Ethiopia. The World Bank and the African Development Bank have announced more than \$35 billion of funding for food security across the region.

Horn of Africa: Malnutrition

28 Oct 2022 | 67873

Asked by: David Mundell

To ask the Minister for International Development, with reference to Save the Children's press release entitled new figures reveal more than half of children in Somalia now facing malnutrition, published on 14 September 2022, what recent assessment she has made of that organisation's recommendation to invest £70m to help treat malnourished children in the Horn of Africa.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The humanitarian situation in Somalia is devastating, with roughly half of the country now in need of life saving aid. In order to alleviate the impact of drought and address the risk of famine, since 1 April 2022, the UK has allocated £52.8 million in humanitarian, health and nutrition support to Somalia. UK funded activities are making a difference and saving lives.

The FCDO is prioritising spending that is vital to protect against immediate threat to life and wellbeing, will prevent people falling into humanitarian need, or will prevent delays to accessing healthcare, primary education, sanitation and clean water. Ministers will make any adjustments and final aid prioritisation decisions based on additional Official Development Assistance pressures this autumn.

East Africa: Malnutrition

28 Oct 2022 | 67871

Asked by: David Mundell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential long-term impact of ongoing hunger crises in East Africa on levels of malnutrition in that region.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Across East Africa over 51 million people face severe food insecurity, of which 700,000 are facing famine-like conditions in South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. The ongoing drought in the region and dire water shortages are driving alarming levels of malnutrition; about 4.9 million children and 986,100 pregnant and lactating women are acutely malnourished in drought affected areas in the Horn of Africa, including about 1.4 million children who are severely acutely malnourished. There are concrete warnings that the October - December rains might fail. If so, serious humanitarian needs will persist into 2023.

The UK is a major donor to the East Africa region and UK-funded activities are making a difference and saving lives. In Financial Year 2022/23, the UK intends to provide £156 million in humanitarian aid towards crises in East Africa. Of this amount, nearly 50 percent has been allocated as of mid-September.

Somali: Development Aid

25 Oct 2022 | 65961

Asked by: Preet Kaur Gill

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how much and what proportion of the £50m in UK aid allocated to support the Somali people most in need with food, water and healthcare has been disbursed to date.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 21 September at the UN General Assembly, the UK Minister for Development, Vicky Ford MP, announced £22.8 million package assistance for Somalia to alleviate the impact of drought and address the risk of famine. This brings the UK's total support to Somalia since 1 April 2022 to £52.8 million covering humanitarian, health and nutrition support.

The £22.8 million package of assistance has been fully committed to partners and is being programmed through three FCDO programmes: i) Somalia Humanitarian and Resilience Programme (2018-2022); ii) Better Lives for Somali Women and Children (2022-2028); and iii) Humanitarian Assistance and Resilience Building in Somalia (2022/23). Details on programme spend is published online on UKaid Development Tracker (<https://devtracker.fcdo.gov.uk/>)

Somalia and Somaliland: Development Aid

25 Oct 2022 | 64079

Asked by: Sir Gavin Williamson

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, how his Department's funding for (a) Somaliland and (b) Somalia will be spent in the 2022-23 financial year; and how much and what proportion of the funding will be spend on programmes to help tackle child wasting.

Answering member: Leo Docherty | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region and UK-funded activities are making a difference and saving lives. Since 1 April 2022 the UK has allocated £52.8 million in humanitarian, health and nutrition support to alleviate the impact of drought and address the risk of famine in Somalia and Somaliland.

An estimated 1.8 million children under the age of 5 are affected by acute malnutrition in Somalia. UK support is providing emergency cash transfers, life-saving health and nutrition services and supplies, and supporting immediate access to food for people in rural communities. In early 2022 FCDO Ministers approved 'Better Lives'; a new multi-year health and nutrition programme in Somalia targeted at mothers and children.

Given the current fiscal context, the FCDO is not able to publish forward programme allocations in our Annual Report. The original allocations would not be accurate, and it would be misleading to publish detailed disaggregated budgets at this time.

Horn of Africa: Famine

13 Oct 2022 | 824 cc854-7

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the famine in the Horn of Africa.

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, the crisis in east Africa continues to worsen. Drought is causing significant levels of food insecurity. Over 51 million people in the region are estimated to be facing severe food insecurity, and of particular concern is the recent data from the Bay region in Somalia projecting that famine is likely to occur this year. The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the east Africa region and UK-funded activities are making a difference and saving lives. In the financial year 2022-23, the UK intends to provide approximately £156 million in humanitarian aid across east Africa. Of this amount, nearly 50% has already been allocated to help those affected by this devastating crisis.

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of St Albans

My Lords, a combination of conflict, climate change, increasing world food prices and a fifth year of drought means that we have an absolute humanitarian crisis hitting this part of the world. In Somalia alone, the UN is estimating that about half a million children are likely to die shortly. We have slashed our aid budgets to that part of the world. We need emergency funding as well as long-term funding. What can we do in addition to what the Minister has said in working with our international partners to get emergency aid into those areas which are dreadfully affected?

Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, it is absolutely right to say that the UK reduced the proportion of its GNI spending on overseas aid from 0.7% to 0.5%, but we are committed to returning to 0.7%. Like many noble Lords, I hope that happens as soon as possible, but in the meantime it is worth reiterating—to remind the House—that we remain one of the world’s most generous donors, particularly when it comes to humanitarian assistance, and the proportion of our ODA which goes toward the very poorest people in the world is higher than that of any of the other G7 donor countries, I believe. It is an important point that if you tot up all the international aid provided year on year, which comes to around \$160 billion a year, that is not a patch on the actual needs, so we will not solve these problems through ODA alone. That is why our emphasis in the UK on facilitating easier trade with poorer countries and bringing investment to them is so important to leverage the support we can give

Asked by: Lord Bellingham

My Lords, further to the excellent question from the right reverend Prelate, does the Minister agree that there are now indications that some of the humanitarian aid is being intercepted and interrupted by that vile terrorist organisation, al-Shabaab? What assessment has he made of this and what measures can be taken to try to stop it?

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My noble friend makes a hugely important point. The challenge of delivering humanitarian assistance to countries where there are so many people in need but where the authorities are not always moving in lockstep with us makes things very much more difficult. In Somalia, it is now estimated that nearly 8 million people—approximately half of the country’s population—currently need humanitarian assistance. We will continue to focus as much of our support as possible in that region and the wider region of the Horn of Africa, while using whatever leverage we have to deliver political stability in Somalia.

Asked by: Lord Purvis of Tweed

My Lords, during the 10 minutes of this Question, 12 people will die of severe hunger and malnutrition in the Horn of Africa. I declare that I was in the wider

region over the recess. The scale of the Government's cuts is adding to the problem. The UK committed £861 million in 2017 to support a less severe famine, and there is now less than a third of that from UK support. Hospitals that serve children in Somalia are closing which the UK was directly funding. At the very least, can the Minister intervene to ensure that hospitals that serve children are not being closed as a result of UK cuts?

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, the UK-supported humanitarian activities are saving lives and having immeasurable impacts. In the year 2021-22, we provided a total of £230 million in humanitarian assistance to the east Africa region, to which the noble Lord referred. In the current financial year, the UK intends to provide £156 million in addition to that. The impact of our work can be seen and measured but, in the light of the undoubted ODA pressures that we face, we are doing everything we can to prioritise spending where it is most needed, tackling the most acute humanitarian crises.

Asked by: Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

My Lords, the Horn of Africa is now entering an unprecedented fifth failed rainy season, which is having devastating consequences for the local population. Can the Minister outline when the Government will reinstate the overseas aid budget to 0.7% of GNI? Will it be this year, next year or in 2024?

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, I would love to be able to answer that question, but I cannot. The Treasury set a test, with which the House is familiar, and it will be the Treasury that decides when we have met that test. My hope, like that of everyone here, is that we pass that test sooner rather than later and that we resume our 0.7% commitment.

Asked by: Baroness Sugg

My Lords, the UK aid budget is under additional pressure after the cut from 0.7%, as the Government may be planning to charge an estimated £3 billion of domestic refugee costs to ODA, which would amount to about 25% of what we would normally spend overseas. I am sure we are all in favour of supporting Ukrainian refugees in this country, but I hope that this will not be done at the expense of children and their families who are in so much need in the Horn of Africa. Can my noble friend confirm the domestic refugee cost for this year and tell me how it will be funded?

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, my noble friend is right. The Government's response to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, the wider ODA pressures, including the ODA-eligible expenditure incurred through the Afghan resettlement programme and the UK

support to people fleeing Ukraine, has put unexpected and significant pressure on the ODA budget. The Foreign Office and the Treasury are in discussion as to how much of that funding should be categorised as ODA and how much should not. Of course, the hope has to be that there is as little impact as possible on the broader ODA budget, and that is certainly the Foreign Office's position.

Asked by: Lord Collins of Highbury

My Lords, the right reverend Prelate referred to the underlying causes. One persistent underlying cause has been conflict. The situation in Tigray is of particular concern, especially as it has involved awful crimes against humanity. What steps is the Minister's department taking to work with our allies to ensure that we can bring peace to this region, so that all the development support measures can have effect?

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, the situation in Ethiopia is particularly alarming. Ethiopia was the country that, for many people, opened our eyes to some of the problems of acute famine in the world. It was the beginning of a whole bunch of UN and philanthropic programmes designed to tackle acute famine—both the immediate effects and prevention. Ethiopia is now relapsing to those days. Millions of people in Ethiopia face the real prospect of famine returning. That is exacerbated massively by the conflict to which the noble Lord refers. This is a priority for us. It is an issue raised at every opportunity by the Minister for Africa. I do not want to exaggerate the potential power we have as a country to bring such conflict to an end, but we are using whatever levers we have, and on a routine basis.

Asked by: Baroness Sheehan

My Lords, it is clear that climate change is making these events more frequent and more intense, so do the Government support the Climate Vulnerable Forum's call for COP 27 to commission an IPCC special report specifically focused on loss and damage? If the answer is no, perhaps the Minister can say why such a report would be undesirable.

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, I have spoken regularly to representatives of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, and they make a very strong argument on loss and damage. They would probably agree that it is because of our presidency of COP 26 that loss and damage now has a chapter within the annual COPs where that can be discussed. It will be for the donor countries at COP 27 to determine how far they want to go, but the UK's position is that the arguments are very strong, we will maintain our commitment to £11.6 billion for international climate finance, and are doing everything we can to encourage other countries to step up as well.

Asked by: Viscount Waverley

Although I agree with the Minister that the bolstering of humanitarian aid is critical and essential, does he accept that the mantra of poverty alleviation should be to achieve more with less? With that innovation, much more can be done to assist peoples around the world. How might that be achieved, and might not the private sector play a critical part in that process?

Answered by: Answered by: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The noble Viscount is absolutely right. There is no way these problems can be solved through ODA or other aid alone; it is just not possible. That is why the UK has taken an innovative approach to trade, for example. I believe that 65 poorer countries now enjoy simpler, cleaner trade access to the UK than they had before. In many respects, in many of those countries, that is worth more than they could ever expect to receive in aid. That is just one example of what the UK is trying to do to leverage our position to deliver more than just 0.5% or, I hope soon, 0.7%.

[Africa: Food Supply](#)

05 Sep 2022 | 40778

Asked by: Harriett Baldwin

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if she will take diplomatic steps to encourage (a) donor governments and (b) private sector partners to scale up the global response to the hunger crisis in Africa.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is pressing for an urgent collective response to food insecurity in Africa, building on the first G7 Famine Prevention Compact agreed during the UK's presidency in 2021. In April, the UK helped bring states together at a UN drought roundtable which mobilised roughly \$400 million in new commitments for the East Africa region. The Minister for Farming, Fisheries and Food, Victoria Prentis and I attended the G7 leaders meeting in June where participants pledged an additional \$4.5 billion of support, including a UK commitment of £372 million. We continue to support the G7 Global Alliance on Food Security and the UN Global Crisis Response Group to mobilise support from other donor governments.

I have written to the World Bank President and the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator to encourage them to do more. The UN has confirmed a scale-up of efforts in Somalia and Ethiopia. The Multilateral Development Banks, including the World Bank and Africa Development Bank, have in total announced more than \$35 billion of funding. The Banks are rapidly approving projects, totalling \$24 billion at the World Bank and \$1.1 billion at the African

Development Bank, directly supporting vulnerable households and farmers and supporting a shift towards more resilient agriculture.

South Sudan: Food Aid

24 Jun 2022 | 18853

Asked by: Lyn Brown

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent estimate she has made of the number of (a) acutely food insecure people and (b) people at risk of (i) malnourishment and (ii) starvation in South Sudan; and what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the suspension of food assistance by the World Food Programme on 14 June 2022 on those figures.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The latest Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) report on South Sudan estimates that during the period April - July 2022 7.74 million people are projected to be in a state of "crisis" or worse. Of this number 87,000 people are projected to be in famine-like conditions, the most serious measure of food insecurity on the IPC scale.

The World Food Programme (WFP) also estimates that around 2 million children under 5 and women face acute malnutrition. WFP have publicly stated that a lack of funding means they will not be able to assist 1.7 million severely food insecure people but they will prioritise aid for a population of 4.5 million people who face emergency and catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Funding constraints mean that WFP will provide reduced rations to this group. As a leading donor to South Sudan we helped 270,000 people in 2020/21 with food rations and over 1.3 million people with improved access to clean water and sanitation. We continue to support WFP emergency food, logistics, livelihoods and essential transport operations in South Sudan. On 17 January, I [Minister Ford] announced £17 million of emergency humanitarian support to help address drought, floods and food insecurity in East Africa, including £3 million for South Sudan.

Horn of Africa: Food Supply

30 May 2022 | 6778

Asked by: Sarah Champion

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure the rising global food prices caused by the violence in Ukraine do not exacerbate levels of food insecurity in the East and Horn of Africa.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

East Africa is experiencing one of its most severe droughts in history with more than 15 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia assessed to be acutely food insecure, according to the UN. A fourth consecutive - and unprecedented - season of failed rains is contributing to growing water scarcity, alarming rates of malnutrition and huge numbers of livestock deaths. Needs are grave in Somalia where an estimated 81,000 people are experiencing famine-like conditions.

The UK is a major humanitarian donor to the East Africa region. In 2022 to support communities affected by drought plus flooding and conflict the UK has provided £72 million to Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Across the region UK funded humanitarian activities are making a difference and saving lives. In Kenya the UK is providing 26,000 children with life-saving nutritional support. In Ethiopia a further 200,000 children and pregnant and lactating women in southern and eastern regions will receive similar aid. The UK also played a critical role in convening the recent UN Horn of Africa Drought Roundtable which took place in late April in Geneva. This included working with states in the region and the UN to ensure appropriate levels of participation. It helped to bring much needed focus on the drought and it mobilised roughly US\$400 million in new funding.

Countries across the Horn of Africa will also be impacted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine due to the increase in the costs of food commodities and fuel on global markets. We are exploring how we can help lessen the impact of rising food prices caused by the war in Ukraine on vulnerable communities in East Africa. This includes assessing alternate markets for procurement of food supplies and working with UN partners to promote effective prioritisation so assistance reaches the neediest.

Our response to the drought builds on long-established resilience building programmes in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In Kenya this includes support to the Hunger Safety Programme, which has provided 600,000 people in drought prone areas with regular financial assistance. In Ethiopia, the UK funded Productive Safety Net Programme has benefitted some 8 million people via financial welfare provision and community public works projects. In Somalia the UK has been supporting over 220 rural communities in three large urban cities with durable solutions initiatives for internally displaced persons. These programmes, coupled with additional investments, have enabled the UK to reach nearly 8 million individuals as a part of its emergency humanitarian response.

6 Other Parliamentary material

6.1 Debates

[Horn of Africa: Famine](#)

07 Feb 2023 | House of Lords | 827 cc1167-1181

Lords question for short debate on what steps they are taking to alleviate the consequences of the famine in the Horn of Africa.

[Food Insecurity in Developing Countries due to Blockade of Ukrainian Ports](#)

21 Jul 2022 | House of Lords | 823 cc2052-2097

Lords motion to take note of (1) the impact of the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports on food insecurity in developing countries, and (2) its contribution to the danger of famine in (a) the Horn of Africa, and (b) East Africa. Agreed to on question.

6.2 EDMS

[Hunger in East Africa](#)

EDM 912 (session 2022-23)

Layla Moran

28 February 2023

That this House is deeply concerned about the acute hunger crisis in the East Africa region; notes that despite 36.4 million people in the Horn of Africa region suffering with hunger, the Government has cut humanitarian aid to less than a fifth of what it was in the financial year of 2017-2018 in the region; condemns the Government's decision to abandon the 0.7 per cent target for international development spending; calls on the Government to urgently reinstate the 0.7 per cent target, and to correspondingly increase vital support to people in the regions; and resolves to continue to hold the Government to account on its broken promise on international development spending.

[Global hunger and the UN Sustainable Development Goals \(No. 2\)](#)

EDM 513 (session 2022-23)

Tony Lloyd

31 October 2022

That this House is concerned by projections from the World Food Programme (WFP) that famine will take hold in parts of Somalia, with 7.1 million people

facing acute food insecurity, while UNICEF estimates that a child has been sent to hospital over malnutrition every minute since August 2022; notes that a major cause of the crisis is the worst drought in the Horn of Africa for four decades; emphasises the role of climate change in this; highlights that the crisis has been worsened by conflict, with a correlation between areas projected to fall into famine and those impacted by non-state armed groups; notes that this also restricts humanitarian operations; stresses the impact of the war in Ukraine, with at least 90 per cent of Somalia's wheat coming from Russia and Ukraine prior to the February 2022 invasion; highlights that this crisis has displaced over a million people, while disease is spreading rapidly in displacement camps; is dismayed that the world is set to fail the UN Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030; emphasises that a senior Somali Government official recently said the UK has lost its leading role on this issue; notes that this is despite the UK's ongoing commitment to providing security assistance to the Somali Government; and calls on the Government to (a) combine its security role in Somalia with greater humanitarian assistance, (b) support international and non-governmental humanitarian organisations operating in Somalia and (c) restore the commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on international aid.

Global hunger and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

EDM 478 (session 2022-23)

Tony Lloyd

19 October 2022

That this House believes the lack of attention paid to global hunger has exacerbated this long-term and widespread issue; is concerned by warnings from the World Food Programme (WFP) of another year of record hunger; notes the number of hungry people globally increased from 282 million to 345 million during 2022; highlights that a fifth of the total population of Africa went hungry in 2021; further highlights that the WFP is currently holding back famine in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen while hunger in Haiti is also reaching catastrophic levels; notes that Oxfam says food shortages are likely to cause one death every 36 seconds until the end of the year; further notes that hunger displaces millions of people who must search for sanctuary elsewhere; emphasises that these crises are caused by a combination of global factors including climate change, conflict and economic instability; recognises that the covid-19 pandemic led to an increased gap in the funding required to tackle global hunger; is dismayed that the world is set to fail the UN Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030, with the percentage of the global population affected by hunger on track to reach almost 10 per cent by that year; highlights that a senior Somali Government official recently said the UK has lost its leading role on this issue; and calls on the Government to re-establish the UK as a leading actor by restoring the commitment to spending 0.7 per cent of GNI on international aid.

6.3

Select Committee written evidence

[Correspondence from the Minister for Development and Africa relating to hunger in the Horn of Africa.](#)

09 Jan 2023 | Parliamentary committees - Unprinted papers - Select Committee written evidence | International Development Committee

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