



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

SOMALIA DISASTER MANAGEMENT AGENCY (SoDMA)

SUMMARY FOR DECISION MAKERS

Potential Impact of the Anticipated Strong El Niño During the 2026 Deyr Season

October–December 2026

Risk outlook • 1997 and 2023 analogues • IOD analysis •
Loss and damage scenarios • Priority decisions

Prepared for senior government decision-makers, Federal Member States,
humanitarian and development partners, donors and technical institutions

25 August 2026

Prepared by SoDMA using national assessments and reports, complemented by current regional climate and food-security information.

1. Situation at a Glance

Somalia is entering the October–December 2026 Deyr season under a high-consequence climate risk scenario. Current regional forecasts indicate that El Niño has developed and is expected to strengthen, while the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is increasingly expected to move into a positive phase during the Deyr season.

The combination of strong El Niño and positive IOD is particularly important because similar climate conditions were associated with the exceptional floods of 1997 and 2023. Current climate outlooks indicate a high probability of above-normal rainfall across central and southern Somalia, with some areas potentially receiving more than 400 mm during the season.

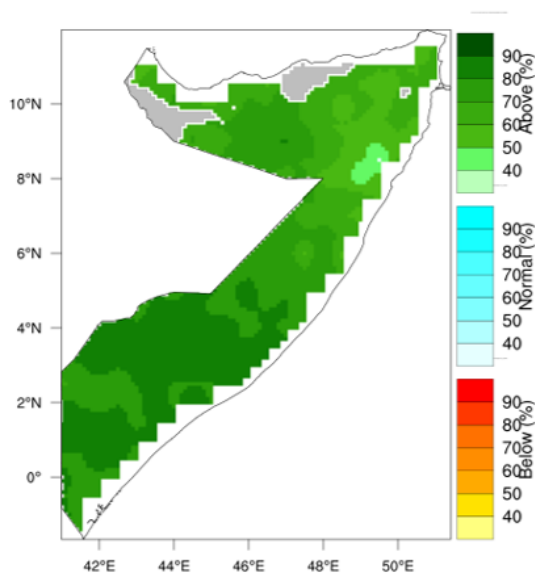


Figure 1: Deyr 2026 Climate outlook

The principal concern is not seasonal rainfall totals alone. Intense rainfall episodes, rapid river-level increases, flash floods, riverine flooding and embankment failures could produce severe humanitarian and economic impacts.

Somalia is simultaneously entering Deyr with significant residual vulnerability from several consecutive poor seasons, high levels of food insecurity, depleted household assets and substantial humanitarian needs.

Key message: The 2026 Deyr season should be treated as a high-priority national preparedness and anticipatory-action period, with particular attention to the Juba and Shabelle river basins and highly exposed settlements.

2. Why 2026 Is Different

The potential impact of El Niño rainfall cannot be assessed in isolation from Somalia's current vulnerability. The country is emerging from prolonged drought and consecutive poor agricultural seasons. Many households have already lost livestock, depleted savings and reduced their capacity to absorb another shock.

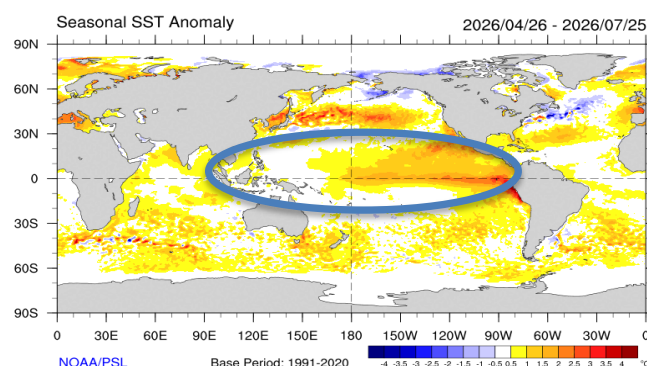
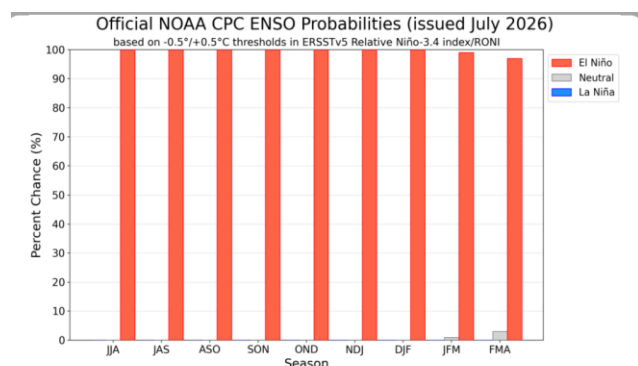
The 2023 floods provide the most relevant recent operational benchmark. The SoDMA-led Rapid Post-Disaster Needs Assessment recorded 2.48 million people affected, more than 1.2 million displaced and 188 deaths. It estimated US\$134.1 million in damages and US\$59.3 million in losses, or US\$193.4 million in combined effects across the 16 assessed districts.

The productive-sector assessment estimated US\$57 million in farming and livestock damage and losses, affecting more than 68,000 households, with approximately 12,800 metric tonnes of crop production losses. The WASH assessment found 1,211 water infrastructure components and 19,234 sanitation components damaged or destroyed, with approximately US\$33 million in WASH damages and losses.

3. El Niño and IOD Outlook

3.1 El Niño

El Niño is currently the dominant climate signal. ICPAC's August 2026 outlook indicates a 90% probability of enhanced October–December rainfall over southern Ethiopia, central-to-southern Somalia. This is particularly significant because rainfall over the Ethiopian highlands contributes to flows into the Juba and Shabelle Rivers.



3.2 Indian Ocean Dipole

The IOD requires a nuanced interpretation. The latest Australian Bureau of Meteorology monitoring indicated that the IOD was not yet fully established in the positive phase at the time of its August assessment, but forecasts increasingly favoured development of a positive IOD during the coming months. ICPAC's regional outlook similarly anticipates a positive IOD during OND 2026.

Operationally, the concern is the increasing probability that a strong El Niño will coincide with a positive IOD during Deyr. This combination resembles the climate configuration associated with the major flood events of 1997 and 2023.

Signal	Current position	Deyr relevance
El Niño	Established; strong and strengthening	Major driver of wetter-than-normal OND rainfall.
IOD	Not fully established positive; positive phase increasingly favoured	Potential amplifier of heavy rainfall.
Combined	Increasingly concerning	Higher-consequence rainfall and flood scenario.

4. The 1997 and 2023 Analogues

Indicator	1997	2023	2026 implication
Climate	Very strong El Niño + positive IOD	Strong El Niño + positive IOD	Potentially reinforcing configuration.
Flooding	Exceptional	Severe	Prepare for riverine and flash flooding.
Displacement	~250,000 reported historically	>1.2 million	0.8–1.5m possible severe scenario.
People affected	Major national impacts	2.48 million	2–3m central planning scenario.
Economic effects	Very significant	US\$193.4m assessed	US\$350–500m severe envelope.

1997 demonstrates the upper-bound climate stress Somalia can experience. The 2023 season is the best recent operational benchmark because its exposure and institutional context are more comparable to the present.

5. Priority Geographic Hotspots

The highest concern is concentrated in southern and central Somalia, particularly along the Juba and Shabelle river systems and in low-lying settlements.

Risk	Priority areas	Main hazard
Very High	Gedo: Doolow, Luuq, Baardheere; Lower/Middle Juba: Bu'aale, Jilib/Jamame, Kismayo, Afmadow	Juba flooding and flash floods
Very High	Hiiraan: Beletweyne, Buuloburde; Middle Shabelle: Jowhar, Balcad, Mahaday	Shabelle flooding and flash floods
High	Lower Shabelle: Afgooye; Bay/Bakool: Baidoa, Bardaale, Hudur	Riverine and flash flooding
Moderate-High	Selected Galmudug, Puntland and Banadir/Mogadishu lowlands	Flash/pluvial flooding and drainage failure

The Juba and Shabelle river corridors should be treated as the national priority flood-risk zone.

6. Potential Humanitarian Impact

- Under a severe scenario, approximately 2.5–3.5 million people could experience direct or indirect flood impacts.
- Approximately 1.2–2.0 million people could require temporary relocation or emergency shelter.
- Food markets could be disrupted by crop losses, road closures and increased transport costs.
- Water contamination and service disruption could increase risks of acute watery diarrhoea/cholera, malaria and other diseases.
- Health, nutrition, education and WASH services could be overwhelmed in high-impact locations.
- Under a 1997-like stress test, 3–4 million or more people could be affected and 1.5–2.5 million could be displaced.
- Extreme and widespread flooding could contribute to Famine-level outcomes in highly vulnerable hotspots.

7. Potential Loss and Damage

A precise 2026 monetary estimate is not yet possible because the event has not occurred and its spatial extent, intensity and duration remain uncertain. The following are preparedness scenarios, not forecasts.

Scenario	Potential direct damages + losses
Moderate	US\$150–250 million
Central planning	US\$250–350 million
Severe	US\$350–500 million
1997-like stress test	US\$500–750 million

Recommended planning envelope: SoDMA and partners should consider US\$350–500 million as a working severe-event envelope and stress-test financing against US\$500–750 million.

8. What Should Government Do Now?

- Maintain an enhanced national preparedness posture through Deyr under SoDMA coordination.
- Strengthen Juba and Shabelle river monitoring, including upstream rainfall, river-level thresholds and embankment monitoring.
- Map high-risk settlements, schools, health facilities, markets, water points, roads and IDP sites.
- Validate evacuation routes, safe areas and temporary reception arrangements.
- Pre-position WASH, shelter, food, nutrition, medicines and emergency logistics supplies.
- Protect livestock, seed stocks, agricultural inputs and other livelihood assets.
- Agree forecast- and river-triggered anticipatory actions and financing before impacts occur.
- Conduct national and FMS-level preparedness simulations.
- Maintain regular risk updates as new forecast, river and impact information becomes available.

9. Strengthen Interoperability of Early Warning Systems

The priority is not necessarily to create entirely new monitoring systems. Somalia should strengthen interoperability among existing observation and information systems so that rainfall, river, forecast and impact data can move efficiently between institutions responsible for monitoring, analysis, warning, anticipatory action and response.

The desired chain:

AWS / rainfall observations → river gauges → satellite information → hydrological forecasts → risk analysis → SoDMA and FMS decision-making → triggers → financing → early action.

The objective is a shared national risk picture rather than parallel information streams operating independently.

10. Financing and Coordination

- SoDMA: national risk coordination, early warning, anticipatory action, emergency coordination and common operating picture.
- Technical institutions and ICPAC: forecasts, monitoring, thresholds and interpretation.
- MoEWR and water authorities: river levels, flood forecasting, embankments and water infrastructure.
- Agriculture/livestock authorities and partners: crop, livestock, pasture, food-stock and market monitoring.
- Health and WASH authorities and partners: disease surveillance, water safety and health preparedness.
- FMS/local authorities: community preparedness, evacuation, access and impact reporting.

- Humanitarian/development partners: anticipatory financing, logistics, technical support and response capacity.

Financing should span preparedness, trigger-based anticipatory action, rapid response and recovery/reconstruction. Early release of resources is critical because protecting assets and pre-positioning supplies is likely to cost less than responding after widespread displacement and infrastructure damage.

11. Key Decisions Required

Decision	Recommended position
Risk posture	Maintain high national flood preparedness for October, November and December (Deyr) 2026.
Benchmark	Use 2023 as operational benchmark and 1997 as stress test.
Financial planning	Prepare for US\$350–500m potential direct effects; stress-test US\$500–750m.
Priority geography	Juba/Shabelle riverine corridor plus high-risk flash-flood and IDP settlements.
Food security	Integrate flood action with drought recovery, food, nutrition, livestock and market measures.
Early warning	Strengthen interoperability and rapid exchange across existing systems.
Triggers	Pre-agree rainfall, river and impact triggers and actions.
Updates	Review at least weekly and after major forecast or river-level changes.

12. Overall Risk Assessment

Risk	Assessment
Above-normal rainfall	● VERY HIGH
Riverine flooding	● VERY HIGH
Flash flooding	● HIGH
Displacement	● VERY HIGH
Agricultural losses	● HIGH-VERY HIGH
Food-security deterioration	● VERY HIGH
Disease outbreaks	● HIGH
Infrastructure damage	● HIGH
Humanitarian access disruption	● HIGH
National economic loss	● HIGH

Final risk statement

We should not wait for flooding to confirm the forecast. The combination of strong El Niño, an increasingly likely positive IOD, vulnerable river basins, residual drought impacts and high food insecurity creates a credible high-consequence scenario for Deyr 2026. Early action before river levels and floodwaters rise is likely to be substantially more effective and less costly than responding after widespread displacement and infrastructure damage occur.

Recommended national preparedness benchmark: US\$350–500 million. Worst-case stress-test: US\$500–750 million.

Source and Methodological Note

This decision-makers summary is based on SoDMA-led national assessments and reports, including the 2023 Deyr Floods Rapid Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, complemented by current regional climate and food-security information available for August 2026. The loss-and-damage ranges are scenario estimates for preparedness and contingency planning, not official 2026 PDNA estimates. Actual impacts will depend on rainfall intensity, duration, spatial distribution, upstream catchment rainfall, river routing, embankment condition, settlement exposure, conflict/access and the effectiveness of anticipatory action, ICPAC's GHACOF 74 for OND 2026 and latest Australian Bureau of Meteorology for Southern Hemisphere Monitoring on the broader hemispheric climate state, including the current status of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation and the Indian Ocean Dipole.