

SITUATION REPORT: EAST AFRICA LOCUST SWARM

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SITUATION OVERVIEW

Numerous countries in the eastern part of the African continent are grappling with an increasing number of desert locusts. Swarms are currently affecting Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Some of these countries are grappling with the worst outbreak in over 25 years. Rural areas are particularly at risk given famine conditions in many regions.

Swarms are starting to breed in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Iran. There is a severe food crisis already ongoing in Yemen due to the civil war.

Governments in affected countries are using a variety of methods to combat the spread, including aerospray from aircraft and have mobilized ground units, from the military to boy scouts, to conduct ground spraying activities. This has been somewhat effective. However, by April swarms could grow 500-fold due to drier conditions that are more favorable to locust mating, hatching, molting and maturing.

Funds needed to combat this infestation are conservatively estimated at \$76 million, of which a mere \$15 million has been raised. With the dry season on the horizon, this number will undoubtedly increase, as will the effect on future agricultural and livestock activities. Notably, this dry season could follow a period of heavy rainfall, allowing new vegetation to grow that will further fuel the plague's strength.

U.N. humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock warned that 10 million of the 13 million people already facing severe food insecurity in east Africa are in places affected by locusts. Food & Agriculture Organization's emergency and resilience director Dominique Burgeon warns that another 20 million people in the region are in danger of becoming food insecure.

BY THE NUMBERS

10 million people affected throughout eastern Africa and beyond

20+ million at further risk

14 countries affected so far

1 million+ hectares monitored

The swarm has the potential to grow

500 times in size

USD \$138 million needed for effective long-term response

In South Sudan, more than **5 million people** are severely food insecure, and some **860,000 children** are malnourished. **47%** of the total population of South Sudan was food insecure before the swarm crossed its borders.

In Ethiopia, farmers have lost **90%** of their production.

This species of desert locust travels on average **80 miles a day**, but some swarms have travelled **186 miles in a day**.

Starting this week, swarms have now been detected in a variety of **countries near the Persian Gulf**.

Source: Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE EFFORTS

Affected countries are cooperating and coordinating efforts within and across borders.

Simultaneously, some countries are using this unique moment to focus on preparedness. Given the unprecedented size of the swarm, there must be an effort to understand how to preemptively hinder or halt the spread of locust plagues in the region in the years ahead. The U.S. has pledged \$8 million to this endeavor.

The FAO has taken a primary role in many of the affected countries in coordinating locust-combatting efforts.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF – ACTIONS TAKEN AND NEXT STEPS

Lutheran World Relief is assessing the situation, communicating with its partners and staff in affected countries as well as contacts in the governments and other NGOs.

With more vigilance over the coming weeks, Lutheran World Relief will have a better picture of what kind of response would be the most effective to combat this crisis.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF IN EAST AFRICA

With nearly 75 years of demonstrated expertise helping to transform some of the hardest-to-reach places in the developing world, Lutheran World Relief is an innovative, trusted international

nongovernmental organization committed to those otherwise cut off from basic human services and opportunities.

We help communities living in extreme poverty adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being, and we respond to emergencies with a long-term view. When a disaster hits — whether it's a drought, tsunami or civil war — we work alongside communities over months and years to help them recover and adjust to new realities, ensuring that they are prepared to withstand the next unexpected challenge. Regardless of whether these challenges are chronic or acute, Lutheran World Relief invests in communities to enable those living in extreme poverty to build the resilience they need to thrive.

Lutheran World Relief has a strong presence in South Sudan, Tanzania and Kenya and its staff is proactive in assisting the emergency response team with on-the-ground knowledge, helping build a proactive and effective understanding on how Lutheran World Relief will respond in the coming weeks.

For additional information about Lutheran World Relief's response to this situation and other emergencies around the world, please visit lwr.org. You can also join the conversation about how Lutheran World Relief is responding to emergencies with a long-term view at facebook.com/LuthWorldRelief or twitter.com/LuthWorldRelief.



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Lutheran World Relief works in concert with Corus International, a family of faith-based organizations delivering holistic, lasting solutions to the interconnected challenges of poverty, health care access and climate change.



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