

# East Africa Now Facing Drought Induced Famine

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Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

Expected rains have failed to arrive for successive seasons in and around Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya. The absence has in turn caused severe shortages of food and water for millions of people. OXFAM's Humanitarian Director Jane Cocking said, "This is the worst food crisis of the 21st Century and we are seriously concerned that large numbers of lives could soon be lost." She added, "Two successive poor rains, entrenched poverty and lack of investment in affected areas have pushed 12 million people into a fight for survival. People have already lost virtually everything and the crisis is only going to get worse over the coming months - we need funds to help us reach people with life-saving food and water." [1]

The hardest hit is Somalia with internal violence from armed groups, famine, an insufficient supply of drinking water, unbearable heat in some locations and long-term drought simultaneously impacting the population. With thousands walking sometimes weeks on end to try to find relief, some of them are being robbed of all possessions by bandits while en route to Ethiopia or Kenya.

This and related problems should be more concretely addressed in a global-scale war on poverty. If the issues of poverty were more seriously and adequately addressed, the 925 million people who presently live in hunger and the many million of children who have already died every year before reaching their fifth birthday could have found relief.

In Asian, African and Latin American countries, well over 500 million people are living in what the World Bank calls "absolute poverty". Every year 15 million children die of hunger. I know there will be one or two who will say "why should I care?" It would seem that the onus is on them to answer the question: "Why *don't* you care?"

All told, twelve million of the refugees are in danger of starvation and, according to UNICEF, one million children are at risk to die. Moreover, the continued lack of rainfall this year and the drastic rise in the price of corn, the food staple for East Africa, mean this humanitarian crisis will continue for some time to come. Meanwhile, drought conditions are expected to continue for the next three months exacerbating an already drastic and nearly hopeless situation.

Organizations helping drought victims in Africa:

- [AmeriCares](#)
- [Catholic Relief Services](#)
- [Doctors Without Borders](#)
- [International Medical Corps](#)
- [International Rescue Committee](#)
- [Mercy Corps](#)

- [Oxfam America](#)
- [Save the Children](#)
- [UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency](#)
- [UNICEF](#)
- [World Food Programme](#)
- [World Vision](#)

Note

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[1] [Oxfam launches largest ever emergency appeal for Africa | Oxfam ...](#), <http://oxf.am/4GE>.

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