

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** November 10, 2019

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**Report Name:** Desert Locust outbreak and existing impact on eastern and northern Ethiopia

**Country:** Ethiopia

**Post:** Addis Ababa

**Report Category:** Pest/Disease Occurrences

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**Report Highlights:**

The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the Desert Locust Control Organization for East Africa (DLCO-EA) are working together to control the desert locust invasion which migrated from Yemen to Ethiopia through Djibouti and Somaliland. The continuing rainy season in Somaliland and the North Eastern part of Ethiopia created favorable breeding conditions which may cause the pest to migrate to North Kenya, Sudan and Eretria soon if immediate action is not taken at the breeding base in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture announced last week that the swarm is under control.

**General Information**

Ethiopia is dealing with the effects of ongoing drought on marginal areas of the country, monitors report that 7.8 million people still need food assistance. On top of the drought, desert locusts (Scientific name: *Schistocerca gregaria*, Phylum: Anthropoda, Order: Orthopetera) have invaded the region adding to the challenges on the ground. The Ministry of Agriculture, in conjunction with the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA), has implemented ground and aerial control operations.

The desert locust swarm now infesting Ethiopia, migrated from Yemen through Djibouti and Somaliland and settled down for breeding in the low land part of Somaliland, Djibouti, and in Ethiopia's Afar region.

According to a press release on November 21, 2019, the Government of Ethiopia has brought the locust infestation under control despite limited capacity and ongoing political insecurity in some areas. It appears that

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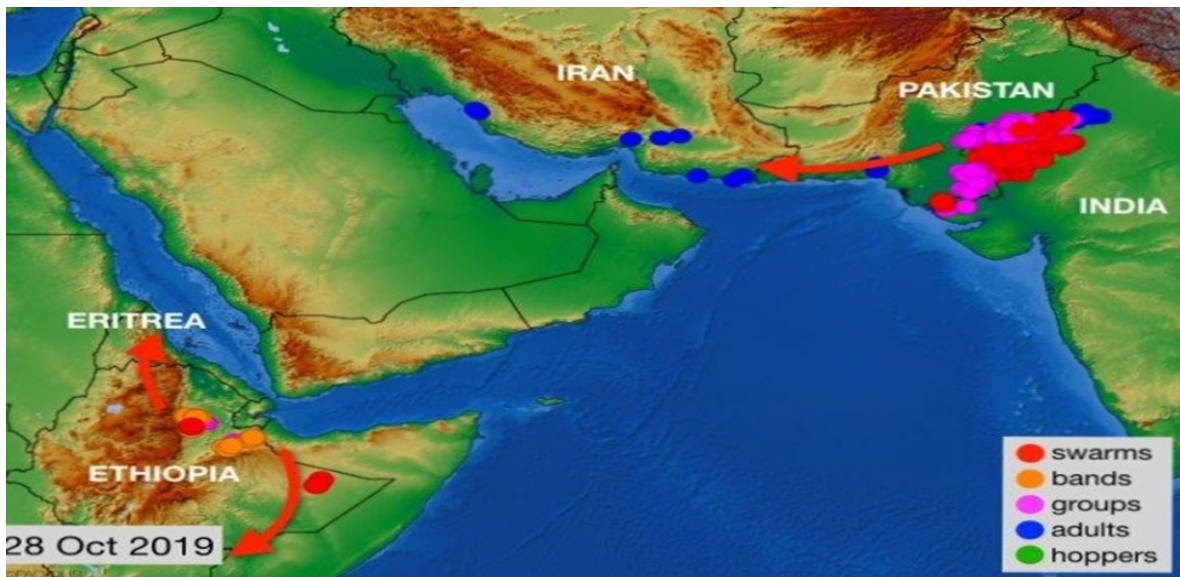
swarms have started moving from the lowland in the Afar region into semi-highland part of Wello and North Shewa and another swarm migrating from Somaliland to the Dire Dawa special administrative region. Aerial spraying operations were started in eastern and northern regions as the landscape allows. It is difficult low-flying sprayers to effectively target the swarm in much of Ethiopia's mountainous topography. In areas where the landscape is too rugged for aerial spraying, manual spraying is on progress. However, a few swarms may also reach semi-highland part of central regions home to Ethiopia's grain belt.

The extended rainy season in the eastern regions of the country has created a conducive breeding environment. In an official press statement, the Ethiopia Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) stated that the Government has marshalled all available human resources like farmers, students, the military and other volunteers using manual methods (crushing the insects by hand) as well as planes to bring the locust swarm under control. The ministry has also dispatched experts to help the efforts to battle against the invasion of the locust which threaten farmers in Tigray, Amhara, Afar Somali and Dire Dawa city administration.

The MOA is monitoring an 85,000 hectare area as a preventive measure. They observed a swarm covering a 32,227 hectare area. Based on that data MOA, DLCO-EA, local community and local authority were able to implement control measures on 27,734 hectares of that area. According to an FAO report published on 07 Nov 2019, the hopper bands recorded to date have covered more than 351 sq. km and are consuming 1.755 million MT of green vegetation and tree branches per day.

The current situation remains serious especially bordering the northern part of the rift valley and Somalia regions where *meher* (main rainy season) crops are still on the field and on an area where local farmers depend on the grazing land for their cattle.

The swarms in northeast Ethiopia are benefiting from the rains and started laying eggs which, when hatched will move into Somalia, Eritrea and eastern Ethiopia.



Map showing the direction of locust movement (From Pakistan, Yemen to Ethiopia)

Source: FAO (relief web)

The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) announced on November 21, 2019 that the major infestation sites are under control. On that date about forty percent of the grain had been harvested and farmers are striving to harvest the rest in the coming weeks. The MoA said that despite the swarms' ongoing presence, it has not significantly damaged vegetation. But the fight is not over, the Government of Ethiopia is still mobilizing people to control the swarm and prevent expansion into the highlands and the country's grain belt.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.