

Desert locusts invade Somaliland

HARGEIS: Food security in eastern and western regions of the self-declared republic of Somaliland is under threat following an invasion of desert locusts, which have destroyed an estimated 3,000ha of farmland, officials told *IRIN*.



The most voracious and harmful stage of the locusts' development is when they are pink and winged like these.

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"The locusts have destroyed both farmland and grassland across Somaliland, from west to east," said Aden Ahmed Dhola-yare, Somaliland's Minister for Agriculture.

A team comprising government and non-governmental officials undertook a mission in late May to assess the impact of the invasion, which was first noted in February.

Abdi-Kadir Jibril Tukale, director-general in the ministry of agriculture, said: "The locust outbreak in Somaliland will not stop in days, weeks or months; according to our assessment, which was conducted in collaboration with international organisations such as FAO Empres [Food and Agriculture Organization anti-locust project] and other stakeholders, the desert locust outbreak will continue until September because the locusts have already buried their eggs within a 700 sqkm stretch in the west coast, particularly in Salal, Awdal, Hargeisa, and Sahel regions [west and mid-west of Somaliland]."

An FAO official, who requested anonymity, said the locust invasion had destroyed several hundred farms in Qabri Bahar area of Awdal region and along the 700km coastline from Lawya-adda to Karin, east of the town of Berbera, as well as the farmlands in Berbera region and around the Golis mountains.

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