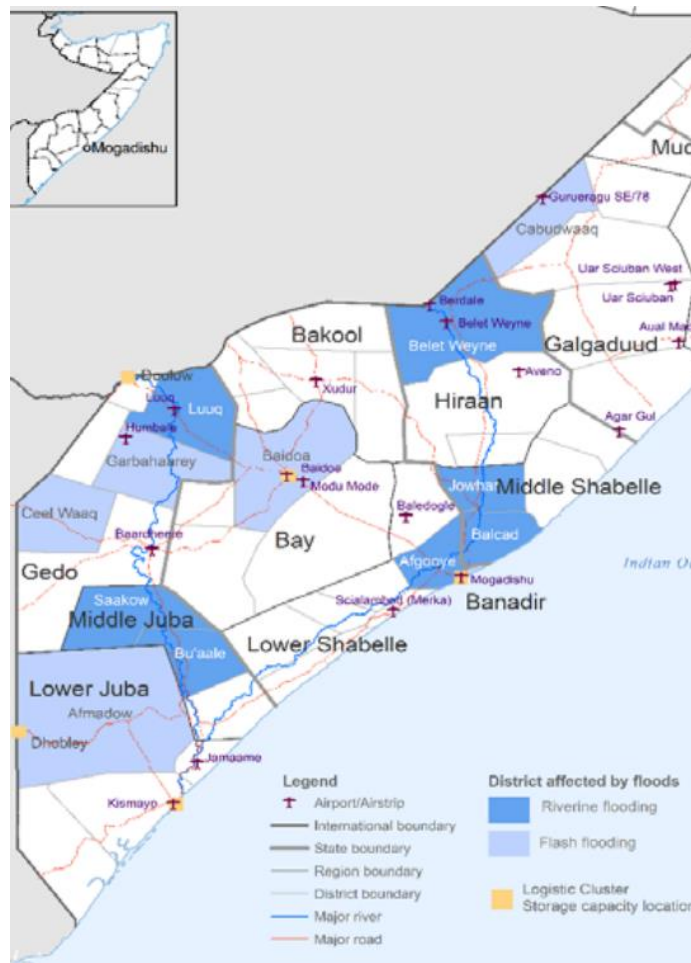


SOMALIA

Floods in Southern Regions

The Deyr rainy season has brought moderate to heavy rainfall to Somalia, causing both flash floods and river overflow in the southern regions of the country. Areas in Gedo and Hiraaan regions have received from 100 to 220 millimetres of rain in October. Localised rainfall coupled with heavy rains in the Ethiopian highlands have led to increasing water levels in the Shabelle and Juba rivers in southern Somalia, raising the risk of widespread flooding in low-lying riverine communities. International organisations are coordinating with local authorities. 273,000 people have been displaced so far. Emergency shelters and latrines are of particular concern, especially for the nearly 285,000 IDPs residing in Hiraaan and Gedo regions.



Source: OCHA 21/10/2019.

NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE



IMPACT



Anticipated scope and scale

On 26 October, the Shabelle and Juba rivers overflowed their banks as rainfall continued across Somalia's southern and central regions. As much as 85% of Belet Weyne town has been inundated. **Moderate to heavy rainfall is expected to continue across southern and central Somalia and the Ethiopian highlands.** Ongoing river flooding is likely to worsen and there is a **high risk of flash flooding in low-lying areas** in Hiraaan, Gedo, and Juba regions. Additional displacements are likely.

Key priorities



273,000
people displaced so far



Strengthen WASH
facilities to prevent disease outbreak

Humanitarian Constraints



Physical constraints, such as blockages and damaged infrastructure are restricting access, with many humanitarian activities requiring boats or large trucks. Insecurity caused by conflict and violence could add additional constraints to humanitarian response.

Limitations

Information gaps exist regarding sectoral needs of affected populations and the exact scope of displacement that has occurred. This is particularly true among IDP populations.

Crisis impact

The Deyr 2019 season began in September in many areas of southern Somalia, and rains have been ongoing for 3 weeks. As of 23 October, most areas in Hiraan region had received between 100-175 millimetres of rain, areas of Gedo region received as much as 220 millimetres (FEWS NET 23/10/2019). On 26 October, due to heavy rainfall in Somalia as well as the Ethiopian highlands which feed into the Juba and Shabelle rivers, both rivers overflowed their banks. Widespread river flooding is occurring, especially in low-lying areas of Hiraan, Gedo, and Juba regions.

Crops have been damaged, households displaced, and roads have been cut off across the region. The worst affected areas of Hiraan region are towns located along the overflowing Shabelle, including Belet Weyne, Kooshin, and Xaawo Taako (FAO 25/10/2019). More than 85% of Belet Weyne town has been inundated, forcing at least 182,000 people to evacuate to higher ground (OCHA 28/10/2019). In Gedo and Juba regions, initial reports indicate that 4 people have died, 750 households have been displaced, and 1,200 farms have been damaged (FAO 22/10/2019).

Moderate to heavy rainfall is expected to continue in central and southern Somalia and the Ethiopian highlands for several weeks, and rainy season typically continues until December (FAO 22/10/2019). Ongoing river flooding (overflow) along the Juba and Shabelle is expected to worsen and flash floods may be experienced in low-lying areas where moderate rains are expected. Flooding is worsening an already dire humanitarian situation: Hiraan and Gedo regions are host to numerous IDP settlements and riverine communities face high levels of food insecurity and weak WASH infrastructure (HNO 2019).

Shelter: Flooding has already caused 273,000 people in Belet Weyne town and surrounding areas in the Hiraan region and an additional 30,000 households in Gedo region to be displaced (NRC 1/11/2019). Further displacement is likely if rain persists and river levels continue to rise as expected. As of 28 October, displaced people were being relocated to the highlands, though due to a lack of shelter, many have been forced to shelter under trees or in emergency tents (OCHA 21/10/2019, NRC 1/11/2019).

Food: Food is an urgent concern in flood affected communities. In Gedo and Juba regions, at least 1,200 farms have been inundated and 250 livestock drowned (FAO 22/10/2019). It is unclear how flooding has impacted agriculture infrastructure, though in past flooding, farm tools such as irrigation pumps were significantly impacted (OCHA 26/04/2018). The affected regions of Gedo and Hiraan are already experiencing high levels of food insecurity. As of September 2019, 30,000 people in Gedo and nearly 100,000 people in Hiraan were classified as IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) or 4 (Emergency) (IPC 02/09/2019). Damage to crops and loss of livestock will exacerbate food insecurity.

WASH: Somalia is highly susceptible to cholera, and increases in cases tend to occur around the rainy season. At least 34 new cases were reported in September 2019 (WHO 10/10/2019). The cholera outbreak has been contained in the current flood-hit Jubaland and Hirshabelle states, though damage to sanitation facilities, poor hygiene practices, and contamination of drinking water caused by flooding poses a significant risk. The construction of emergency latrines and distribution of water treatment chemicals is a priority (OCHA 21/10/2019).

Vulnerable groups affected

Nearly 1.1 million people live in protracted displacement in Somalia due to ongoing conflict and climatic shocks (UNHCR 2018). Hiraan and Gedo districts host more than 285,000 registered IDPs (HNO 2019). IDPs living in settlements, particularly on private land, are at constant risk of forced eviction. In 2019, 173,000 individuals were evicted from IDP settlements across Somalia, more than 138,000 were located in the country's South West state alone, which has been affected by flooding in recent weeks (ReDSS 09/2019). Evictions disrupt IDPs' livelihoods and coping abilities, increasing their vulnerability and high humanitarian needs during flooding.

Humanitarian and operational constraints

Physical Constraints: There have been reports of road closures due to flooding. Humanitarian agencies are indicating that boats are required to reach some affected communities and the road connecting Belet Weyne town and Ceel Jaale - where displaced communities are being relocated - is only passable by heavy trucks (OCHA 21/10/2019, OCHA 28/10/2019). There is currently no electricity in Belet Weyne (NRC 1/11/2019). General underdevelopment and poor maintenance due to prolonged conflict has resulted in a weak road and bridge network across the country (Logistics Cluster 31/05/2018). This is worsened during rainy season, when unpaved roads can become completely impassable (OCHA 15 May 2018).

Security Constraints: Prior to the flooding, insecurity already restricted humanitarian access, particularly in southern and central Somalia. Humanitarian organisations face limitations on movement, interference in activities, and are often targets of violence. Insecurity is fuelled both by conflict associated with non-state armed groups as well as clan-related fighting (HRW 2018). The Hiraan region is already receiving insufficient humanitarian response due to security risks (NRC 1/11/2019). This is particularly problematic when new large-scale humanitarian activities are implemented. For instance, following the scale-up of flood response during the 2018 Gu rainy season, reports of looting of humanitarian supplies and violence at distribution sites increased (HNO 2019).

Aggravating factors

Drought

Drought conditions have persisted across Somalia due to erratic and below-average rainfall during the October-December 2018 Deyr rainfall and the April-June 2019 Gu rainfall (FEWS NET 02/09/2019). Limited pasture and water availability has worsened livestock body conditions, and agricultural and pastoral livelihoods have deteriorated, reducing the population's ability to cope with severe flooding (USAID 17/06/2019). Deforestation, compounded by charcoal exportation, and drought worsen the impact of heavy rainfall as the land is unable to absorb water (FAO 03/05/2018).

Food Insecurity

The drier-than-normal conditions are driving food insecurity. IPC projections indicate that 2.1 million people across Somalia are expected to face food consumption gaps, high acute malnutrition, or depletion of food stocks indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse through December 2019 (IPC 08/2019). An additional 3.4 million are experiencing Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food insecurity. Around 74% of people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) live in rural areas (FAO 09/02/2018).

Previous Displacements

Southern and central Somalia have recorded the highest levels of displacement in the country. In 2019, Hiraan region saw the arrival of 8,000 IDPs due to conflict, drought, and flood. More than 12,000 people were forcibly displaced from Hiraan region itself. In Gedo region, 4,000 IDPs arrived and 8,000 were displaced from the region in 2019 so far (UNHCR 2019). These new displacements added to the 285,000 IDPs already registered in the two regions.

The vast majority of IDPs in Somalia are living in a protracted state of displacement in poor living conditions with inadequate services and in need of shelter and NFI support (Shelter Cluster 02/2019). IDP settlements face particularly high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition (IOM 22/10/2109).

Response capacity

Local and national response capacity

To mitigate and control the effects of the floods, Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SALIM), FAO, and United States Geological Survey have created flood forecasting and early warning systems. Lessons learned from past floods have led to the creation of various initiatives, including the production of a flood bulletin, establishment

of a flood information centre in Somalia, building a flood information dissemination network in Somalia, and developing and improving the flood prediction methodologies (SWALIM 10/06/2016).

Dissemination of early warning information to flood prone-areas is ongoing, including SWALIM flood alert SMS messages to high-risk communities along the Shabelle and Juba rivers. This is helping to reduce the loss of life and assets (OCHA 21/10/2019).

International response capacity

Despite the challenging operational environment, humanitarian agencies have continued to expand their reach across the country in recent years. There are 366 international NGOs and UN agencies across the country (OCHA 08/2019). As of August 2019, there were 91 organisations with an operational presence in Gedo region and 76 in Hiraan region. Humanitarian activities cover all sectors.(OCHA 08/2019).

International organisations are working closely with local and regional administrations to improve conditions of flood-affected people. A Hiraan flood taskforce was activated by the Governor in Belet Weyne to coordinate humanitarian partners and local authorities and strengthen preparedness and response measures (OCHA 21/10/2019). Key humanitarian activities taking place include: provision of clean drinking water to 120,000 families, deployment of emergency supplies such as hygiene kits for 18,000 people, water treatment chemicals, and emergency latrines for 10,000 people (OCHA 21/10/2019, OCHA 1/11/2019). Shelter and WASH needs are being prioritised. Tarpaulins are scheduled to be delivered and distributed within the coming days. WASH and CCCM cluster partners are working to improve the drainage system in IDP settlements in South West state. There are currently four boats and helicopters conducting rescue operations and distributing aid to isolated communities, but more will be required (OCHA 28/10/2019).

On 21 October, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management called on humanitarian partners to intensify their efforts (OCHA 28/10/2019). The European Commission has allocated an additional €850,000 in emergency aid to Somalia (OCHA 1/11/2019).

Information gaps and needs

Information regarding the extent of the damage caused to infrastructure and its impact on humanitarian operations is limited, particularly in terms of road closures or disruptions to communications networks.

There are information gaps regarding the sectoral needs of the affected population and the exact number of people in need. This is particularly true for humanitarian needs among IDP populations.

Key characteristics

Demographic profile: 11,031,386 people (Index Mundi, 2018).

- **0-14 years:** 43.15% (male 2,376,526/female 2,383,060)
- **15-24 years:** 19.04% (male 1,059,608/female 1,040,343)
- **25-54 years:** 31.43% (male 1,795,355/female 1,671,421)
- **55-64 years:** 4.2% (male 230,027/female 233,257)
- **65 years and over:** 2.19% (male 93,736/female 148,053) (2017 est.)

Food security figures: Over 2.1 million people are projected to be in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) in December 2019 (IPC 02/09/2019).

Health statistics: Infant mortality rate: total: 94.8 deaths/1,000 live births. Male: 103.3 deaths/1,000 live births. Female: 86 deaths/1,000 live births (Index Mundi, 2017).

WASH statistics: Drinking water source, improved urban: 69.6% of population, rural: 8.8% of population, total: 31.7% of population / unimproved: urban: 30.4% of population, rural: 91.2% of population, total: 68.3% of population (Index Mundi, 2011)