Key Overall Developments
The worsening security situation in South-Central Somalia continues to jeopardize the work of local and international aid agencies trying to assist millions of Somalis who are in need of humanitarian assistance.

On 22 December, unknown gunmen shot dead the head of WFP security guards in Belet Weyne town. The motive for the killing has not yet been determined. On 27 December, unknown masked gunmen shot and killed a staff of a local NGO (Jubbaland) at his residence in Belet Xaawo town, Gedo region. The gunmen reportedly entered the house of the victim and shot him several times in the presence of his family. The latest murders bring to ten the number of aid-related workers killed in Somalia in 2009. In total ten aid workers are currently held in captivity.

On 27 December, Al Shabaab militia entered the compound of a UN agency in Bu’ale (Middle Juba). The compound is now under the full control of Al Shabaab. On 21 December, a hand grenade was hurled at the UN compound in Mogadishu. No causalities or damage to property occurred. This is the second attack on the compound within two weeks.

Action Against Hunger (ACF) announced through a letter to humanitarian partners on 23 December that the agency will discontinue its humanitarian activities in Galgaduud region. The decision was taken after a comprehensive assessment of their presence in the region following the kidnapping of four of their staff in November 2008 in Dhuusamarreeb, Galgaduud. The staff were released October this year. The letter stated, “With the decision taken, we are intending to send a clear signal to those who are directly targeting aid workers and thereby not only endanger the lives and wellbeing of our staff, but also compromise the ability of international humanitarian organizations to provide life-saving aid & assistance to the civilian population of Somalia”. ACF will engage with other organisations in order to assess if their humanitarian activities (mainly in the field of nutrition) in the area can be continued by others. Elsewhere in Somalia, the agency intends to enlarge its current level of assistance in 2010.

During the past two weeks, escalating clashes between various armed groups were reported in many parts of South-Central Somalia. The worst fighting took place in Mogadishu, Gaalkacyo (Puntland), and Belet Weyne (Hiraan).

In Gaalkacyo, daily clashes between armed militia from South Gaalkacyo and Puntland local municipality forces resulted in significant casualties. According to medical sources, since the fighting broke out in early December, 31 people have been killed and around 100 injured, most of whom were reportedly civilians.

According to OCHA field reports, since 22 December, more than 22 trucks with people returning from Puntland arrived in Waajid, Bakool region. These are IDPs originally from Bay and Bakool. The IDPs have, during the past weeks, experienced harassment in Puntland as the host community blames those from Bay and Bakool for the increasing insecurity in the area.

Since 1 September, a total of 75,000 people have been displaced countrywide primarily due to insecurity and drought. In Mogadishu, 34,000 people have been displaced due to conflict, 27,200 have left the city, while 7,100 have moved to relatively calm districts within Mogadishu.

According to UNHCR, 74,000 people crossed the Gulf of Aden from Somalia and Djibouti to Yemen in 2009. This is a 50 percent increase compared to 2009. At least 309 died during the crossing this year. Roughly 32,000 of the 2009 refugees were Somalis; about the same number as in 2008 while 42,000 were Ethiopians, double the 2008 figure. Around 150,000 Somali refugees currently live in Yemen.
Response
For the first time ever, Child Health Days were implemented in 12 out of 16 districts in Mogadishu. More than 192,000 children under-five and 191,000 women of child bearing age were reached with a life-saving high-impact health package including immunization against measles, polio and DPT, Vitamin A supplements, and de-worming.

Countrywide, the second round of the Child Health Days has so far reached 810,000 children under-five and over 616,000 women.

In December, UNICEF and partners carried out psycho-social and pedagogical skills training for 68 IDP teachers (17 females) in the Afgooye Corridor. The training will enhance the capacity of IDP school teachers and included modules on child-friendly teaching techniques and psycho-social care.

Eighteen days in-service teacher training for 284 Non Formal Education (NFE) teachers (82 females) were successfully completed in Waajid (Bakool). The training covered active learning methods and pedagogical skills, Education Management Information Systems, gender responsiveness in NFE, conflict resolution and community mobilization.

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