

In this issue

[Dry conditions worsen P.1](#)

[Protecting livestock P.2](#)

[Humanitarian access update P.3](#)

[Polio response update P.5](#)

[Humanitarian funding update P.6](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

- Dry conditions worsen across Somalia.
- Protecting livestock to save livelihoods.
- Access constraints continue.
- Redoubling efforts to End Polio Outbreaks
- Sustained response through pooled funds.



Over 1.5 million Somalis, mainly IDPs and rural populations, still face acute food insecurity crisis or worse.

FIGURES

# of food insecure people	4.9m
# of people in humanitarian emergency and crisis (IPC Phases 3 &4)	1.5m
# of people in IPC Phase 2	3.4m
# of children projected to be malnourished	1.2m
# of internally displaced people	2.6m

Dry conditions worsen across Somalia

Worsening dry conditions have resulted in deteriorating pasture and water availability particularly in northern and central regions of Somalia, compounding an already fragile humanitarian situation.

Humanitarian partners across the country reported critical water shortages and a rapid decline in the remaining water reservoirs during the month of February, particularly in the most affected northern and the central regions. In the worst affect areas, aid agencies are already reporting stress induced migration among pastoralist communities in search of water and pasture, with some moving to urban centers to seek casual labour or to join relatives.



Health partners are providing hygiene messages at water points to help prevent the spread of water-borne diseases. Photo/UNICEF.

The dry conditions follow a poor 2018 *Deyr* rainy season (Oct-Dec), ongoing conflict in some parts of the country as well as continued displacement and forced evictions in urban centers. Recovery for the most vulnerable populations is projected to be very slow. Overall, 4.9 million Somalis are estimated to be food insecure. Compared to the post-*Gu* assessment results in August 2018, the number of people in IPC 3 and above remained at 1.5 million with a geographic shift to the north; however, the number of people in IPC 2 increased by over 10 per cent from 3,077,000 to 3,392,000. The situation is expected to deteriorate further, if aid is not sustained or scaled up in the worst-affected areas and if the next *Gu* rainy season performs poorly. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) launched the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan seeking \$1.08 billion to provide life-saving assistance and livelihood support to 3.4 million of the 4.2 million Somalis in need of assistance.

Water assessments in affected areas

The preliminary findings of the water assessments conducted by authorities and WASH cluster partners in Hirshabelle, Puntland and Somaliland states and the Banadir region have shown a deterioration in water availability and early signs of drought. Most shallow wells, boreholes and *berkads* have dried up in some of the worst affected areas, according to the assessments. For example, in the Badhan district of Sanaag region and its surrounding villages, three major boreholes that supply water to Balibusle, Damala Xagare

FUNDING

\$1.08BILLION

requested in the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan

\$68 MILLION

Total humanitarian funding received towards the 2019 HRP

Source <http://fts.unocha.org>, 3 March 2019.

and Dhahar villagers have broken down due to over use as more people moved to these areas in search of water.

Authorities appeal for assistance

Authorities in Hirshabelle, Puntland and Somaliland and South West states have appealed for urgent assistance including the provision of water, food, nutrition supplies, education and healthcare services, for worst-affected areas. On 28 February, the Governor of Sanaag region issued an appeal seeking assistance for 30,000 families in urgent need of WASH assistance and 20,000 households in need of food. Prioritization is ongoing to allocate the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) resources to enable aid agencies scale up response in the worst affected areas in the north. See page 6 for more details.

Some authorities have appealed for urgent assistance.

Humanitarian impact

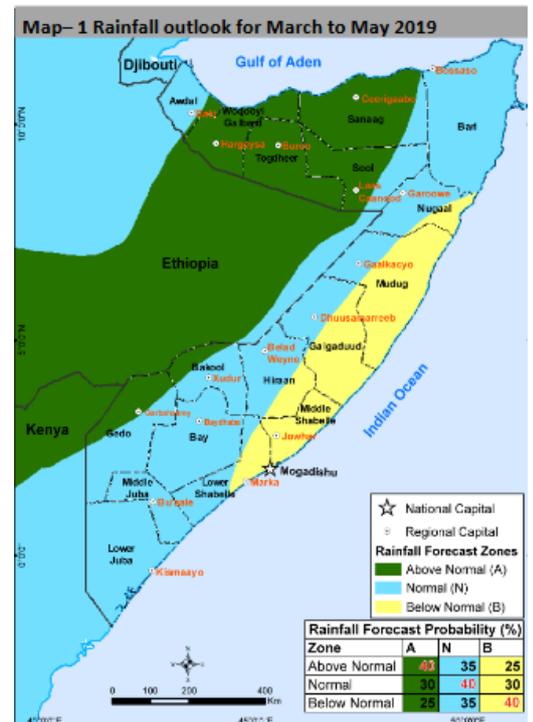
Health partners are concerned about possible outbreaks of communicable diseases due to the worsening water shortages. Already in Doolow district in Jubaland State, health officials have reported 35 suspected cases of AWD/cholera admitted at the local health center between 22 and 23 February. The majority of the cases are from IDP settlements in Doolow town. The outbreak is attributed to limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities. An inter-agency coordination meeting on 25 February recommended the re-activation of the district AWD/cholera Task Force and establishment of a Cholera Treatment Center (CTC). In Banadir region, an influx of IDPs from rural areas has been reported. The new arrivals in Mogadishu, who fled from Lower Shabelle region over the last months, have cited water shortages and conflict as the main cause of their displacement. In Galmudug State, water prices have reportedly more than doubled. Deteriorating pasture is also of concern for pastoralists.

The 2019 Gu season rainfall outlook

According to the recently issued climate outlook for the Greater Horn of Africa (GHACOF51), the 2019 Gu rainy season in Somalia is expected to be near normal to above normal in most areas with warmer than normal temperatures across the whole country. There is increased likelihood of above normal to near normal rains with 70 per cent probability of above normal to normal rains in Somaliland.

The Ethiopian highlands, whose rainfall contributes about 90 per cent of the river flow in Juba and Shabelle rivers inside Somalia, are also expected to record enhanced Gu seasonal rains. The southern parts of the country, including large parts of central regions and Puntland will likely receive near normal rainfall. While, the coastal and adjacent parts of Nugaal, Mudug, Galgaduud, Middle and Lower Shabelle regions are expected to receive depressed rains with a higher percent probability of below normal to near normal rains.

Near normal to above normal 2019 Gu rains are expected in most areas.



Source: SWALIM

Normal to above normal rains will enhance pasture and water availability for livestock, improve livestock body condition and reproduction, and facilitate increased crop cultivation in rain-fed crop-growing areas of Somalia, which might see food production to improve. This will extend the window of opportunity to strengthen the resilience of Somalis by implementing programmes that offer long-lasting, durable solutions to complement life-saving humanitarian interventions.

Protecting livestock to save livelihoods

The United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has launched a mass vaccination campaign targeting over one million goats in villages across Somalia's central Galgadud region. The two-month vaccination programme is to decrease the likelihood of transboundary animal diseases such as *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) and sheep and goat pox, which were first confirmed in nearly 100 animals in mid-2018.

Livestock is the main source of livelihoods for rural communities.



Massive livestock losses have severely affected Somalia's economy and people. The vaccination campaign will target vulnerable households. Photo/FAO.

The vaccinations began in villages on the outskirts of the town of Abudwak, Adado, Dhusamareb, El-Bur, Eldher and Guri'el, with teams targeting the livestock of 18,000 vulnerable households. Dr Suleiman Mohamed Salah, Head of the Central Regions Livestock Professional Association (CERELPA) which carried out the vaccinations, said veterinarians and support staff had been deployed around watering points and deep into remote areas. *"The vaccinations will protect livestock from disease and cushion pastoralists from economic loss*

incurred from illness and death of their animals," Dr Salah stated.

Mr. Abdirahman Barre Mohamed, a pastoralist from the Dariye Hassan village, said the campaign had reassured him about the safety of his animals. *"Even the sick livestock recovered after they were vaccinated. We are keen to access livestock drugs and we welcome this move as it helps us to have healthy animals,"* he said. Mr. Omar Shidane Abdulle, from the village of Labi-arag, said 18 of his 150 animals had died of suspected PPR and he was relieved to have the remaining livestock – and thus his income – protected through the initiative.

Rearing livestock for milk or meat is the main source of income for millions of rural people in the country. FAO estimates that Somalia exported some five million livestock in 2016, mainly to the Gulf region, generating nearly \$330 million. However, export restrictions, particularly to Saudi Arabia over fears of the spread of contagious diseases, mean the sector has taken a severe hit and in 2017 export numbers almost halved, to just over 2.5 million livestock. The restrictions were lifted in July 2018.

Combined with their high exposure to adverse climatic conditions such as drought and floods that can kill off large numbers of animals, the pastoralists are in a precarious situation. FAO is working to strengthen the livestock sector through short- and long-term interventions, an example of which is animal treatment and vaccinations that in 2018 reached over 37 million livestock, protecting the food and income security of more than 5.7 million people.

More than 1.5 million Somalis are in crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse, and many more are on the brink of crisis. As their primary source of food, income and trade, livestock are a lifeline for pastoralists. Not only do these large-scale vaccination campaigns keep the animals alive, they also mean they become more productive, providing more meat, milk and increased income for families, communities and markets across the country. Helping people become self-reliant is 100 times more cost-effective than giving them aid: it costs about \$40 to replace an animal, but just 40 cents to vaccinate one.

While this year's HRP remains focused on the immediate needs of people in the most vulnerable circumstances, complementary development assistance in Somalia has

Somalia exported approximately five million head of livestock in 2016, generating nearly \$330 million.

become more important. Assisting people to protect their livelihoods and enhance their coping capacities will help to break the cycle of vulnerability. Humanitarian and development partners continue to work together to promote resilience and to improve self-reliance. Ultimately, supporting rural communities and strengthening their resilience will lead to a reduction of humanitarian needs.

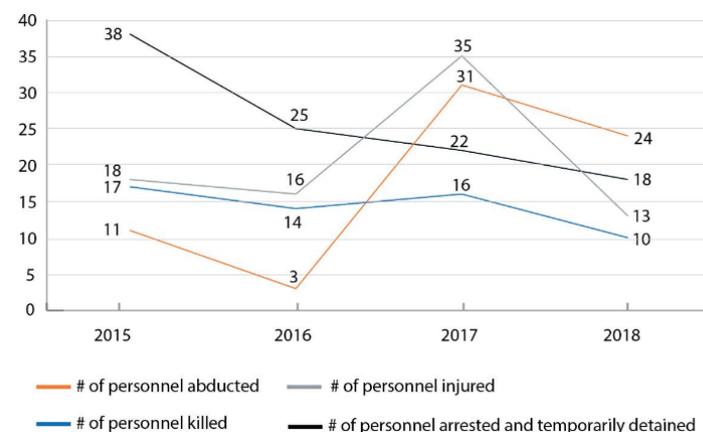
Access constraints continue

The volatile and unpredictable situation in the country remains a major source of concern as it continues to hamper the ability of humanitarians to reach the people in need and sustain their operations among the affected populations. Some 67 humanitarian personnel were directly affected by violent incidents in 2018, which is significantly lower than the 116 reported in 2017, partly due to the scaled-up response in drought-affected hard-to-reach areas.

Some 67 humanitarian personnel were directly affected by violent incidents in 2018.

Violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities and assets remains a major concern. In 2018, some 10 humanitarian workers were killed, 13 injured, 24 abducted, 18 arrested and temporarily detained, and two expelled by the authorities for alleged infractions. In comparison, in 2017, some 16 humanitarian personnel were killed, 35 injured, 31 abducted, 22 arrested and temporarily detained, three physically assaulted and nine expelled.

In comparison, in 2017, some 16 humanitarian personnel were killed, 35 injured, 31 abducted, 22 arrested and temporarily detained, three physically assaulted and nine expelled.



Source: OCHA. These numbers do not include expulsions due to alleged infractions.

Just like in the previous years, improvised explosive device attacks in the highly populated places, particularly Mogadishu, continue to account for a majority of the humanitarian casualties. There have also been attacks, killings, kidnappings for ransom, abductions, expulsions, looting and the destruction of assets and facilities, arrests and detentions, and verbal and written threats.

The civilian population, particularly the people in need, as well as humanitarian organizations continue to experience severe challenges along the roads in 42 districts across the country. This is despite assurances by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and some Federal Member States (FMS), including Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Puntland and South West states, to open the main supply routes. A siege by a non-state armed actor on some government-held towns in Hirshabelle, Jubaland and South West states has hindered the movement of humanitarian and commercial supplies by road. In Burlo Burte, Xudur and Wajid, non-state armed groups members continue to target the donkey-cart operators using minor roads and tracks to deliver essential supplies to the towns. They often confiscate or destroy the supplies, attack the transporters, kill them and/or levy fines. Humanitarian organizations continue to access besieged towns by air.

Aid agencies continue to access besieged towns by air.

Meanwhile, extortion and other forms of violence are also common at the numerous illegal checkpoints manned by both government affiliated and non-state armed actors. Similar violations are also reported at regular checkpoints along the major roads in the southern and central areas of Somalia, with the Mogadishu-Afgooye-Baidoa, Mogadishu-Balcad-Jowhar and Cadaado-Gaalkacyo roads being the most affected.

The humanitarian community has continued to make efforts to scale up its presence in Somalia. However, administrative/ bureaucratic impediments remain high and continue to disrupt humanitarian programmes. In 2018, there were more than 100 incidents where

humanitarian operations were interrupted by administrative impediments. These include arbitrary taxation, demand by the authorities to participate in contracting suppliers and service providers for aid organizations, and interference in staff recruitment, among others. There have been disruptions, delays, raids at humanitarian facilities, arrests, detentions and expulsions of humanitarian workers, causing the suspension of programmes.

Redoubling efforts to End Polio Outbreaks

As Somalia is facing another phase of vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) outbreak, the polio team spent January and February planning for a robust outbreak response, to stem further spread of the strains of polioviruses. (Please visit <https://www.who.int/features/qa/64/en/> for additional information on cVDPVs.)

To maintain protective immunity among children across the country, the polio programme will conduct the next nationwide polio campaign March onwards.

At a workshop conducted in Mombasa, Kenya, in January, 70 polio team members from Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya met to develop coordinated and coherent strategic outbreak response plans for each country, and the Horn of Africa region. The plans take into account similarities between people living in these countries, and along the border areas. They also incorporate



recommendations made by two technical missions, the Outbreak Response

Assessment (OBRA) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), that assessed the work conducted by Somalia to address the outbreaks in 2018.

Thousands of health workers are working to stem the spread of polio across the country. Photo/WHO.

Other activities undertaken include refresher trainings in Entebbe, Uganda, and Hargeisa, Somaliland, for regional technical polio staff. Social mobilization trainings were conducted in Hargeisa and Garowe for regional and district social mobilization coordinators (37 in Somaliland and 46 in Puntland), who were trained on Communication for Development (C4D) for polio, using global evidence-based approaches to behavioural change and community engagement.

Since the viruses were discovered late in 2017, 12 children have been paralyzed with cVDPVs. So far this year, 46 children with paralysis have been presented to health workers; 31 cases that were suspected to have polio were discarded, as no polio viruses were found in these specimens. Polio virus testing is underway for 15 cases. Polio teams continue to monitor key areas in the Mogadishu sewer system for evidence of further circulating viruses. To maintain protective immunity among children across the country, Somalia's polio programme will conduct the next nationwide polio campaign from 24 March onwards.

Polio remains one of the biggest risks for children in Somalia, alongside other vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, whooping cough, and diphtheria. Efforts are being made to strengthen routine immunization system, which is the backbone of children's health.

Sustained response through pooled funds

The SHF will complement CERF interventions in northern Somalia and additionally target priority areas in central and southern Somalia.

Through 2018, the two humanitarian pooled funds – the Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) – continued to play a vital role in sustaining and, where necessary, scaling up response in the country. Combined, the SHF and CERF contributed eight per cent (\$70 million) of the received 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) funding (\$861 million), with the SHF allocating \$53 million for activities across the country and CERF providing more than \$17 million for rapid response to drought and floods. The SHF provided a particularly important boost for early 2019 response through its second 2018 Standard Allocation that ensured sustained humanitarian response and continuity of programming in multiple targeted areas across the country, including those with high IDP concentration (Baidoa, Mogadishu, Bossaso and Hargeisa) and rural communities in Awdal, Bay, Gedo, Hiraan, Lower Juba, Lower and Middle Shabelle.

Alarmed by the deteriorating situation as Somalia entered the dry *Jilal* season, strategic prioritization has been ongoing for the integrated pooled funds response to the hardest-hit areas in the north, central, but also southern Somalia. The anticipated CERF funding will be used to target communities in emergency in Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed regions and severely acutely malnourished women and children supported with nutrition interventions, supported by health and

WASH, in Sool, Sanaag and parts of Bari region. The SHF will complement CERF interventions in northern Somalia and additionally target priority areas in south and central Somalia. The selection of the SHF-funded projects and partners will take place in March.

Humanitarian funding requirements for Somalia remain high in 2019 – \$1.1 billion has been requested for the 2019 HRP. So far, \$134 million has been received, of which \$68 million against the HRP and \$66 million for activities strategically aligned with, but outside of the Plan. Timely and sufficient donor contributions, whether channeled through the pooled funds or directly to humanitarian partners – will be essential in 2019 to ensure the continuity of humanitarian programming across the country.



For further information, please contact:

Tapiwa Gomo, Head of Communication, gomo@un.org, Tel. +252 616 548 007. Antonette Miday, Public Information Officer, miday@un.org, Tel. +252-619150461. Mursal Ali Ahmed | Public Information Analyst, mursalali@un.org, Tel: +252619150457/ 252615679998. OCHA humanitarian bulletins are available at www.unocha.org/somalia | www.unocha.org | www.reliefweb.int