The mission of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.

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Situation overview

The 2020 Gu’ (April-June) rains subsided in many areas of Somalia and flood waters receded in several villages along the Juba and Shabelle river valleys. Despite a general reduction in precipitation, flood risks remain. Heavy rains in Hargeysa, Somaliland, on 29 May triggered a flash flood that washed away a vehicle, killing two people while a woman was also electrocuted.

In Qardho town, Bari region in Puntland State, authorities and partners estimate that 80 per cent of the 22,500 people who were displaced by flash floods in April, have returned to their homes following a reduction in rainfall in the area. In Belet Weyne district, Hiraan region in Hirshabelle State, the Shabelle River dropped from the bank-full level of 8.30 metres as of 28 May to 6.35 metres as of 31 May. The road connecting Ceel Jaale and northern districts is accessible. The district task force estimates that 12,000 people out of 240,000 who were displaced, have already returned to their homes.

In Lower Shabelle region, South West State, water levels receded in Mashani, Wagadi and Majabto villages of Afgooye district and sections of Qoryooley and Marka districts. As a result, some of the 26,000 displaced people have started returning home. Like the Shabelle, there is a reduction in water levels along the entire length of the Juba River. Flooding reduced in the upper reaches, but some farmlands are still submerged in Middle and Lower Juba.

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Increases in Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) and cholera due to flooding remain a concern. On 28 May, the South West State Ministry of Health (MoH) reported 121 AWD cases and four deaths in Bay Haw and Bay Regional hospitals. Three out of four water samples collected by the MoH, the state Ministry of Energy and Water and the WASH Cluster from four sections of Baidoa town were found to be contaminated. In Banadir region, 57 AWD cases and six related deaths were reported between 15 and 19 May. The cases, mostly children under 5, are from Hargadid, Dhibaawe, Sanaag, Gargaar, Kulan and Galadmacquul IDP settlements in Kahda district.

Since April, floods have affected nearly a million people in Somalia, displacing close to half of them in 29 districts. The floods impacted more people compared to the 2019 Deyr (October-December) floods that affected 544,400 people and the 2018 Gu’ floods that affected 352,500 people. Moreover, the floods came at a time when Somalia is grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and swarms of locusts in northern and central regions, creating a triple threat.

Humanitarian impact and needs

The Gu’ seasonal rains exacerbated Somalia’s complex humanitarian situation. As people who were displaced by the floods return to their damaged homes, they need assistance to rebuild their shelters, food and non-food items (NFIs) as well as WASH assistance. Authorities in Qardho, Puntland have appealed for shelter, food, NFIs and other assistance to enable dignified returns. An estimated 80 per cent of the shops and market areas in Qardho town were significantly

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damaged by floods. In Belet Weyne, the returnees face challenges such as contaminated water sources (shallow wells and water storages), damaged residences and a high risk of malaria from mosquitoes that are breeding in pools of stagnant water. Most families reportedly need water treatment tablets and mosquito nets while farmers need assistance to fix damaged farm infrastructure such as irrigation canals, water pumps, produce storage facilities as well as to recoup losses after their crops were washed away by the floods. The district flood task force has reported that flood-affected people are also struggling to access markets. In Bulo Burto, Hiiran region, where riverine floods have displaced nearly 20,000 people in Indhaceel, Bagabeso, Wadajir and Haji Bube villages, houses and many latrines were damaged.

In Lower Shabelle, South West State, the road connecting Marka town to the nearby villages was damaged, forcing people to travel using boats via the ocean. The inaccessibility of Marka town remains a concern as people from outside the town cannot easily access the main referral hospital. Some other roads connecting towns and villages are still impassable to heavy vehicles, which is slowing the movement of goods, including humanitarian supplies. Communal latrines and other social facilities used by IDPs in South West State and Banadir region were also damaged. Partners report that the affected IDPs need emergency health kits to mitigate the risk of disease outbreaks in their settlements.

Humanitarian responses

Humanitarian partners have delivered assistance to more than 255,200 flood-affected people across the country to date while maintaining protocols required by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Puntland, the WASH Cluster partners supplied hygiene kits containing soap, water cans, aqua tabs to over 8,000 flood-affected families in Qardho. In addition, with support from UNICEF, partners conducted hygiene promotion and awareness campaigns targeting 300 households. Save the Children International is supplying water to displaced people and most vulnerable households in Qardho town for one month.

Following localised flash flooding in Galmudug, the KSRelief donated one month supply of food to 2,600 households, each receiving 90 kg of rice, sugar, spaghetti, dates, wheat flour, beans, and cooking oil. Mercy USA distributed high energy biscuits in Bacatwyene to 1,500 children and is running a health centre that is offering services including maternal childcare to flood-affected people. UNICEF is supporting the provision of water to 2,000 people in Bacatwyene and hygiene promotion activities. WFP is distributing assorted food relief for displaced people in Bacatwyene and south Gaalkacyo. However, critical NFIs and shelter gaps still exist in Bacatwyene, south Gaalkacyo, Dhussamarreeb and Cadaado districts.

In Belet Weyne district, partners have reached 96,000 people with clean water, 80,000 with food and cash assistance, 85,000 with health services and 30,000 with nutrition services. The flood task force is coordinating the delivery of assistance in conjunction with OCHA. In addition, the Logistics Cluster is facilitating the air transportation of essential cargo such as sandbags donated by UNSOS to the Federal Government, to Belet Weyne and Jowhar. On 20 and 21 May about 3 MT of relief items were airlifted to Jowhar and 5 MT to Belet Weyne on behalf of IOM for their partner, the Danish Refugee Council.

WHO donated emergency health kits to the South West State Ministry of Health to benefit an estimated 10,000 people. The agency also donated basic health kits for 1,000 patients for three months and cholera treatment kits for 100 patients. NGO partners have distributed more than 14,268 NFI kits in Baidoa, Xudur, Afgooye and Marka. Three major riverbank breakages in Afgooye and Golweyn canal were closed by community volunteers and a local organisation.

In Jubaland, American Refugee Committee trained 20 health staff on AWD and cholera prevention and management and distributed 450 hygiene kits in Dhexley, Afmadow district. In addition, IOM conducted hygiene promotion activities and water chlorination in Doolow and Luuq. On 20 May, an integrated health and WASH project supported by the Somalia Humanitarian Fund was launched in Buurhahwo town.

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