

STATEMENT

HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR URGES PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS AS CLASHES DISPLACE AN ESTIMATED 56,000 PEOPLE IN JUBALAND STATE, SOMALIA.

Mogadishu, 3 March 2020 - Preliminary reports indicate that up to 9,000 households (approximately 56,000 people) have been displaced in Gedo, Jubaland State, following a stand-off since early February between the parties to the conflict in the region.

“All efforts must be made to minimise harm to civilians and damage to schools, health centres and homes,” the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mr. Adam Abdelmoula, said. “I urge parties to take all the necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian assets amid the escalation in violence.”

The initial clashes of 7 February and the escalating tensions that led to more hostilities on 2 March have resulted in large-scale displacement of civilians, mainly from Belet Xaawo and the nearby Belet Amin Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) settlements.

Some IDPs have moved towards Doolow, Luuq, areas within the town, villages outside Belet Xaawo town and into the bushes. Some of the affected people were reportedly transported on trucks or walked, while those who were reportedly stopped from exiting the area have relocated to other parts of the town.

“It is imperative for all parties to safeguard the movement of civilians out of conflict areas in safety and dignity so that they may have unobstructed access to humanitarian protection and assistance,” the Humanitarian Coordinator said.

An estimated 2.6 million people are currently displaced within Somalia as a result of ongoing conflict and recurring climatic shocks. In 2019 alone, approximately 190,000 people were displaced as a result of conflict. In January 2020, some 35,000 people were reported as newly displaced in Somalia, including 28,000 people fleeing insecurity.

Somalia is preparing to deposit the instrument of ratification for the Kampala Convention on the Protection and Assistance of IDPs at the African Union, which was signed by the President of Somalia on 26 November 2019.

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