Climatic shocks, conflict, insecurity and political instability continue to drive humanitarian need in the Horn of Africa. While food insecurity increased by nearly 24 per cent in 2017, it decreased in the first month of 2018. In Somalia, famine risk declined, but needs remain high, with some 2.7 million severely food insecure people in need of assistance. In Kenya, the number of severely food insecure decreased from 2.6 million in December 2017 to 2.35 million by January 2018. Following the meher assessment in Ethiopia, 7.9 million people are severely food insecure and in need of assistance.

People continued to be displaced by drought and conflict. Some 106,000 people were newly displaced in Somalia between 1 January and 28 February due to water shortages and some areas of the country are experiencing stress-induced migration of pastoralist communities in search of water and pasture. In Ethiopia, 47,441 people were displaced between 1 January and 28 February. The number of refugees hosted in the region increased by 11,397 between 1 January and 28 February.

Several disease outbreaks are ongoing in the Horn of Africa. Although the number of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD)/cholera cases tapered towards the end of 2017 outbreaks of AWD were ongoing in Dire Dawa and Somali regions in Ethiopia, and outbreaks of cholera were ongoing in Tana River, Garissa, Mombasa, Turkana, Siaya, Tharaka Nithi, Meru, Busia and West Pokot counties in Kenya and Banadir, Hiraan and Lower Juba in Somalia, as at the end of February 2018. In Kenya, 1,476 cholera cases and 29 deaths were reported since January 2018, compared to 4,079 cases in 2017. Measles cases reported in 2018 are on the rise in Ethiopia (532), Kenya (24), and Somalia (2,853).