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HIGHLIGHTS

- Drought has worsened in many parts of Somalia and could push the country to the verge of a catastrophe in coming months. Over 4.3 million people are affected, up from 3.2 million a month ago, with over 271,000 displaced in search of water, food and pasture.

- Health facilities are reporting increased admissions of children with malnutrition, especially in areas affected by drought in Galmudug, Jubaland, Puntland and South West states. In many drought-affected areas, Global Acute Malnutrition is at Serious level (10 to 14.9 per cent), rising to Critical (15 per cent or more) in some locations.

- Evictions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from their temporary shelters is contributing to new and secondary displacement. Over 2,400 IDP sites exist in Somalia, of which 85 per cent are built on private land.

- An estimated 98 per cent of Somali women aged 15 to 49 years old have been subjected to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the majority between ages 5 and 9 years. There is no national legislation outlawing FGM, but Puntland passed an FGM Zero Tolerance Bill in 2021.

- Since October 2021, at least 15,000 people who were recently displaced by drought have been registered in Qansahaley and Kabaasa settlements in Doolow Town, Gedo Region, and in nearby Qurdubay and Kaxarey sites.

KEY FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People needing assistance</th>
<th>People displaced within the country</th>
<th>Children projected to be acutely malnourished</th>
<th>People experiencing acute food insecurity</th>
<th>People affected by drought</th>
<th>People displaced by drought</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.7M</td>
<td>2.9M</td>
<td>1.2M</td>
<td>3.8M</td>
<td>4.3M</td>
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DROUGHT CONDITIONS DEEPENING IN SOMALIA

Drought has deepened in Somalia and could push the country to the verge of a catastrophe in the coming months. Due to the deteriorating situation, the number of people affected has increased by nearly 35 per cent in just one month, from 3.2 million to about 4.3 million people. Of these, about 271,000 people have been displaced from their homes in search of food, water and pasture, according to data from partners. A rapid assessment by Save the Children estimates that over 3.6 million people do not have enough water, a critical need for both household and livestock consumption.1 Other reports indicate

1 Save the Children, Somalia Drought Rapid Needs Assessment - Preliminary Findings, January 2022.
that livestock and crop losses are mounting, decimating a key source of livelihood for Somali families. Jubaland State, the central regions of Somalia and adjacent areas are facing extreme drought, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)\(^2\). The poor rains during the last three consecutive seasons have resulted in failed crop harvests and widespread water shortages, triggering abnormal livestock migration, decline in livestock production and increased livestock deaths. Water and food prices continue to rise sharply in affected areas.

Extreme water shortages, and lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities have heightened the risk of disease outbreaks. Children are dropping out of school as parents can no longer afford to pay fees. Food insecurity and malnutrition are increasing. Furthermore, drought-induced migration is on the rise, as people move in search of water, food, pasture and basic services. In Galmudug State, authorities estimate that 657,000 people are affected by drought, and have established four sites to accommodate the new arrivals. In Jubaland State, at least 140,000 people have been displaced since October 2021, and pastoralists have lost 80 per cent of their cattle. Similarly, in Puntland, over 34,000 affected people in Jaribbin District need urgent assistance. Somalia, which was previously less impacted, is facing moderate to severe drought conditions; authorities estimate that 810,000 people are affected. In South West State, the CCCM Cluster reports that 18,462 people were displaced in January from rural areas to towns in Bay and Bakool regions. IOM's latest Displacement Tracking Matrix analysis indicates that deteriorating drought conditions in Somalia could displace over 1 million people by April, if urgent action to mitigate the situation is not taken.

The drought conditions are expected to worsen until the start of the gu’ rains in April, which is likely to devastate livelihoods. Water levels in Juba and Shabelle rivers are at historically low levels, and some sections may dry up in February. Local communities, authorities and humanitarian partners are scaling up assistance and intensifying resource mobilization, but additional funding for priority sectors is urgently required to save lives and livelihoods, including substantive and early funding for the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has warned that without urgent preventative action to alleviate the crisis, lives could be lost to the escalating drought.

**Somalia Humanitarian Fund allocates US$25 million for early response to the drought**

The Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) is launching an early allocation of $25 million to provide immediate support to communities critically affected by the drought in key hotspot locations, particularly in under-served and hard-to-reach areas. This allocation is complementing the recent grant allocation of $17 million from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). This comes at a time when recurring shocks have deepened poverty, compounded pre-existing vulnerabilities and stripped communities of their livelihoods. Among the first sources of funding this year, this allocation will likely catalyze additional resources and early action to those most affected by the drought.

The carry-over funding from donor contributions received in December in response to the deteriorating situation has allowed the SHF to lead an early response that closely complements the CERF and SHF drought response allocations launched last month. This allocation will focus on integrated multi-cluster interventions that prioritize key life-saving activities for those most affected. It will also support families displaced by drought and new arrivals at IDP sites by ensuring provision of key services. In addition, cluster-specific interventions such as WASH, Livelihoods and Nutrition will allow for emergency livestock assistance, provision of safe drinking water, and continuation of nutrition life-saving services.

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\(^2\) FAO, *Somalia Drought Update*, 27 January 2022
PROGRAMMES SCALED UP AS MALNUTRITION CASES RISE

Across Somalia, an estimated 1.2 million children under the age of 5 are acutely malnourished, of whom nearly 300,000 are projected to be severely malnourished and may be at risk of dying without immediate treatment, according to the Nutrition Cluster partners. The prevalence of acute malnutrition is particularly high in drought-affected areas. In Galmudug, Jubaland and Puntland, nutrition admission caseloads have reportedly increased by about 12 per cent between the third and fourth quarter of 2021. In some areas, Global Acute Malnutrition is at Serious level (10 to 14.9 per cent) or Critical (15 per cent or more).

In response, Nutrition Cluster partners have scaled up programmes, reaching about 478,000 boys and 595,200 girls aged 6 to 59 months and about 278,000 Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW) with nutrition treatment and prevention services, in 2021. Those reached include over 257,000 severely acute malnourished children. Over 327,600 children under 2 years and PLWs received blanket supplementary feeding assistance. Services were provided through 988 operational nutrition facilities; 755 facilities provided outpatient therapeutic programmes, 50 provided inpatient therapeutic services for children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) with medical complications, and 500 provided feeding programmes to children with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) and PLWs. Most programmes are integrated, and services provided by one partner.

The cluster is extending nutrition services to hard-to-reach areas through national partners. In the last three months, however, escalating drought has created more challenges, including funding constraints as partners overstretched their normal programming, to meet rising needs. In 2021, the nutrition cluster received only 46 per cent of its funding requirement, affecting prevention services and supplies for MAM programmes. In 2022, the cluster is asking for US$178.8 million to meet the needs of 1.8 million people and is calling for urgent funding. In addition, the cluster continues to be constrained by access challenges, especially in hard-to-reach areas in Hirshabelle, Jubaland and South West states, where delivery of supplies has been especially difficult in some districts.

IDP EVICTIONS HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR PROTECTION

Conflict and insecurity remain prevalent drivers of displacement in Somalia. In 2021, an estimated 874,000 people were displaced across Somalia, according to the UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), of whom 544,000 were displaced by conflict and insecurity. Many of those displaced live in informal settlements and often at the risk of eviction, largely due to lack of land tenure as they are settled on private lands. Over 2,400 IDP sites exist in Somalia, of which 85 per cent are built on private land3. About 1.8 million IDPs (62 per cent of the 2.9 million IDPs in the country) are at high risk of eviction. From January to August 2021, over 92,000 people were evicted, mostly in Banadir region, where about 85 per cent of all evictions occur.

During the reporting period, in South Gaalkacyo, about 1,400 IDPs in Bula Jawan settlement in Galmudug Region are at risk of eviction, following an instruction from the landlord, despite living on the land since 2016. On 13 January, in Banadir, 400 IDPs were evicted from two settlements in Daynille and Garasbaly districts. The same day, nearly 1,300 people were reportedly evicted by non-state armed actors from Garasaley village, Wanla Weyn District, Lower Shabelle Region. The evictions are largely due to lack of security of tenure; an obstacle to the enjoyment of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights. Efforts to support the victims are hampered by several factors. For example, victims of spontaneous evictions require emergency response, however this needs funding. There is also limited capacity among implementers and practitioners to respond to HLP-specific needs. Despite these challenges, HLP interventions are ongoing including eviction responses, information services and technical support.

Over the last two years, there has been a significant decline in forced evictions due to advocacy and policy influence, systematic monitoring, and analysis of eviction data to inform response, according to protection partners. This is especially the case in areas of Somalia where local moratoriums were issued, eviction task forces established, and robust legal aid interventions and information campaigns on HLP-specific violations initiated. The Protection Cluster has developed a 2022–2023 strategy to complement the Humanitarian Country Team Centrality of Protection Strategy and existing Area of Responsibility (AoRs) strategies. However, concerns remain that, going by past trends, full implementation of the strategy will be difficult unless adequate funds are provided. In 2021, the Protection Cluster and AoRs requested US$106.6 million but received only $27 million (25 per cent), which significantly hindered effective delivery of protection services.

**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION STILL RIFE IN SOMALIA**

Humanitarian partners in Somalia continue to reaffirm their commitments towards ensuring zero tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in the country. According to UNFPA, the 2020 Somalia Health and Demographic Survey shows that at least 98 per cent of Somali women aged 15 to 49 years old have been subjected to FGM, the majority between ages 5 and 9 years old. There is no national legislation in Somalia outlawing FGM, but Puntland passed an FGM Zero Tolerance Bill in 2021.

UNICEF and UNFPA are working with Somali communities through the Joint Programme on Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation, to change cultural attitudes and educate families on the life-threatening consequences of forcing young girls to undergo FGM. Young Somali girls are at the forefront within their communities in calling for the abolition of the FGM practice. In Galmudug, Puntland and Somaliland, CARE is implementing a leadership empowerment programme to enable girls to become advocates against FGM. Under the programme, 1,990 girls have been trained on peer-to-peer support, decision making, sexual reproductive health rights and guided on how to disseminate this information to their community.

Several international conventions prohibit FGM, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, but the practice continues globally. FGM is a serious human rights violation and causes permanent harm to women and girls. It is commemorated every year on 6 February to remind the world of the urgent need to combat the harmful practice. UN agencies are working to eradicate FGM globally by 2030, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework. However, an alarming trend has been reported in which roughly one in four girls who have been subjected to FGM, were cut by health personnel.

**DISPLACED FAMILIES HARD-HIT BY DROUGHT IN JUBALAND**

Qansahaley settlement is a dusty expanse of make-shift shelters located in Doolow Town, Gedo Region in Jubaland State, Somalia. The settlement hosts more than 42,500 internally displaced people, including about 7,800 who have been forced by severe drought in the last four months to abandon their homes. “It took me two days to get here with my three children,” said Rahima Hassan, 19, who arrived in Qansahaley in November 2021, from Qansax Dheere district in Bay Region. “We lost all our crops during two consecutive dry seasons, so we left our home and came here,” she added.

Rahima’s husband, Ibrahim, spends his day looking for employment as a casual labourer in the town, but work is difficult to find. “It is better here because we get some humanitarian assistance,” she said, adding that the aid enables her children aged 7, 5 and 2, to survive. “At the moment, we do not plan to go back to Qansax Dheere.”

Doolow last received substantial rains in March 2020. Since October 2021, the district has been hit by severe drought, leading to a steady increase in the number of people in need. “We have seen droughts before, but this time is different,” said 60-year-old Abdi Barre, chairlady of Kaxarey village - south of Doolow. In past years, local pastoralists would, whenever drought struck, seek food, pasture and water in
nearby regions and in neighbouring Ethiopia and Kenya. This time, drought has spread to all those locations and there is nowhere to go.

The situation is similarly grave for Dunia Muhamad, a 29-year-old mother of seven who recently arrived in Kaxarey settlement from her home 35 km away, in search of a livelihood for her children. Dunia lives in a makeshift dwelling, which offers little protection from the sun, heat and dust. All her children are malnourished. “We lost 20 goats and one of our two camels,” she said. “My husband sells firewood in Belet Xaawo and sends help because we do not get enough assistance here.”

Since October 2021, at least 15,000 people have arrived in Qansahaley and Kabaasa IDP settlements, as well as two additional areas in Qurdubay and Kaxarey. Most new arrivals are women and children, the men staying behind to try and save the remaining livestock. Partners are concerned that the women and girls face higher protection risks. In addition, there are virtually no provisions for the special needs of 320 people living with disabilities in Qansahaley. “Drought has affected all of us, but mostly mothers,” said Saghe Abdnasir, chair of the displaced women in Qansahaley. “Think of a mother who gives birth here, has no care, not enough water or food, yet has to take care of the family.”

Humanitarian workers in Doolow are worried that the next two to three months, starting January, will be critical as the situation is projected to escalate. In January, an estimated 62,700 people were displaced due to drought in Jubaland. In addition, malnutrition is rising. In Doolow, Luuq and Belet Xaawo districts, children admitted in stabilization centres in December constituted an all-time high of 195, compared to 127 in November and 88 in October. “Everything depends on the rains,” said Shueb Abdishakur, medical officer at Doolow referral hospital, which is supported by the NGO Trocaire. “As long as we are facing drought, we expect the numbers to go up.” Visits to the Outpatient Therapeutic Programme doubled from 75 children in September to 142 in December, and admissions at the stabilization centre surged from 36 to 60 children over the same period.

Severe water shortages and lack of sanitation and hygiene facilities have heightened the risk of diseases. Education too has been impacted. At least 4,367 boys and 2,689 girls have dropped out of school in Gedo either because their parents cannot longer pay fees or have moved in search of pasture and water. Some 35 schools have closed, and 141 teachers have left their jobs.

Humanitarian partners have ramped up responses but say they are constrained by limited funding across sectors. Since October 2021, at least 460,000 people are receiving assistance in Jubaland, but the IDPs say that it is not enough. Adequate funding is therefore required to provide more assistance. Currently, health and nutrition partners are running out of funds yet more than 1.2 million people in Jubaland rely on these agencies for life-saving services.

Somalia is the most severely drought-affected country in the Horn of Africa. Those affected are the most vulnerable Somalis whose coping capacities have been eroded by decades of conflict, food shortages, climate shocks, disease outbreaks, the Desert Locust upsurge, and the socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

For further information, please contact:

Ogosso, Erich Opolot | Head of Communications | ogosso@un.org | Tel. +254 720 766 587.
Mursal Ali | Public Information Officer | mursalali@un.org | Tel: +252 6156 79998/ +252 6191 50457
Anjichi, Truphosa Kodumbe | Humanitarian Reporting Officer | anjichi@un.org | Tel. +254 722 839 182

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