

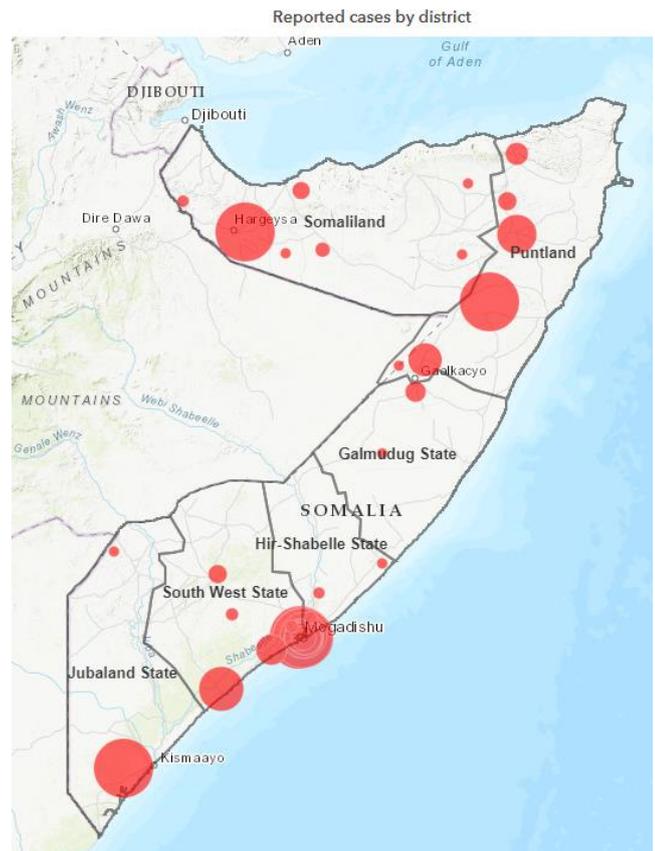
### Highlights



### Situation Overview

As of 28 May, the confirmed COVID-19 cases in Somalia reached 1,731 with 67 deaths and 265 recoveries. Banadir region is the epicentre of the pandemic with 1,126 cases, 43 deaths and 225 recoveries; followed by Somaliland with 225 cases, 16 deaths and 21 recoveries. Hirshabelle State has recorded the lowest numbers so far: nine cases and one death. The cases are surging at a time that Somalia is struggling to contain floods that have affected nearly a million people and desert locusts that are devouring crops and pasture in Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug; creating a triple threat.

There is growing concern that the virus may spread to IDP settlements and among health workers. According to UNHCR, one IDP and one refugee tested positive for COVID-19 as of 17 May. The IDP is quarantined at home in an IDP camp and the refugee admitted to a hospital. According to WHO<sup>1</sup>, the virus has exposed weaknesses in the capacity of Somalia’s health system to respond to an outbreak of this magnitude. While various measures have been instituted to mitigate the impact, tracing the sources of locally transmitted cases has proved challenging. The situation is complicated by societal norms, cultural practices and high population density in major urban cities. According to WHO, most COVID-19 deaths in Martini hospital, Mogadishu, have been elderly patients and people with chronic health conditions to which the virus was transmitted at home by other family members.



<sup>1</sup> WHO statement. Statement. 20 May 2020.

## COVID-19 Impact

According to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (FSNAU)<sup>2</sup>, local cereal prices increased by eight to 16 per cent and imported foods such as rice, sugar and vegetable oil saw mild to moderate increases from four to 30 per cent in April compared to March in southern regions of Somalia due to increased household demands in response to COVID-19 related movement and trade restrictions, Ramadan and Eid festivities. WFP<sup>3</sup> reported that cross border trade between Somalia and neighbouring countries is ongoing whilst some borders as that of Ethiopia are officially closed with restricted movement of essential items such as food and medical supplies.

In Puntland, the state Ministry of Health and the COVID-19 Committee report that most confirmed cases are men with frequent movements around the state; 65 per cent are men aged 19-39 years. Women account for about 24 per cent of the confirmed cases. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) activities are now focused on people aged 15-40 years. Meanwhile, hundreds of migrants are stranded in Bossaso as a result of border and sea-crossing closures since 28 March brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to IOM, nearly 400 migrants are currently hosted by the Ethiopian community in informal settlements around the city.

In Galmudug State, the isolation center in Gaalkacyo south is still under construction as more rooms are added. On 17 May, the Federal Ministry of Health handed over 31 hospital beds, 41 mattresses, bedsheets and assorted medical supplies to Galmudug Ministry of Health for Dhuusamarreeb isolation center. Despite this intervention, the state authorities are concerned that the facility lacks essential COVID-19 equipment like ICU beds and reliable oxygen supply.

In South West State (SWS), 88 COVID-19 cases with five deaths were reported as of 28 May. Some 48 per cent of the cases are in the 20-39 age group. The SWS Incident Management System Team have raised concerns on the weak enforcement of social distancing and underutilisation of isolation centres despite the high number of cases.

Jubaland State authorities closed all mosques from 15 May. On 20 May, the Jubaland Ministry of Health (JMOH) confirmed 46 cases, a 40 per cent increase to 134 from 88 cases reported on 15 May. According to JMOH, over 70 per cent of the latest test samples sent to Mogadishu tested positive. On 21 May, Belet Xaawo district authorities verbally directed everyone to wear a facemask, after the first COVID-19 case was confirmed. Across the state, however, poor social distancing is reported in markets.

In Banadir region, the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster RCCE mapping report of 20 May indicates that about 550,000 IDPs are at high COVID-19 risk in over 200 IDPs sites. The cluster calls on partners to scale up risk communication activities to increase COVID-19 awareness. Meanwhile, the IDPs report that COVID-19 restrictions have affected their livelihoods as most of them no longer work.

## Responses to COVID-19

The Federal Ministry of Health and IOM have launched #SomaliaResponds, a campaign to raise funds to save lives and curb COVID-19 spread. Proceeds will support Martini Hospital and other health facilities with medicines, laboratory equipment, testing equipment and accessories, PPEs, biomedical equipment (ventilators, oxygen concentrators and others), human resources and ambulances. Those interested can join the campaign at: <http://www.bit.ly/somalia-responds>

In SWS, four integrated response teams have been trained and deployed: 50 persons in Bay region, 14 in Bakool and 25 in Lower Shabelle. Additionally, 89 integrated community surveillance teams have been trained by the Ministry of Health, WHO and UNICEF, and deployed to Baidoa, Baraawe, Marka and Ceel Barde districts. Furthermore, isolation centres have been set up in Baidoa (65 beds), Afgooye (12 beds), Hudur (two), Marka (15) and Baraawe (20). More isolation centres are being set up in Buur Hakaba and Ceel Barde districts. However, there is a lack of key medical supplies and equipment, especially oxygen, in the isolation centres.

## Humanitarian Responses to COVID-19

### Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

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<sup>2</sup> Market Update 2020, Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia, Food and Agriculture Organization. May 2020

<sup>3</sup> WFP Somalia Joint Markets and Supply Chain Weekly Update W2 10 May-17 May 2020

With support from UNDP and the Office of the Prime Minister, the Somali National Army conducted a week-long awareness campaign in Mogadishu with specially trained army medics, loudspeakers and a COVID-19 bus in IDP camps, markets and other crowded areas. Medics also handed out masks and conducted COVID-19 tests. UNDP also announced the participation of Somali celebrity Aar Manthaa in the COVID-19 awareness campaign, released the first COVID-19 poem by famous poet Naima and began broadcasting messages from senior religious figures on 28 radio stations nationwide.

Nearly 1,400 COVID-19 safety information booklets were printed for the Somali Police Force in Banadir, including recommendations on how to prevent spread among officers and reduce the number of arrests. In addition, UNDP supported the federal Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs to launch its first website, new safe burial guidelines and phase two of the Clerics vs COVID-19 awareness raising campaign. Together with the Attorney General's Office in Somaliland, UNDP is working on criteria for humanitarian prisoner releases.

The Federal Ministry of Health in partnership with WhatsApp and Infobid have launched a free coronavirus information service. Users can access the service by adding the number +252613600700 to their phones or by clicking on <https://bit.ly/MoHSomalia>. Across the country, radio spots highlighting COVID-19 prevention measures have been aired on 21 radio stations, reaching an estimated 10 million people, according to UNICEF. In addition, 25,000 posters on COVID-19 prevention were disseminated in Mogadishu, and over 30 billboards installed across the country. Two TV talk shows were carried out on COVID-19 prevention and control awareness, and to discourage rumors and stigma.



Community health workers being trained on handwashing. Photo: WHO

The CCCM Cluster has reached about one million IDPs in 852 IDP sites out of over 2,000 that exist in Somalia with COVID-19 information. A follow up evaluation found that 98 per cent of interviewed IDPs have heard of COVID-19 and the importance of preventing transmission of the virus. Given that the risk of transmission is highest in the congested IDP sites, UNHCR has trained 260 IDP leaders to increase their capacity to prevent and respond to COVID-19 concerns in their IDP sites. UNHCR also manages 10 phone lines that people can call to request assistance or get more information about COVID-19.

The Protection Cluster, with the support of national NGOs and Radio Ergo, has developed guidelines for risk communication with marginalised communities. Meanwhile, IOM has reached 1,671 people entering and exiting Somalia with COVID-19 messages. At Wajale entry point on the Somali-Ethiopian border, six health professionals were trained to conduct COVID-19 awareness campaigns.

Findings of an assessment conducted on 13-16 April by Save the Children International titled '[Somali Risk Communication and Community Engagement Rapid Assessment Report](#)<sup>4</sup>' show that 94 per cent of respondents have heard of COVID-19. Most have heard about the virus through radio, family and friends and community-based networks, and identified hand washing as the most important form of prevention. However, there was a concern that children and people with disabilities have been excluded from awareness campaigns and access to information about COVID-19. About 10 per cent of people living in IDP settings (IDP, refugees, or returnees) reported not hearing about COVID-19.

## Sector Responses to COVID-19



### Health

- WHO has trained health workers at Martini hospital, Mogadishu, on case management and infection control and is assisting to automate patient registration systems. The hospital has also received supplies including PPEs from

<sup>4</sup> Save the Children International. Report. 24 May 2020.

IOM, UNFPA and USAID. It has 20 intensive care units. WHO is also supporting 13 other isolation centres across the country with medical supplies, training and budgets for salaries.

- UNICEF and WHO trained 205 Health Cluster partners (27 female, 143 male) on COVID-19 and community health workers case management, infection control measures and the continuation of essential health services. UNICEF partners have since cascaded the trainings in health facilities for 322 staff (149 female, 173 male) and trained an additional 89 frontline health workers (45 female, 44 male) on infection prevention control protocols.
- UNICEF received 3,375 bottles of hand sanitizer and 10,983 bars of soap which are to be distributed to health facilities to support infection prevention.
- IOM handed over PPEs, including thermometers, gloves, face masks, gowns, and disinfectants, to the South West State Ministry of Health to be used by staff screening at points of entry. It also delivered oxygen concentrators for the referral isolation unit.

## WASH

- UNICEF has reached 559,747 people across Somalia with critical WASH supplies since the advent of the pandemic, as it scales up interventions. The number includes 310,800 people reached with hygiene kits and emergency water supply over the last two weeks.
- UNHCR reports that over 1,700 women and girls of reproductive age have received sanitary materials to minimise their movement and exposure to COVID-19.
- NRC has provided cash to purchase hygiene kits for 2,135 households in Dhuusamarreeb and Cadaado districts in Galmudug State.
- Immediate WASH gaps in Baidoa Isolation Centre have been addressed through water trucking, construction of an elevated tower, provision of soap/chlorine and waste management support. To date, five of the six isolation centres in South West State lack adequate WASH facilities.

## Logistics

- Over 17 MT have been dispatched to Dhuusamareeb, Kismayo, Baidoa, Jowar, Hargeisa, Belet Weyne, Garowe and Barawe on behalf of the FMOH – cargo included hospital beds and other medical supplies.
- On behalf of the OPM, the Cluster is coordinating the airlift of two ventilators from Mogadishu to Garowe. Coordination support is also being provided for the airlift of an oxygen plant from Nairobi to Mogadishu.

## Food Security and Livelihoods

- Many returnees and displaced persons have lost their employment because of the shrinking economy and are unable to meet their basic needs. Over 8,600 people have received unconditional cash grants from UNHCR to restore their livelihoods.

## Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- UNHCR reports that over 2,800 persons have benefited from emergency shelter assistance aimed at decongestion at the shelter level given that congestion in the IDP sites represents risk for community spread of the COVID-9.
- Shelter and NFIs interventions in 13 high risk IDPs sites are underway and once completed, 900 IDPs will benefit from shelter interventions and 36,000 from NFIs interventions.



Useful information on the COVID-19 pandemic is available at: <https://covid19som-ochasom.hub.arcgis.com/>

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