

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Drought conditions in many parts of Somalia results in livestock migration and rapid increase in water prices.
- Cases of AWD/cholera cases reported following deteriorating water stress situation.
- National COVID-19 vaccinations continue with at least 91,087 people having received the first does of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine across the country as of 6 April.
- Desert locust control operations underway following siting of newly formed immature swarms in northern parts of the country.



Haafuun residence fetching water from a well 15 kilo meters way from the district, Bari region. Photo: Ayub Ahmed/OCHA

## KEY FIGURES

**5.9M**

People in need of humanitarian assistance

**2.9M**

People displaced by conflict and natural disasters across the country

**116K**

People displaced by water shortages since October 2020.

**1.6M**

People currently experiencing acute food insecurity.

**11.5K**

Cases of COVID-19 reported since March 2020.

**91K**

Covid-19 vaccines administered

## SITUATION OVERVIEW

### Pre-drought conditions worsen in many parts of Somalia

In March, large parts of the country faced severe drought conditions, triggered by below average 2020 Deyr rains and above average temperatures during the Jilal season. Over 116,000 Somalis were displaced by water shortages between October 2020 and March 2021. According to the [FAO latest drought update](#), the worst affected regions include Lower Juba, Middle Juba, Gedo, Mudug, Nuugal, Bari, Togdheer and Sool which are currently experiencing severe water shortages for domestic, livestock and agricultural production purposes.

Availability of water and pasture conditions have significantly deteriorated, leading to increased livestock migration and rapid rise of water prices. In Puntland, the price of water in most rural villages has doubled since the beginning of March as the dry conditions persist in most rural villages and settlements across the state. By the end of March, a 200-litre barrel of water sold between USD\$7 to \$9, up from an average of \$3 in February 2021. In a [Drought Need Assessment](#) conducted in February by an NGO in Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer regions, about one-third of communities do not have access to sufficient water, with 88 per cent of water points unable to produce sufficient water for drinking. In Jubaland, 200-liter barrel cost about USD \$14 as water pans which were the main source of water in the area dried up. As a result of the ongoing situation, water is trucked from locations 60 kilometers away for communities in Burgabo village in Jubaland.

In Lower Shabelle region of South West State, authorities and partners have reported that a 200-litre barrel of water currently costs around \$4.5, a 20% increase compared to prices in December 2020.

In Middle Shabelle, consequences of water shortages forced about 5,000 farmers among riverine communities in Jowhar and Mahadaay to flee to Mogadishu in search of casual labour to support their families.

According to the [latest UNICEF humanitarian situation report](#) the water shortages and challenges of getting safe drinking water has contributed to cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) /cholera cases in some areas across the country. According to Federal Ministry of Health and Human Services, a total of 88 suspected cases of cholera were reported in the last week of February from Bay, Afgoye, Merka and Banadir regions, with no reported deaths. As of 23 March, the cumulative total number of suspected cholera cases in 2021 was 780, including 2 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.3%.

In response to the water crises, both federal and local authorities, and humanitarian partners are providing support in various areas. The humanitarian leadership mobilized \$13.3 million from the Somalia Humanitarian Fund and \$7 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to facilitate rapid response efforts for populations hardest hit by the water-shortage crisis as well as up to \$20 million to activate the Anticipatory Action Framework. Puntland authorities have secured funding to rehabilitate five strategic boreholes with replacement of submersible pump, control panel, pipes, motors and storage tanks. Once repaired, all five boreholes will serve up to 15,000 people cumulatively thus reducing the pressure on available water access points. In Hiraan region, UNICEF has responded to areas affected by water shortages with water trucking in Belet Weyne, reaching about 18,000 people. Disease surveillance is being managed with the support from WHO through the the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) and is currently being expanded to all health facilities across the country.

## COVID-19 VACCINATION ROLL OUT

As of 7 April, Somalia has recorded close to 11,504 [positive Covid-19 Cases](#) with 537 associated deaths since March 2020. Close to 90 per cent of cases are of individuals aged between 20 and 60 years, with a median age of 35 (ranging from 1 to 110 years). Close to 70 per cent of cases are male. The cumulative positivity rate since the start of the outbreak has declined gradually and now stands at 7.4 per cent, with a cumulative case fatality rate at 4.8 per cent.

The federal government with support from UN agencies has rolled out the Covid-19 vaccine campaign. As of 5 April 2021, a total of 91,087 vaccine doses have been administered across the country. Before the commencement of the vaccine, immunization teams were trained on vaccine introduction, target population and vaccination strategy, vaccine injection procedure, infection prevention and control, monitoring adverse effects after immunization and tools for data collection and reporting.

While the vaccination campaign continues, efforts continue to be undertaken by the Federal Member States to curb the spread of the virus. For instance, in March, authorities in Jubaland released new directives primarily focused on crowding and movement restrictions, protective measures, and personal hygiene rules. In the new directive, government and non-government entities were advised to reduce the number of staff in office. In Somaliland, the Somaliland National COVID-19 Prevention Committee issued on 22 March a series of new instructions including mandatory use of face masks, social distancing, as well as the closure of sports facilities and school closures from 13 April to 3 July.

In an effort to create awareness of the risks associated with the virus, community mobilizers reached 488,795 individuals in 95,608 households across states with key health messages focusing on COVID-19 symptoms, transmission, testing and prevention measures. Awareness messages on radio and television stations are also ongoing.

## DESERT LOCUST SITUATION IN SOMALIA

According to FAO, the Desert Locust upsurge showed signs of decline in March within Somalia and neighbouring countries due to ongoing control operations and poor rainfall. However, newly formed immature swarms were spotted in the plateaus of Iskushuban, Erigavo and Garowe of Puntland. Aerial and ground control operations reached 21,143 hectares and projected below-average Gu rains (April-June) expected to limit breeding. Despite control efforts, the presence of desert locusts in Puntland continues to negatively impact on people's livelihoods due to destroyed crops and exhausted pasture. Nomadic communities are the most affected as an estimated 60 – 70 per cent of livelihoods in Puntland relies on pastoralism.

## FUNDING UPDATE

### The SHF to allocate US\$13.3 million, but more resources are urgently needed to sustain life-saving response

The Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) has issued a call for project proposals to eligible partners under its First Standard Allocation Window of US\$13.3 million. This is geared towards sustaining the life-saving response in areas experiencing pre-drought conditions including acute water shortages, causing the death of livestock, escalating hunger and extreme difficulty in growing crops. The crisis has been exacerbated by protection risks and limited access to health facilities and basic services. The SHF funds will also target underserved and hard-to-access areas through cluster-specific and integrated projects. Through the integrated response, 33 per cent of the \$13.3 million will support vulnerable communities facing severe water shortages in Toghddeer, Gedo and Lower Juba, while the remaining funds will be used to support critical cluster-specific interventions across the country.

Prioritized activities will help address food insecurity and acute water shortages through rehabilitation of dams and construction of water harvesting infrastructure, conditional cash transfers to access food, provision of fodder seeds and training on improved fodder production and management. Other project activities also aim to improve health and nutrition outcomes, through delivery of free basic and life-saving health services, training health care staff and provision of curative and preventative nutrition services.

WASH services to most vulnerable communities living in underserved and hard-to-access areas in Hiraan, Sool, Bakool and Bay regions will also be enhanced through rehabilitation and construction of water infrastructure and installation and rehabilitation of sanitation facilities on the sites. SHF funds will support access to education for pre-drought affected children from IDP and poor host communities. Additionally, protection risks will be eased through the provision of emergency support items, shelter/NFI kits, dignity kits, cash for emergency assistance to victims of eviction, community psychosocial support and the establishment of referrals and provision of legal aid for GBV survivors. Children and other vulnerable individuals, particularly persons with special needs including those with disabilities, will be prioritized.

This SHF allocation is complemented by two CERF allocations; a Rapid Response allocation of \$7 million to address the critical water shortages and an Anticipatory Action allocation of \$20 for early action against potential drought in many parts of Somalia.

While this early funding from the SHF is critical for continued programming, much more financial support is required to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and livelihood support to millions of Somalis in 2021. As of 29 March, the 2021 HRP is only 3.9 percent funded (\$43.1 M). Early funding can keep the situation from deteriorating further as weather predictions indicate lower than average rainfall in the *Gu* rainy season (April-June) due to effects of La Niña.

## IN BRIEF

### Critical Humanitarian Assistance Gap in Garduush

Garduush is a settlement hardly hit by Cyclone Gati which made landfall in late November last year. The cyclone was one of the strongest tropical cyclones to have hit Somalia. Garduush is in a very remote area surrounded by the Indian ocean. The nearest town is over 400 kilometers away. Access to basic services is challenging. The coastal settlement is home to close to 100 families where 70 per cent are women and children. Over 50 shelters were damaged by the cyclone and had their roofs blown off by the strong wind.

Xadiyo Mohamed, 65, lives in Garduush with her family of eight members. During an interview with OCHA Somalia monitoring team, Xadiyo narrates her current situation. "My family gets one meal a day, we cannot afford to have more than that, currently we don't get any fish from ocean, as the boats were destroyed by strong winds." The population in Garduush relies heavily on fishing as main source of livelihoods.



*Hadiyo Mohamed seated in-front of her make-shift shelter in Garduush settlement along the coastal area of Bari Region Somalia. Photo: Ayub Ahmed/UNOCHA*

One of the many impacts of the cyclone, was the destruction of shelters. “We have not received any assistance in terms of shelter repair, we have now constructed a makeshift shelter made of cloths and metal scraps” said Xadiyo Mohamed.

Given the expected Gu rainy season, the weather is feared to get colder. Xadiyo is worried about the expected climate changes. “If we don’t get shelter repairs very soon, I am afraid that our makeshift shelter will not protect us from the cold and windy weather. It is my hope that humanitarian partners will provide support and re-build our shelters”, she narrates.

Among other challenges, water scarcity is a major problem. Currently the community must walk 12-kilometers to fetch water. Access to clean drinking water is a nightmare. Prior to the cyclone, people in this settlement used shared communal latrines which have since been destroyed by the winds. As a result, open defecation is practiced, posing personal safety and SGBV risks to women and girls.

Food assistance, water tracking, shelter repair and basic health services are among the key needs of people living in costal settlements of Xaafuun, Hurdiye and Garduush. In addition to humanitarian assistance, medium-term support including, restocking of lost animals, provision of new fishing boats and engines is critical in enabling a continuation of the community’s key sources of livelihood: fishing activities.

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