



Somalia

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

6.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance

1.1 million internally displaced persons

Over 900 000 Somali refugees in the region

Over 30 000 returnees & refugees in Somalia due to conflict in Yemen

363 000 children (1 in 8) suffer from acute malnutrition

1 in 11 Somali children dies before their 1st birthday

1 in 18 women dies in childbirth – among the highest maternal mortality rates in the world

Sources: UNHCR, the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), UNOCHA

European Commission humanitarian funding in 2016: €58

European Commission – Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection:

B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: (+32 2) 295 44 00

Fax: (+32 2) 295 45 72

e-mail:

echo-info@ec.europa.eu

Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/echo>



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A Somali woman holds her child at a therapeutic feeding centre in Baidoa, Somalia. ©UNICEF/Sebastian Rich

Key messages

- Somalia is ranked first in the 2016 [fragile states index](#). According to the UN, out of 12 million inhabitants, more than half are food insecure and in need of humanitarian assistance. 363 000 children are acutely undernourished and 1.1 million Somalis are internally displaced, under constant threat of insecurity and armed conflict.
- The successive failure of the 2016 rainy seasons across parts of the Horn of Africa region has led to devastating drought. In January 2017, a **pre-famine alert** was issued for Somalia. The UN has called for the **immediate scale-up of assistance to avert a catastrophe** similar to the 2011-12 famine when over 260 000 Somalis died.
- Over 135 000 people have been newly displaced inside Somalia due to the drought since late 2016, while a few thousands have crossed into Ethiopia.
- Somali refugees continue to return from Kenya after the government announced it would close Dadaab camps. More than 50 000 people have returned, either spontaneously or assisted by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), although conditions in many parts of Somalia are not conducive for return. The drought is making matters worse as vulnerable people vie for overstretched resources.
- Humanitarian agencies are stepping up aid, trying to meet the most urgent needs in the hardest hit regions. They do so in a dangerous and extremely challenging environment. Attempts at disrupting the elections have resulted in security incidents and deadly explosions in the capital Mogadishu.
- In 2016, the European Union (Member States & European Commission) provided 44% (> USD 403 million) of all humanitarian aid to populations in Somalia.

Humanitarian situation and needs

The humanitarian situation in Somalia has severely deteriorated. Half the population faces **food insecurity** and is in need of humanitarian assistance. The failed October-to-December rains have resulted in **prolonged drought**, more failed crops, livestock deaths and an inflation of food prices. It is predicted that the next rainy season in May 2017 will also disappoint, representing a third consecutive failed rainy season. In this worst-case scenario, famine is expected in the second half of the year unless it is averted. Puntland and Somaliland in the North, as well as large swathes of southern and Central Somalia have been worst hit. Drought conditions there are classified as extreme and severe. A **pre-famine alert** has been issued by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET).

In a fragile context such as Somalia, drought has devastating consequences for vulnerable communities who already suffer under protracted conflict and a lack of basic services. Recovery from the 2011–12 famine which left 260 000 people dead, more than half of them children, has been fragile. Today, early action and funding are extremely important to avert a famine. This will also be less costly than responding to a famine. The UN has appealed for 825 million USD towards famine prevention during the first half of 2017.

Approximately 2 million Somalis live uprooted from their homes, either inside Somalia or in neighbouring countries [Kenya](#)*, [Djibouti](#)* or [Ethiopia](#)*. In Somalia, many of the 1.1 million **internally displaced people** stay in precarious and insecure conditions in over-crowded settlements, with little or no basic services. Most of them rely on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs of shelter, food, health, water, sanitation and protection. According to the UN, 150 000 people were newly displaced in 2016 due to conflict or flooding and 75 000 forcibly evicted, mostly in Mogadishu, Galkayo and Kismayo. Displacement due to drought will likely only increase internally and possibly to neighbouring countries.

In May 2016, Kenya announced its intention to close the refugee camps in Dadaab. Dadaab hosts over 272 000 mostly Somali refugees. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, a total of 53 812 **refugees** has returned from Kenya in 2016, 28 355 spontaneously and 25 457 assisted by UNHCR. Most 'returnees' go to Jubaland and the port town of Kismayo where a dire situation awaits them.

The EU continues to emphasise that any **repatriation needs to be voluntary, informed, safe, dignified and sustainable**. It should also happen in a realistic timeframe. It remains unclear how the Kenyan high court ruling to block the Dadaab camp closure will affect the return process. Due to the conflict and hunger in [Yemen](#)*, another 30 000 people, mostly Somalis, have arrived in Somalia since March 2015.

According to UNICEF, only 30% of primary school-aged children attend school in Somalia. Maternal and child **mortality** are among the highest in the world. Emergency levels of **undernutrition** persist as a result of food insecurity, poor hygiene and nutrition practices, a lack of clean water and disease outbreaks. Somalia is regularly affected by **epidemics** such as measles, cholera and polio; an outbreak of cholera was contained thanks to a robust and timely response by aid organisations. Access to health care needs to be improved.

Daily violations of human rights and [International Humanitarian Law](#)* make Somalia one of the most complex environments in which to deliver aid. Sexual violence against women is a daily occurrence, as are violations against children such as abductions and forced recruitment.



The European Union's Response

The European Commission has provided humanitarian assistance to Somalia since early 1994. In 2016, it supported humanitarian aid operations in Somalia with €58 million. This included an additional €10 million released at the end of 2016 to mitigate the effects of the severe drought. The aid reaches two million vulnerable people and includes emergency preparedness and response, [food assistance](#)*, health and [nutrition care](#)*, shelter, [water, sanitation and hygiene](#)*, protection, [education](#)* as well as resilience building. Aid operations focus mainly on the most affected regions in south and central Somalia where needs remain vast and have increased due to the drought. They also address the needs of those affected by the drought in Puntland and Somaliland.

In recent years, support has been provided to displaced families who wish to return to their place of origin or settle permanently in a new location. This has been done with the cooperation of local authorities and communities in order to facilitate reintegration.

The impact of the Commission's aid depends on the operational capacity of partners on the ground, their level of access to populations and their ability to operate in insecure circumstances at any given time. Longer-term development is needed to solidify the gains that have been made in recent years and prevent people from sliding back into crisis.

Delivering principled humanitarian assistance and safe-guarding humanitarian space in Somalia comes with many challenges. Attacks and threats against aid workers have increased. The European Commission is committed to preserving the humanitarian space by striving to reach all people in need wherever they may be, and by safeguarding the independence of humanitarian aid.

Examples of humanitarian projects in Somalia

Life-saving healthcare



SOS Children's Village runs a clinic in Badbadho camp, which hosts thousands of displaced people, and a hospital in Mogadishu's Heliwa district. The latter treats over 200 000 patients every year. The facilities provide life-saving, quality health care including specialised care such as surgery, emergency obstetrics and nutrition care. Skilled birth attendants perform an average of 450 deliveries per month. Special care is provided for survivors of sexual violence. Despite many years of conflict in Mogadishu, the hospital has continued to treat its patients without interruption, including when fighting forced it to relocate temporarily.

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Solutions to displacement



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Many displaced Somalis have sought refuge in more stable cities such as Hargeisa in Somaliland. However, many families are living in unsanitary and undignified conditions in makeshift settlements. The **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** and **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** relocated over 800 families to a newly-established site, providing safe and clean shelter and sanitation facilities. The authorities assisted by assigning land. Though the displaced do not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as residents, especially with regard to jobs and livelihoods, the site has begun to resemble a new suburb, with private bus services and power connections. Families have started to build a new life for themselves.

Undernutrition

Humanitarian access in the Hiraan region is constantly hampered, and the area has been plagued with critical levels of malnutrition for many years. With EU support, thousands of children under-five, as well as pregnant and breastfeeding women, received treatment and care for malnutrition. Initially, more than 10 000 children suffered from severe acute malnutrition and more than half of them would most likely have died without treatment. **Save the Children** also responded to worsening food insecurity in the districts of Beletweyne and Mataban. Cash transfers for food and other basic needs during the extended hunger gap benefited 4 000 families, which prevented more children from becoming undernourished. © Save The Children



Responding to conflict

In Awdhegele district, Lower Shabelle, hundreds of people were caught up in inter-clan fighting and were forced to flee their villages. **Concern Worldwide** was able to respond rapidly to the needs of 300 families who sought refuge in a nearby village. The families were provided with cash to meet their immediate needs, while the local community helped with food and allowed them to shelter in a local school. Those families that did not have a mobile phone received a free solar-rechargeable handset to access mobile cash transfers.



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