

DROUGHT SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE

May 2023



Diyyaro Baluga and her children fled drought and insecurity in Somalia to Dadaab, Kenya. © UNHCR/Mohamed Aden Maalim

Situation Overview

The Horn of Africa continues to face a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need of assistance due to a combination of drought, flooding, conflict, and inability to provide for basic needs. The region has been hit by a series of droughts in recent years, leading to crop failure and a lack of water and food. The region has also been hit by heavy rains in recent months leading to flooding which has caused widespread destruction and displacement exacerbating humanitarian needs. The floods have also led to further health risks, including concerns regarding water borne diseases.

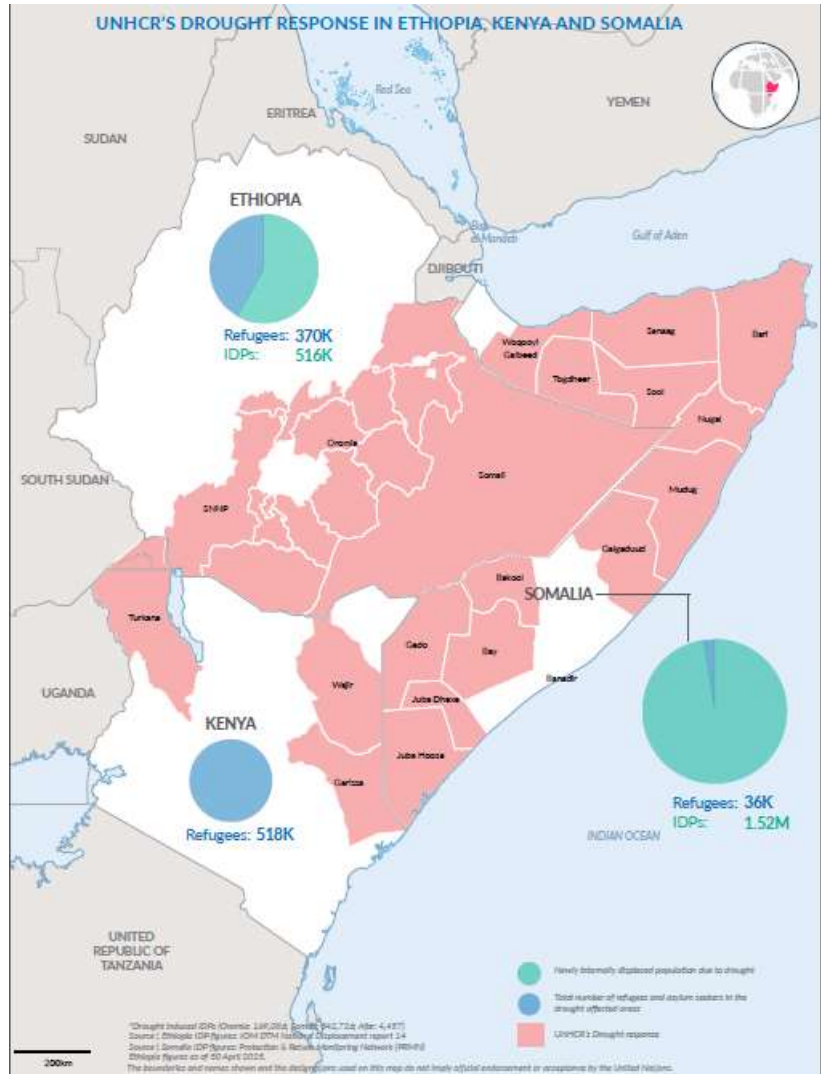
In recent months, according to [UNHCR's drought dashboard](#) of displacement affected populations, by the end of May 2023, over 2 million had been internally displaced in Somalia and Ethiopia, while over 260,000 new refugee and asylum-seekers have crossed into drought affected areas of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia since January 2022.

In **Ethiopia**, out-of-season flooding caused widespread destruction and displacement exacerbating humanitarian needs across Somali, Oromia, and Southern Nations Nationalities & Peoples' (SNNP) regions. This has further worsened vulnerability among people already impacted by prolonged drought in areas also affected by the cholera outbreak. The rains compound ongoing efforts to respond and control the outbreak. With the Government and partner support, Oral Cholera Vaccination (OCV) campaigns took place in mid-May across targeted areas of Oromia, SNNP and Somali region. As of 15 May, over 7,400 cholera cases (including 116 deaths) had been reported. Despite Health, Nutrition, and WASH partners' interventions in the cholera response with training of health workers, malnutrition treatment, water, hygiene and sanitation services as well as support to surveillance and rapid response teams, a further scale up in resources is required to fill the gap in partner presence, logistics, essential medical supplies, and shortage of oral vaccines. ([OCHA Situation Report, May 2023](#)).

The Somali region is the most affected by the drought, with more than 35,000 households displaced. More than 23,000 livestock have died, and nearly 100,000 hectares of farmland have been destroyed during the recent floods. A coordinated allocation of \$40 million by the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund is being prepared to address the immediate needs of drought and flood-impacted people.

In **Kenya**, the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) region continued to face immense humanitarian needs following five consecutive below-average rainy seasons. Over 6.4 million people, including 5.4 million severely food insecure people, require assistance in 2023 ([OCHA Situation Report, May 2023](#)). Additionally, the long rains in most arid counties led to flash floods which had negative impacts on the local livelihoods and critical facilities like roads. Despite the impact of the March-April-May (MAM) rainfall season 17 counties continued to experience drought conditions.

In **Somalia**, the effects of climate change and insecurity made the operational environment challenging. With the Shabelle river busting its banks, widespread flooding was reported in Beletweyne and surrounding areas. The downpours in May brought respite from the extreme drought conditions, yet sustained rainfall is needed to successfully reverse the impact of the historic drought. In May, 345,000 new internal displacements were recorded, primarily due to flooding (266,000), conflict (41,000) and drought (35,000) bringing the overall number of internal displacements in 2023 to over 1.25 million (see [UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#)). The top humanitarian needs of the displaced families were shelter (76%), followed by food (12%) and livelihood (10%). The top three regions that received the greatest number of new displacements in May were Hiran, followed by Lower Shabelle and Gedo.



See [May 2023 Drought Dashboard](#) for more details.

UNHCR response

ETHIOPIA

SOMALI REGION

Refugees

In May, UNHCR continued supporting cholera outbreak response activities in the Liban zone. As of end of May, a total of 710 cases of cholera and 18 deaths were reported in Dollo Ado woreda and OCV was provided to 81,000 people. In the refugee camps, the situation is stable with 12 cases reported so far and one death. Community sensitization and preventive activities were carried out along with the distribution of non-food items for collecting, treating, and storing water.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In May, UNHCR in Melkadida piloted the distribution of multi-purpose cash to drought affected IDPs reaching 8,325 individuals in Darsoo IDP site. The funds were distributed through two modalities (mobile money and cards) offered by HelloCash (a mobile money service in Ethiopia provided by banks and micro finance institutions). In line with the Somali region's Sub Cash Working Group's strategy, UNHCR adopted the endorsed transfer value of ETB 7,700 (equivalent to USD 143) for the mobile money. Complementary measures will be taken to the existing social safety nets for food insecure populations, feeding into the Productive Safety Nets Program (PSNP) of the Somali region of Ethiopia. Providing cash directly to IDP households ensures that the most vulnerable households receive direct support, minimizing the risk of interference or diversions. Cash transfer is also considered to be the most protection-sensitive modality of assistance as it upholds the dignity of recipients by allowing them to prioritize their needs.

In May 2023, UNHCR in Jijiga in collaboration with the Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO) at grass root level conducted registration, and verification of 20,100 individuals affected by drought and flooding in Shabelle and Koraha zones of the Somali region. The affected communities were in dire situation as they had not received any humanitarian assistance by government or partners in more than a year. They lack access to basic needs and core relief items (CRIs) and women and girls are exposed to multiple challenges including risks of gender-based violence (GBV).

Upon registration and verification of these families, a total of 17,579 persons in the Koraha, Shabelle, Erer, and Nogob zones of the Somali region will receive a multipurpose cash grant (MPC) to a tune of ETB 23 million (equivalent to USD 426) through the Ethiopian Commercial Bank branches on behalf of UNHCR.



Despite the arrival of some rains, the humanitarian consequences of the drought for displaced families in south-west Ethiopia persist.
©UNHCR/Mary-Sanyu Osire.

OROMIA REGION

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

UNHCR conducted a CRI post-distribution monitoring in Jeedhane IDP relocation site, where displaced people from the drought are temporarily living. The purpose of monitoring was to determine programme efficiency and how communities received information before, during and after the distribution and if they received the required amount and quality of CRIs. In the coming weeks, the team will continue monitoring in various locations where the beneficiaries received CRI support.

UNHCR participated in zonal coordination meetings in East and West Hararghe and coordinated the East Hararghe protection cluster fora. The major concerns raised were the continued increase of malnutrition cases, waterborne diseases as people are using water from unprotected water sources and children dropping-out of schools. As a result of heavy rain and flooding, crop and shelter damage, loss of life were reported. The situation of protracted IDPs due to drought and conflict in the East and West Hararghe zones remains a major concern.

KENYA

DADAAB

At the end of May 2023, the Dadaab refugee population stood at 370,830 individuals (76,875 households). Of this number, 252,027 individuals (50,087 households) are registered while 118,803 individuals (26,788 households) have been profiled. Dadaab continues to receive new arrivals mainly from Somalia due to drought, insecurity, climate change, as well as lack of basic services in some parts of Somalia.

Protection

The registration of new arrivals continued in Ifo camp during the month of May 2023. The process included nationality screening against the government's National Registration Bureaus (NRB) register for individuals aged 18 years and above, as well as vulnerability screening at the registration centre by protection partners. During May 2023, a total of 7,006 individuals were registered and issued with entitlement cards. This brings the cumulative total to 25,427 individuals (6,359 households) registered and provided all necessary assistance. 95% of those registered are from Somalia, 3% from Ethiopia and 2% from South Sudan.

Screening related to GBV has been ongoing for new arrivals through community leaders and partners, who identify cases and refer them to respective partners for support. Additionally, self-referrals are received, and cases are identified by the Danish Refugee Council's (DRC) outreach team and medical partners, (IRC and KRCS). Awareness was raised on GBV prevention and response, GBV risk mitigation training was conducted for key Protection and Programme unit staff, covering GBV core concepts, GBV disclosure and safe referrals, safety audits and risk mitigation programming. Community sensitization fora targeting new arrivals in the outskirts of Ifo1 camp (Section F) were conducted with information on GBV mitigation and prevention, as well as prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). New arrivals were also informed about their rights as asylum-seekers and the available services in the camp, including GBV prevention and response services. Reporting channels were shared, including the GBV toll-free line.

UNHCR and partners conducted a vulnerability screening to assess various specific needs of the undocumented population to enable timely assistance to populations with critical specific needs as part of the drought response. The Vulnerability Assessment Desk, now integrated into the new arrival registration process, also continued to identify individuals with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children, and supporting them with Emergency Social Support to meet their immediate needs while undertaking close follow-up to monitor their protection needs.

Health and Nutrition

Admissions rose for both moderate and severe acute malnutrition due to a general increase in morbidities in the camps especially diarrhea related illnesses following the rains. New admissions for moderate acute malnutrition cases rose to 1,538 compared to 1,303 in the previous month. Those with severe acute malnutrition increased from 837 to 1,126.

Water and Sanitation

Water for refugees in the Dadaab refugee camps was pumped from 25 borehole water supply schemes, stored in 42 elevated steel tanks, and distributed through a 243 km pipeline network to 842 tap stands. The daily per capita water available for May was 18 litres. Latrine coverage was 52.5 percent.

Repair works on three elevated steel tanks in Ifo 2 camp begun on 24 April. As of 30 May, the old reservoirs of three tanks had been dismantled, waiting for new panels from Nairobi. Rehabilitation works on Ifo 2 boreholes A and B were completed. One borehole is now fully operational on hybrid power system (solar energy and diesel generator). The second one is on solar, awaiting a genset being repaired, to be installed early June 2023.

WASH services provided also included three five plastic water tanks (10,000 liters), a 5,000m pipeline 26 tap stands with four tap stands each (104 taps), as well as 146 communal latrines in the three camps. Water was trucked to three five plastic tanks with one or two trips per day in the three camps.

UNHCR through Relief, Reconstruction and Development Organization (RRDO) and the Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS) delivered 51 trips using water trucks to new arrivals in the outskirts of the three camps.

Host Community Support

There is a need to mobilize urgent and concerted UNHCR and partner efforts for short, medium, and long-term interventions in the WASH sector, especially water in the host communities surrounding the Dadaab refugee camps. There are 16,467 individuals (2,745 households) residing in the host community villages surrounding the three refugee camps. These pastoral families are presently affected by the drought, some of whom are provided with water trucking support through UNHCR since 2022. There were 31 water trucking trips to host community sites supplying a total of 53,000 people.

The prolonged drought had pushed many pastoralist nomads into poverty, and some settled in nearby villages to find livelihood opportunities. UNHCR, under its drought intervention and relocation of host community residing in the now re-gazetted Ifo2, procured, and distributed 302 shelter kits comprised of iron sheets, roofing nails, poles, and tarpaulins, to 302 households (1,800 individuals) to meet part of their shelter needs.

SOMALIA

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Protection

The UNHCR-supported protection desks at IDP sites in Bossaso, Garowe, and Gardo, and North Galkayo in Puntland, as well as Abudwak, Adado, Dhusamareeb Guriel, and South Galkayo in Galmudug, continued to serve as communication hubs, information centers, and referral points to the affected communities, reaching more than 1,500 individuals who raised protection concerns due to a lack of access to basic services such as shelter, food, health, and latrine.

In Sool and Togdheer regions in Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partners, reached 658 drought affected IDPs, of whom 43 persons with specific needs (PSN) were provided mobility devices, and 615 individuals received psychosocial counseling and information and awareness sessions on the inclusion of PSN in different humanitarian services. Moreover, 667 individuals were reached through community committee trainings on community-led messaging on key child protection risks, protection mainstreaming, social norms, harmful practices, and related information on child protection services for displaced drought-affected communities.

In Adado and Dhusamareeb, Galmudug, roving psychosocial counseling teams visited IDP sites and conducted individual and group psychosocial first aid sessions, reaching 181 individuals, including GBV survivors and people with mental disabilities.

In Somaliland, 151 individuals received psychosocial counseling, case management support, and information about available humanitarian services via UNHCR-supported protection desk and hotline services.

Shelter

In Baidoa, UNHCR, through its partner, completed the construction of 88 transitional shelters at the Barwaqo 2 Durable Solutions site. The shelters will be provided to vulnerable drought affected IDPs.

Coordination

UNHCR and WFP convened to reflect on the progress and discuss the next steps of their joint drought and emergency response collaboration, which is based on community protection risk assessment and analysis, protection mainstreaming workshops, and information exchange between the two. During the meeting, UNHCR conducted a consultation to understand the prevalent protection risks that UNHCR and WFP field offices face in the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and presented the findings from the community protection risk assessments in Beletweyne. The WFP-UNHCR collaboration was deemed beneficial in ensuring that the most vulnerable groups were targeted and included in assistance through integrated programming.

Cash Assistance

As a part of its drought response, UNHCR in Mogadishu distributed cash in lieu of emergency shelter to 600 IDP households (2,400 individuals), with each family receiving USD 213 and cash in lieu of core relief items (CRI) kits to 258 IDP households (1,548 individuals). 200 IDPs. In addition, 62 latrines were rehabilitated, and 45 latrines went through the desludging process in the two locations.



New arrivals in Kabasa IDP camp, Doolow district, Somalia. © UNHCR/Asma Barre.

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