

SOMALIA OPERATIONAL UPDATE

March 2024



UNHCR staff monitoring the situation of IDPs in Girible Durable Solutions Site in Bossaso, Puntland. © UNHCR

OVERVIEW

In March, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia continued, with millions of Somalis in need of humanitarian assistance. The [Protection and Returns Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), which has been tracking internal displacement trends for the past 17 years, recorded approximately 50,000 internal displacements in March, primarily due to insecurity and the enduring effects of flooding that occurred last year from October to December. The security situation in the country remained tense, with ongoing military operations to reclaim territory from the Al-Shabaab, hereafter referred to as the non-state armed group (NSAG), which was responsible for multiple indiscriminate attacks, often causing harm to ordinary Somalis. Although the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) completed the review of the first four chapters of the Provisional Constitution, it faced strong opposition from past presidents and prime ministers and, more importantly, the Puntland State. Climate change is expected to impact Somalia for the foreseeable future.

Finding durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers, refugee returnees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in collaboration with the FGS, Federal Member States (FMS), and development and humanitarian partners remains one of UNHCR's top priorities in Somalia. Moreover, UNHCR, in collaboration with authorities and partners, continued to provide vital protection assistance to vulnerable IDPs and host communities affected by conflict, flooding, and drought. In Somalia, UNHCR leads/co-leads the Protection, Shelter, and CCCM clusters for the IDP response.

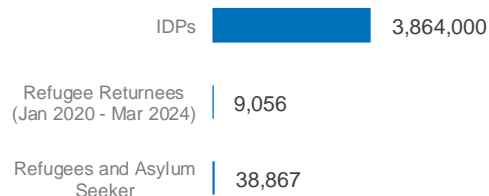
UNHCR's key achievements for the month of March are listed below:

- The Protection Cluster produced the Protection of Civilians analysis for the Joint Technical Assessment (JTA) report of Phase 2 of the ATMIS drawdown. This analysis and its recommendations were integrated into the report, which was submitted to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- In Somaliland, UNHCR distributed subsistence allowance to 848 refugee and asylum-seeker HHs (4,180 individuals). Likewise, in Mogadishu, UNHCR distributed cash assistance to 410 Somali refugee returnees to help them reintegrate back into their communities.
- In Beletweyne, UNHCR completed the enrollment of 1,051 flood affected IDP HHs (2,519 individuals) into the BIMS/proGres database.
- In Baidoa and Mogadishu, UNHCR, through its partner, established three community-based protection networks (CBPN) consisting of 90 members who will play a crucial role in identifying and responding to protection risks and vulnerabilities within the IDP communities they live in.

KEY FIGURES

PERSONS OF CONCERN

3.9M # of persons of concern to UNHCR Somalia



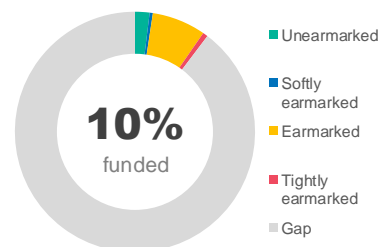
PARTNERS

29 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2024



FUNDING

177 M Funding required for 2024 (as of 31 March)



POPULATION DATA

38,687

Refugees and asylum-seekers

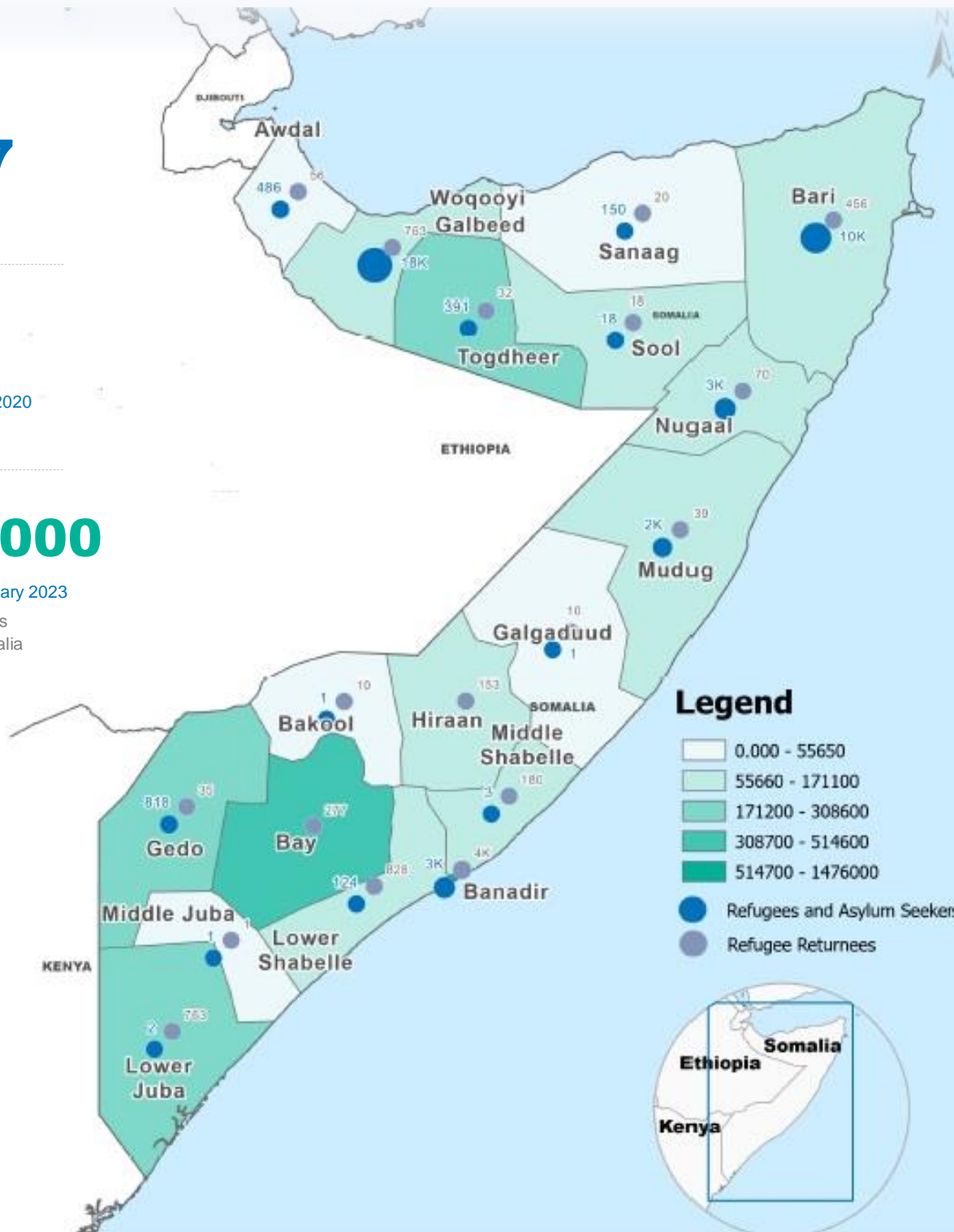
9,056

Refugee returnees from January 2020

3,000,000

Internal displacements since January 2023

3.86M Internally displaced persons
(Stock IDP number, Source: Somalia IDP WG)



Legend

- 0.000 - 55650
- 55660 - 171100
- 171200 - 308600
- 308700 - 514600
- 514700 - 1476000

- Refugees and Asylum Seeker
- Refugee Returnees



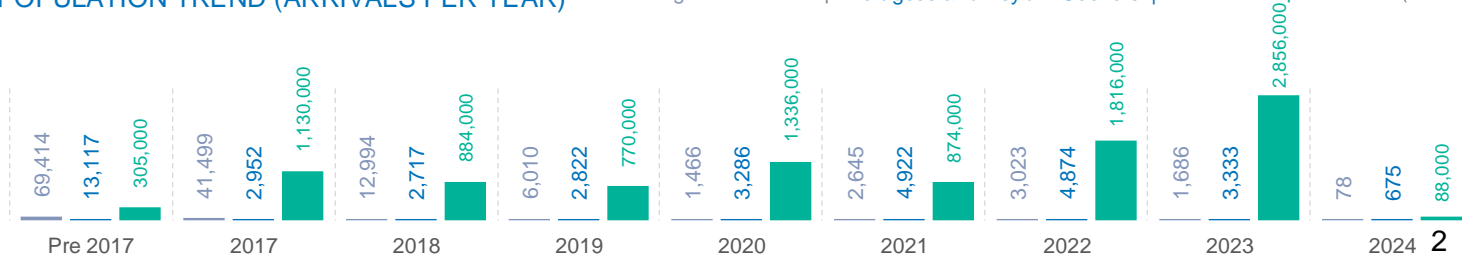
Sources of Data: UNHCR, HDX,

Feedback: sommapmn@unhcr.org

Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

POPULATION TREND (ARRIVALS PER YEAR)

Refugee Returnees | Refugees and Asylum-Seekers | Internal Displacements (PRMN)



Operational Context

UNHCR in Somalia continued to operate in a highly complex environment, largely characterized by insecurity, political tension, and climate change. The humanitarian crisis in Somalia is severe. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 6.9 million people in Somalia will need humanitarian assistance in 2024. Recurrent shocks, including climatic events, conflict, insecurity, and disease outbreaks, continue to exacerbate needs. About 4.3 million people remain acutely food insecure, and malnutrition rates among children under five remain high.¹

According to the Seasonal Climate Forecast issued by IGAD's Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), there is a 55% likelihood of above normal rainfall during the "Gu" rainy season, which traditionally runs from the second week of March to June, posing a risk to agro-pastoral livelihood.² Moreover, the impact of the 2023 floods continues to be felt.

Ongoing insecurity and conflict contributed to a volatile operating environment for humanitarians and resulted in the displacement, injuries, and deaths of many ordinary Somalis. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)-led military operations against the non-state armed group (NASG) continued to intensify in March. The NASG responded with reprisal attacks and continued to engage in asymmetrical attacks against civilians and government institutions across multiple locations in central and south-central Somalia.

Rates of internal displacement owing to climate change and insecurity remain high. According to the UNHCR-led [Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), approximately 50,000 displacements within Somalia were recorded in March, primarily because of conflict/insecurity and climate change. Food, shelter, and livelihood support were the top needs of the newly displaced families. The top three regions that received the greatest number of new displacements in March were Bay, followed by Galgaduud and Gedo. More up-to-date information about displacement and the protection needs of the IDPs can be found at the new PRMN online interactive dashboard: <http://prmn-somalia.unhcr.org/>. Women and children, who face heightened protection risk, make up 80% of the displaced population.³

On the political front, the FGS has finalized reviewing the first four chapters of the Provisional Constitution. Key amendments apply to the following chapters: freedom of expression (Article 17), women's representation (Article 47), leadership system (Article 49), and composition of the electoral and boundary commission (Article 57). However, Federal Member State of Puntland and some opposition leaders, including former presidents and prime ministers, rejected the amendments.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland on 1 January continued to cause political tension. The agreement grants Ethiopia, a landlocked country, access to the sea in exchange for Somaliland's recognition as an independent country. Despite the majority of international responses supporting Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, there is a looming risk of this situation escalating into a regional conflict in the Horn of Africa.

As part of the transition process, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) has pulled out 5,000 troops and handed over 13 military bases to the Somali Security Forces during the first and second phases of the drawdown. The third phase, targeting 4,000 troops, is scheduled for the end of June 2024.

Somalia also hosts some 38,867 refugees and asylum-seekers, of whom 67% are women and children; 30% are school-age children (6-17 years); and 26% are women and girls of reproductive age (13-49 years). The majority of refugees and asylum-seekers (66%) are from Ethiopia, followed by Yemen (29%), Syria (4%), and other countries (1%). Most of the refugees and asylum-seekers (74%) reside in urban or peri-urban settings across the Woqooyi Galbeed and Bari regions, both of which are in the northern part of the country. Furthermore, since January 2020, 9,056 former refugees have returned to Somalia from their countries of asylum, mostly from Yemen, followed by Kenya. From the total number of refugee returnees, 3,652 individuals have been directly assisted by UNHCR, mainly through the Voluntary Repatriation Programme from Kenya and the Assisted Spontaneous Returns (ASR) Programme from Yemen.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2024-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-hnrp-summary>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-climate-outlook-2024-gu-long-rains-season-issued-7th-march-2024>

³ [Somalia Factsheet - Key Figures \(As of 29 Feb 2024\) - Somalia | ReliefWeb](#)

Update on Achievements



Protection

Prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV)

- International Women's Day (IWD) was commemorated across the country under this year's theme, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." A series of activities, such as open public forums, panel discussions, workshops, awareness campaigns, and cultural performances, aimed at promoting gender equality and celebrating women's contributions to society, were organized, reaching more than 1,100 participants, predominantly women from IDP communities in Bossaso, Dollow, Dhobley, Galkayo, Garowe, Gardo, and Kismayo. Government officials, UNHCR partners, and community members attended the events.
- In Puntland and Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner, identified and/or supported at least 52 new and existing GBV cases in March. The survivors received case management support, safe house and meal support, psychosocial counseling, medical and legal referrals, hygiene and dignity kits, shelter support, transportation reimbursement, and cash assistance, among other things.
- In Dhobley and Kismayo, UNHCR, through its partner, provided individual protection cash assistance to 23 vulnerable women aimed at addressing their specific needs.
- UNHCR, through its partner, distributed sanitary kits to 35 women and girls of reproductive age. These kits met the unique requirements of women and girls in challenging circumstances and contained a backpack or an easy-to-carry bucket and a range of items to ensure that they had access to essential hygiene products and personal care items tailored to their specific needs. Such items included menstrual pads, bath soap, multiple pairs of underwear, detergent powder, sanitary napkins, a flashlight, toothpaste, a toothbrush, and a comb.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its protection desks and hotlines, supported 25 females with counselling, information about services provided by UNHCR partners, and referrals.

Community engagement and awareness raising

- In Baidoa and Mogadishu, UNHCR, through its partner, established three community-based protection networks (CBPN) consisting of 90 members (70 females and 20 males), who will play a crucial role in identifying protection risks and vulnerabilities within the IDP communities they live in. They actively seek opportunities to reduce or mitigate the identified protection risks, improve community capacity to avoid or withstand their impact, and minimize vulnerability and exposure.
- In Kismayo, UNHCR, through its partner, conducted training sessions for 20 community-based committee members (9 females and 11 males) from the New Qam Qam IDP Site. The training provided the participants with a comprehensive overview of their roles and responsibilities and equipped them with the necessary knowledge and skills to prevent and respond to GBV incidents effectively. Similar training was also conducted in Dhobley for 40 community-based committee members (30 females and 10 males) across four IDP sites: Dnawadag, Qorax, Mowlid Liqay, and Hodan.
- In Puntland and Galmudug states, UNHCR operated roving Protection Help Desks in various locations to enhance access to information, referrals, and services for at-risk individuals. In Garowe and Gardo, 12 sites were covered, reaching 228 individuals and referring 45 cases to the appropriate service provider. The main concerns raised by the IDPs were harsh living conditions and an outbreak of watery diarrhea. In Galkayo, the desks visited 8 sites, conducting focus group discussions, community leadership engagements, and home visits, reaching 546 individuals and facilitating 64 referrals. In Galmudug, the desks operated in nine sites across Dhusamareb, Abudwaq, and Adado, reaching a total of 584 individuals, including 29 persons with disabilities. The desks conducted focused group discussions, engaged with community leaders, and made home visits to persons with protection concerns.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner at the joint counseling desk of the Peaceful Co-existence Center (PCC) and hotline in Hargeisa, supported 233 refugees and asylum-seekers with counseling, information dissemination, and referral services. Most of the advice sought at the PCC was about refugee status determination (RSD), followed by financial insecurity and resettlement.



UNHCR's partner conducting community-based protection training to CBPN members in Mogadishu. © Danish Refugee Council (DRC)

- In Somaliland, UNHCR provided direct counselling and referral services to 144 cases via its complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs), including hotlines, protection mailbox, and an in-person counselling desk at UNHCR premises. The main concerns revolved around financial insecurity and related risks such as lack of shelter, followed by RSD, resettlement processing status updates, and access to health services. The majority of the issues were addressed and closed on the spot, and a few others were referred to relevant service providers.

Legal assistance

- At the Qaboobe Durable Solutions Site in South Galkayo, Galmudug State, UNHCR and its partners facilitated the issuance of land title deeds, ensuring the security of land tenure for 44 verified families who had earlier received permanent shelter from UNHCR in October 2022.
- In Somaliland and Puntland, UNHCR, through its partner, provided legal assistance and support to 310 individuals, mainly refugees and asylum-seekers, along with a handful of IDPs and host community members. Services included legal counseling, mediation, legal advocacy for release from custody, legal representation, and referral to other service providers, among others. Furthermore, UNHCR, through its partners, conducted 36 monitoring visits to police stations and temporary detention centers in Maroodi-Jeeh and Sahil regions, Somaliland, and provided legal assistance to six refugees and asylum-seekers.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner, facilitated the issuance of 40 birth certificates. This is a vital service that ensures these children have the necessary documentation to access essential services and protection.
- UNHCR, with the support of the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI), facilitated the litigation exercise for 22 refugee HHs who requested reactivation of their close cases. The exercise was conducted to address the legal challenges faced by the refugee and asylum-seeker population in the Banadir region and to identify and address barriers and gaps that hinder their protection.

Registration, reception, and reintegration support

- In Somaliland, UNHCR distributed two months of subsistence allowance for refugees and asylum-seekers, covering January – February 2024, targeting 848 HHs (4,180 individuals). UNHCR, its partners, and representatives from the refugee communities were present to monitor the exercise and to counsel and support individual cases.
- UNHCR in Mogadishu released the pending reintegration grant cash assistance (USD 200 per individual) for 410 refugee returnee HHs (705 individuals) who returned mainly from Yemen, Libya, and India at the end of 2023.
- In Somaliland, the National Refugee and Displacement Agency (NRDA) registered and biometrically enrolled 193 new arrivals, comprising 49 asylum-seekers (29 females and 20 males), 133 refugees (31 females and 102 males), 10 returnees (3 females and 7 males), and a female of other concern.
- The NDRA in Somaliland renewed 523 refugee ID cards and 615 certificates for asylum-seekers, resulting in a cumulative total of 7,039 replaced refugee and asylum-seeker identity documents, out of the estimated 12,000 documents scheduled for renewal in 2024.
- In Berbera, Somaliland, UNHCR and partners received 39 new arrivals, comprising 28 refugees (2 females and 26 males), a male asylum-seeker, and 10 returnees (3 females and 7 males). They were transferred to the UNHCR Reception Center for temporary accommodation, registration, food, health screening, and counselling support.



Refugees undergo biometric verification prior to receiving subsistence allowance in Hargeisa. © UNHCR

Durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers:

- UNHCR facilitated the resettlement of a refugee family comprising three individuals in Finland.
- A refugee family of five individuals was identified for resettlement consideration as survivors of GBV.
- An elderly refugee was successfully repatriated to the outskirts of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in close coordination with the IOM.



Flood Response

- In March, UNHCR teams in Jowhar and Beletweyne concluded Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) training sessions for 30 enumerators (10 for Jowhar and 20 for Beletweyne) aimed at facilitating the proGres registration exercise in Beledweyne and Jowhar. The enrolled families underwent a vulnerability assessment exercise and will receive non-food items (NFIs) and multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA). By the end of the month, 1,051 HHs (2,519 individuals) were enrolled in Beletweyne. Furthermore, the enrollment exercise, which is part of an ongoing effort to ensure proper documentation of assistance distributions and reduce duplication of assistance and aid diversion, will commence in Jowhar soon.
- UNHCR, through its partner, completed the construction of a multi-purpose building, which will be used to enroll 3,200 flood-affected IDP HHs who will receive material support from UNHCR in BIMS/proGres. The building will then be transformed into a community center for the IDPs.



UNHCR, through trained enumerators conduct biometric enrolment of IDPs in Beletweyne. © UNHCR



Education

- In Mogadishu, UNHCR, through its partner, paid school fees for 799 primary and secondary school refugee and asylum-seeker students (387 girls and 412 boys).
- In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner, provided financial support to 251 refugee secondary school students (130 girls and 121 boys), ensuring their continued access to education in 12 schools without any financial constraints.
- Under the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative, also known as the DAFI Scholarship, 20 individuals (10 females) were selected to take English language training, and UNHCR paid the thesis fee for 12 tertiary school students.



Health

- In Mogadishu and Somaliland, UNHCR's partners delivered primary, secondary, tertiary, or maternal and child health care services to 1,637 refugees, asylum-seekers, refugee-returnees, IDPs, and host community members. Services included consultations and medical screening, laboratory investigations, medical treatments, ambulance services, and referrals to specialized hospitals.



Community Empowerment and Self Reliance

- In Mogadishu, UNHCR, through its partner, has identified 170 trainees for the first phase of the vocational (100) and business skills (70) trainings. The selection process was inclusive of all communities, including refugees and asylum-seekers (102), Somali refugee returnees (51), vulnerable IDPs (9), and host community members (8). The training is expected to commence following Eid.



Cluster Coordination and Leadership

Protection Cluster

- In March, the Protection Cluster produced the Protection of Civilians analysis for the Joint Technical Assessment (JTA) report of Phase 2 of the ATMIS drawdown. This Protection of Civilians analysis and its recommendations were welcomed by the JTA stakeholders and integrated into the report, which was submitted to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on 31 March. The Protection Cluster is already working on a joint workplan for the upcoming Phase 3 of the drawdown, due by the end of June.

- The Protection and Shelter clusters, in close coordination with UNOCHA, are working on the operationalization of the frontline response and mobilizing resources to assist the 815 HHs (4,890 individuals) who were forcibly displaced and arrived in Cadaado district, Galmudug State. The joint response is in line with the Protection Cluster's 2024 frontline response strategy in hard-to-reach areas and with the Somalia Inter-Cluster Integrated Response Framework (IRF).



266K

 # of beneficiaries reached by the Protection Cluster and the AoRs

■ Reached ■ Gap



3.8 M  People in need


2.7 M  People targeted

173 M  Funding required

■ Funded ■ Gap



484K

 # of beneficiaries reached by the Shelter Cluster

■ Reached ■ Gap



4.6 M  People in need


1.4 M  People targeted

80 M  Funding required

■ Funded ■ Gap



1.4M

 # of beneficiaries reached by the CCCM Cluster

■ Reached ■ Gap



3.3 M  People in need

2.7 M  People targeted

61 M  Funding required

■ Funded ■ Gap



Shelter Cluster

- In March, the Shelter Cluster partners reached 110,372 individuals, out of which 67,873 individuals received shelter assistance and 42,449 individuals received non-food item (NFI) kits, ensuring access to essential household items.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster

- CCCM partners conducted site verification assessments, in coordination with partners, local authorities, and other stakeholders, at 157 IDP sites in eight locations, namely Balcad, Bossaso, Bulo Burto, Garowe Jalalaqsi, Jowhar, Laascaanood, and South Galkayo. A total of 52,282 HHs (318,644 individuals) were verified to be living at the assessed sites.
- CCCM partners conducted service monitoring activities across 1,763 IDP sites, covering 33 districts, under the administration of 15 partners. Overall, 71% of sites had water access for IDPs. 48% of sites have primary education facilities, while IDPs in 30% of sites could access primary education facilities within a 20-minute walk. 59% of sites had access to health facilities within walking distance, and 76% of sites also had access to nutrition facilities. 95% of the residents in the monitored sites live in makeshift emergency shelters, and only 9% of IDP households reported receiving cash or food assistance in the last 6 months.
- In March, the number of issues raised through the CCCM-managed complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) stood at 3,771. Most of the complaints raised were attributed to food security, followed by WASH and Shelter/NFI. The agencies and clusters addressed and resolved 51% of the issues raised after referral.
- For new arrivals, CCCM partners conducted orientation sessions and screenings for malnourished children. In Khada, community engagement activities were conducted to prevent aid diversion, raise awareness on evacuation and preparedness for the "Gu" rainy season, and disseminate cholera prevention measures.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its CCCM partner, carried out service monitoring, awareness raising, and site-level coordination meetings across 15 IDP sites to monitor existing service provisions, identifying and addressing any critical gaps or challenges faced at the site level. Ahead of the "Gu" rainy season and forecasts of potential flooding, the CCCM partner's outreach team launched an awareness campaign targeting all 15 sites.
- The CCCM partners conducted site improvement activities, including decongestion activities to improve access and mitigate the risk of fire, rehabilitation of drainage systems at 89 sites, and waste disposal management using disaster

risk reduction (DRR) tools in an incentivized cash-for-work approach, benefiting 470 individuals. CCCM partners rehabilitated 30 shelters in Khada by removing damaged plastic sheets and reinforcing them with iron sheets, plastic coverings, and wooden stakes.

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the Somalia Operation in 2024 amount to **USD 18 million**. UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have already contributed to the Somalia Operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

External / Donors Relations

Thanks to the donors of earmarked contributions to Somalia Operation in 2024 | USD

Japan 6.6 million | **United States of America** 6.6 million

Leaving No One Behind – The Internal Displacement Solutions Fund | Other private donors

Thanks to softly earmarked contributions to UNHCR in 2024 | USD

United States of America 8.6 million | **Norway** 2.8 million

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted funds to UNHCR in 2024 | USD

Sweden 90.6 million | **Norway** 58.9 million | **Netherlands** 36.3 million | **Denmark** 35.6 million | **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** 28.5 million | **Switzerland** 19.2 million | **Republic of Korea** 17.9 million | **Ireland** 13.6 million | **Belgium** 11 million | **Australia** 10.7 million

Algeria | Angola | Armenia | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Thailand | Türkiye | Private donors

CONTACTS

Phoebe Wanjiru Mukunga, Associate External Relations Officer, UNHCR Somalia
mukungap@unhcr.org

LINKS

Somalia: Global Focus | Somalia: Data Portal | UNHCR Somalia | @UNHCRSom

