UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Somalia Forced Displacement and Protection

January to December 2025

Executive Summary

Tracking Displacement Trends and Drivers to Guide Humanitarian and Development Action in Somalia

In 2025, displacement in Somalia was increasingly driven by **climate-related shocks**, with drought emerging as the leading cause, marking a significant shift from 2024 when conflict and insecurity were the primary drivers. This change has reshaped both displacement patterns and the nature of protection risks, with growing emphasis on **access-related challenges**, including discrimination, denial of services, and reduced humanitarian coverage. This shift is also reflected in IPC analysis, where drought-affected areas correspond to locations facing high levels of acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above). Drawing on UNHCR, NRC, and national partner data, this report analyzes displacement trends from January to December 2025, covering internal and cross-border movements. It highlights regional patterns, evolving drivers of displacement, and key protection risks affecting displaced populations, particularly women and children, who represent the majority of those displaced.

The findings underscore, among displaced women, those heading households — particularly widows, women separated from spouses, and women from minority clans — face compounded protection risks, including barriers to accessing aid, heightened exposure to GBV, and reduced clan-based social protection. Girls and boys, while both displaced in large numbers, face distinct risks: girls are disproportionately affected by FGM, forced marriage, and sexual exploitation, while boys face forced recruitment and child labor. Persons with disabilities across all sex and age categories face specific mobility-related barriers that prevent them from reaching distribution points or accessing protection services.

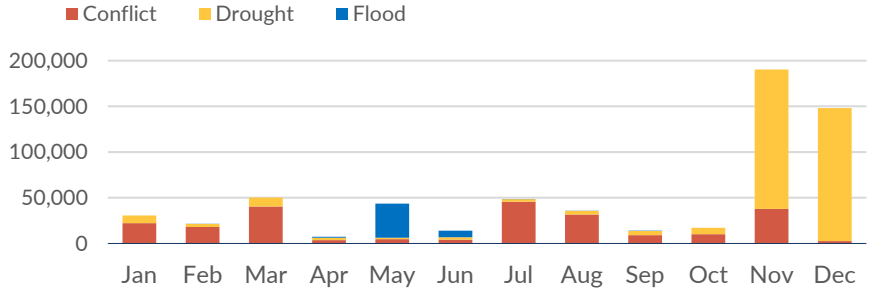
The findings also highlight the critical role of **protection monitoring and early warning mechanisms**, including flash alerts, in informing timely humanitarian response and supporting evidence-based planning.

Overall, the report emphasizes the need for **integrated, well-coordinated protection responses**, combining monitoring, community engagement, referrals, and targeted assistance, to address both immediate risks and longer-term vulnerabilities in the context of evolving displacement dynamics.

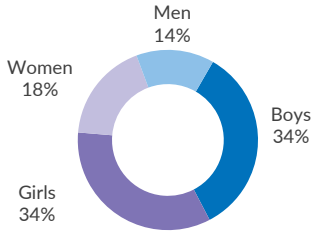
Key Highlights

- **663,612** internal displacements were recorded in 2025, representing a 21% increase from the total **546,702** displaced individuals in 2024, with women and children representing 85% of the displaced people in 2025.[1]
- In 2025, according to the PSMN findings, **drought** was the leading cause of internal displacement, with **344,688 people displaced (52%)**. This was followed by **conflict and insecurity, 230,428 (35%),** and **floods, 45,758 (7%).** Other causes accounted for the remaining 6% (42,738).
- This marks a shift from 2024, when conflict and insecurity were the leading causes, driving 290,451 displacements (53%). Flooding followed with 142,111 (26%), while drought contributed only 8,356 (2%). Other causes made up the remaining 19% (105,784).
- **Drought** was the least significant cause for displacement in 2024 (2%) to the leading cause in 2025 (52%), driving displacement at scale and aligning with areas experiencing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 and above).
- Regionally, the highest levels of displacement recorded in 2025 were in **Mudug** (85,470 departures - 110,430 arrivals), **Hiraan** (81,110 departures - 108,890 arrivals), and **Middle Shabelle** (80,990 departures– 66,410 arrivals).
- By contrast, in 2024, displacement was highest in **Gedo** (112,100 departures - 128,240 arrivals), **Sanaag** (72,210 departures - 69,630 arrivals) and **Lower Juba** (61,920 departures - 70,050 arrivals)
- Drought-related cross-border movement was observed from **Togdheer, Sool and Sanaag** regions into eastern Ethiopia (PSMN Flash Alert #18).
- *Minority clan members — including Bantu, Benadiri, and Barawans — are likely significantly underrepresented in protection violation data, reflecting known barriers to self-reporting including fear of reprisal and exclusion from community-level data collection channels. Protection monitoring should actively account for these reporting gaps."*
- No cross border movements have been observed into Kenya as a result of the schocks covered by the PSMN Flash Alerts.

Monthly displacement trends and reasons



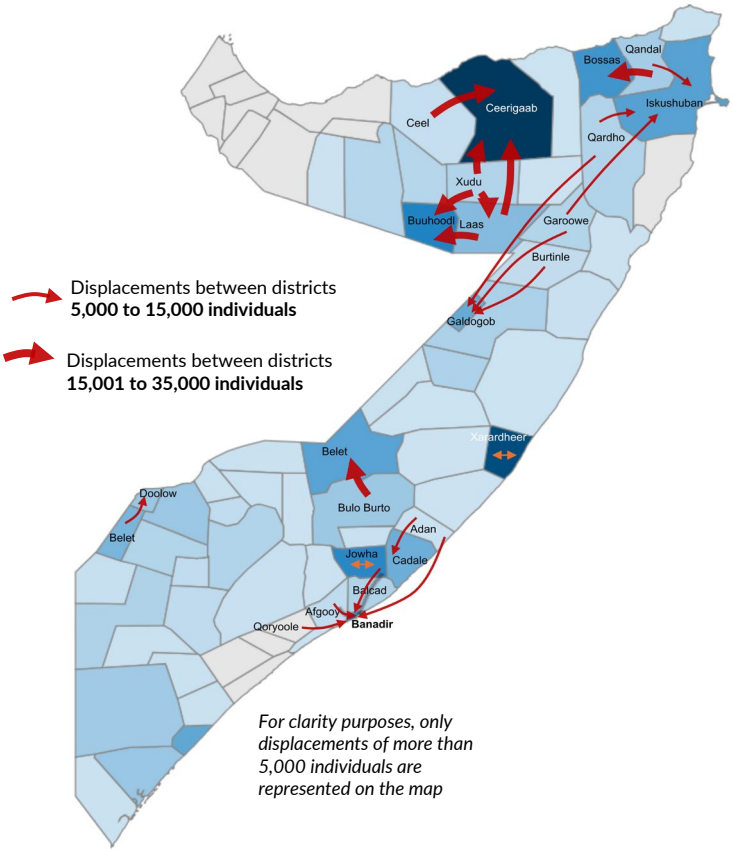
Age and gender distribution



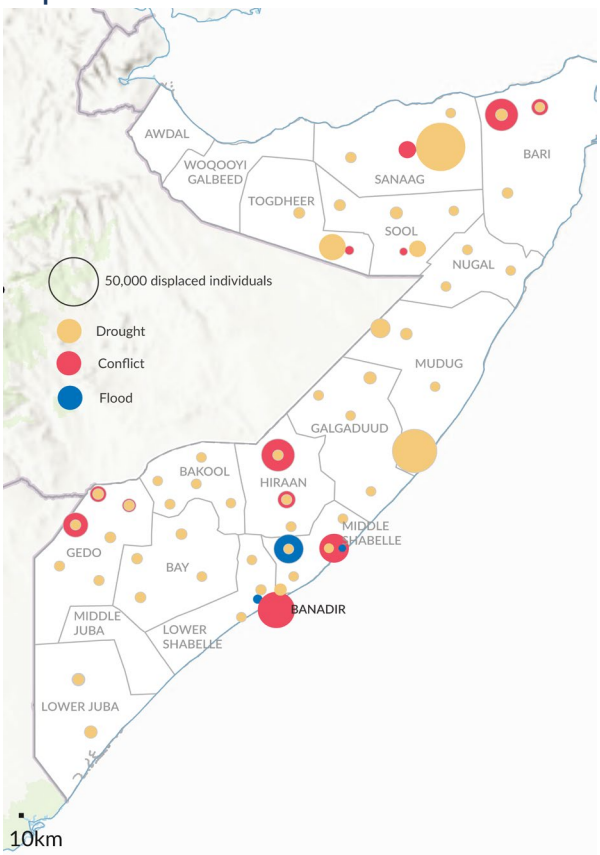
[1] *According to IOM DTM report published March 26th, there were 385,645 new arrivals across 3,794 settlements in 2025. According to DTM, displacement was 47% climate-induced and 47% conflict-induced. DTM monitoring focused only priority districts and into existing settlements. UNHCR's PSMN focused on all displacement incidents across the country.*

It is noted that UNHCR PSMN data captures rapid, event-based displacement in near real time, including emerging shocks and initial movements, while IOM DTM provides periodic validated datasets with consolidated population estimates, alongside weekly updates and rapid assessments. PSMN enables earlier and more frequent capture of displacement events, while DTM offers a more periodically consolidated picture. Both systems are complementary rather than directly comparable in scale, and differences may arise due to methodological and timing variations. Strengthened operational linkages—through harmonized core variables and structured data sharing where PSMN informs DTM rounds—would improve coherence. Joint technical coordination would further align methodologies while preserving each system's strengths, supporting a more consistent understanding of displacement trends in Somalia.

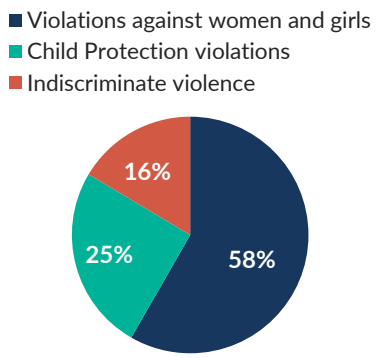
Displacement Patterns in 2025

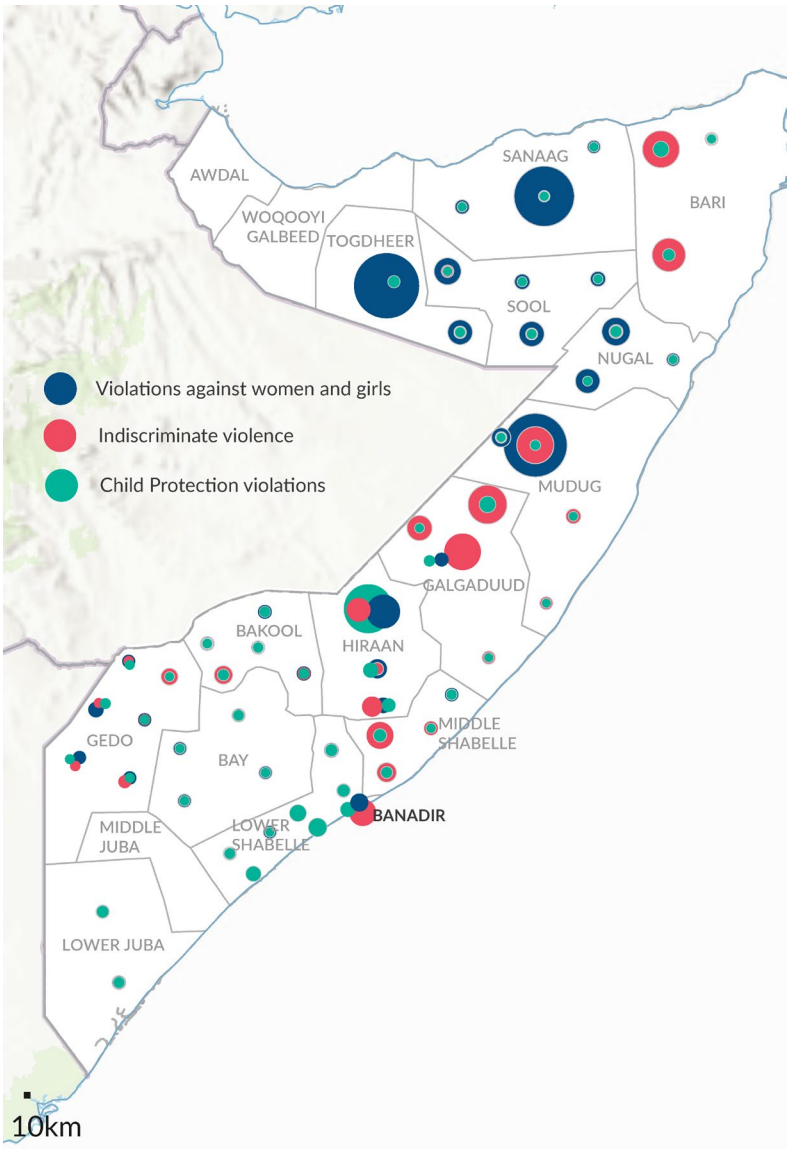


Displacement Reasons in 2025



Protection Violations in 2025





Violations against women and girls accounted for **58% of the protection violations recorded in 2015.**

These violations were primarily recorded in the districts of **Ceerigabo (Sanaag region)**, **Burco (Togdheer),** and **Gaalkacyo (Mudug)**.

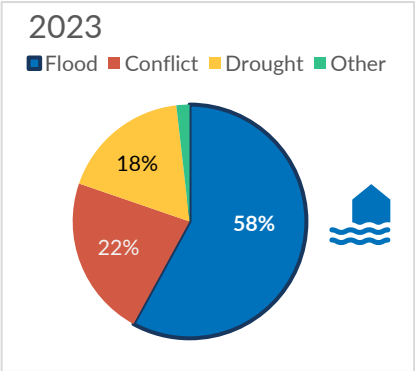
The shift to drought as the primary displacement driver in 2025 has had measurable gendered implications. In pastoral communities across Mudug, Hiraan, and Gedo — the three highest-displacement regions — drought typically destroys male-controlled assets (livestock, land), prompting male outmigration for labor or security while women, children, and the elderly undertake household displacement. This pattern generates a disproportionate share of female-headed displaced households, who face heightened protection risks including SGBV, limited clan-based social protection, and restricted access to distribution points. This dynamic is distinct from conflict-driven displacement, where men and boys face higher exposure to direct violence, forced recruitment, and killing.

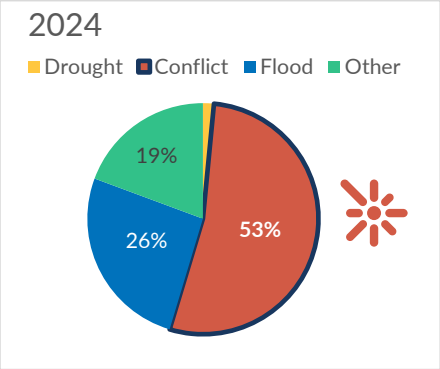
Alerts

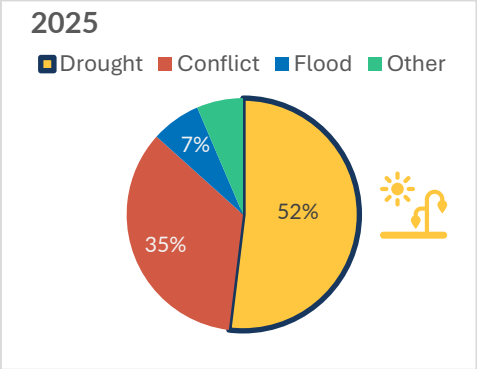
A total of **20 alerts were published in 2025, informing partners and donors of urgent displacement, prevailing protection risks and violations, and other priority community needs.** All alerts are available on the UNHCR Protection and Solutions Monitoring dashboard (page 4).

About PSMN alerts		
> Provide **immediate updates** on urgent displacement and protection issues.	> Triggered for issuance when more than **1,000 households** have been observed to move.	> Produced immediately after an incident occurs in a particular location/region and within the **first 24-hour window and no later than 72 hours.**

Main Drivers Trend Analysis | 2023 - 2025



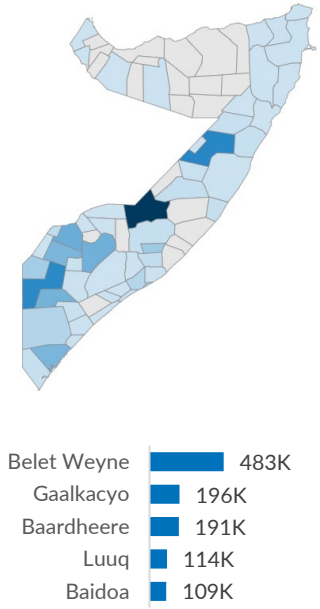




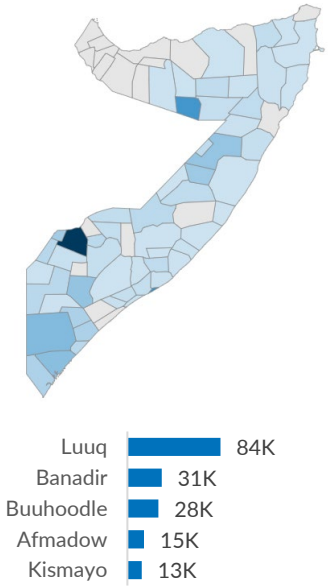
Since 2023, the main drivers of displacement have shifted significantly:

- **Flooding** was the leading cause of displacement in 2023, accounting for 58% of total displacement. Its impact declined in subsequent years, dropping to 26% in 2024 and 7% in 2025.
- **Conflict** became the primary driver in 2024, responsible for 53% of displacement. Since 2023, conflict has consistently accounted for over 20% of displacement, meaning at least one in five displacement events was conflict related.
- **Drought** showed the most notable increase. While it accounted for only 2% of displacements in 2024, it rose sharply to become the leading cause in 2025, responsible for 52% of internal displacements.

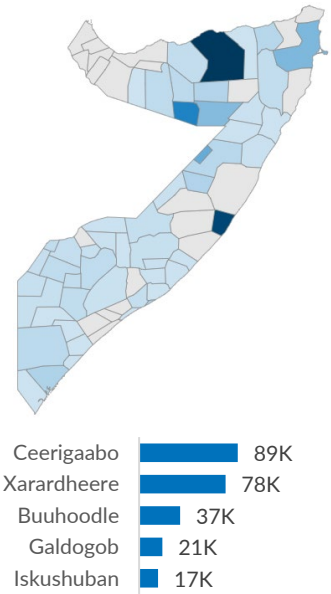
2023 – Flood affected locations and top 5 affected districts



2024 – Conflict affected locations and top 5 affected districts

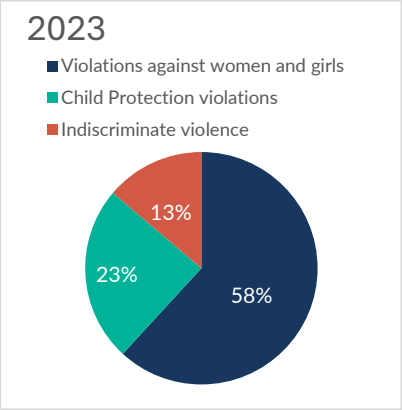


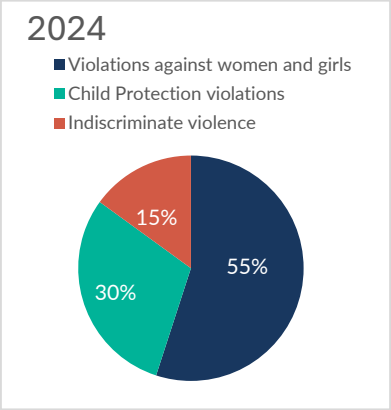
2025 – Drought affected locations and top 5 affected districts

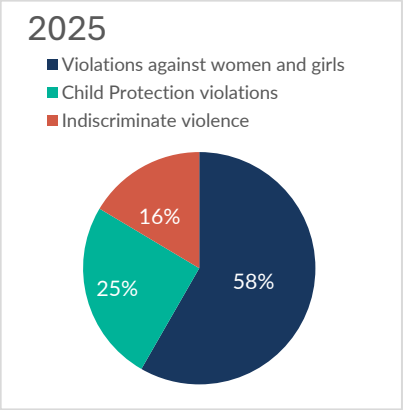


Protection Violation Trend Analysis | 2023 - 2025

The violations presented reflect incidents recorded during displacement and do not represent the overall prevalence of violations in Somalia.







Violations against women and girls consistently represent the largest recorded share across all three years (58% in both 2023 and 2025, 55% in 2024). However, this aggregate figure obscures important distinctions. In drought-affected regions such as Hiraan (FGM 28%, domestic violence 22%) and Bay (FGM 33%, forced marriage 18%), violations are predominantly girl-specific harmful practices and domestic-space violence against women. In contrast, in conflict-affected Galgaduud (killing/manslaughter 42%, physical assault) and Bari (torture 27%, domestic violence 14%), violations are more broadly distributed across sexes, with men and boys facing heightened exposure to direct violence.

Boys, while classified under children in the demographic data, face distinct risks including forced recruitment (as recorded in Bakool), child labor, and abduction — risks that are typically underweighted in gender analyses that focus primarily on women and girls.

Persons with disabilities and members of minority clans are likely significantly underrepresented in violation data. The near-zero disability figures in most regions, and minority violation proportions of 1–7% in regions with known minority populations, point to structural barriers in data collection rather than an absence of violations. Protection monitoring partners should review collection methodologies to ensure these groups are actively reached."

Protection risks

Analysis of trends between 2024 and 2025 indicates a shift in the nature of protection risks, closely linked to the primary drivers of displacement in each year. **In 2024, when conflict was the main driver**, protection risks were more directly associated with insecurity and violence. Unlawful impediments to freedom of movement, forced displacement, and attacks on civilians featured prominently, reflecting the immediate impacts of active conflict on affected populations.

In contrast, **in 2025, when drought emerged as the main driver of displacement**, the risk landscape shifts toward more structural and access-related challenges. Discrimination and stigmatization, along with the denial of access to resources, opportunities, services, and humanitarian assistance, become the most prominent risks. This leads to increasing pressure on already limited services and resources, as well as heightened vulnerability linked to prolonged displacement and environmental stress. This trend is consistent with IPC findings, which highlight worsening food insecurity in drought-affected areas, reinforcing the link between reduced access to resources and heightened protection risks.

Gender-based violence remains a persistent and prominent risk across both years. This aligns with the protection violations analysis, where incidents affecting women and girls consistently account for the largest share of recorded violations. Together, this reinforces the scale and continuity of GBV risks across displacement contexts, regardless of whether displacement is driven by conflict or climate-related factors.

Disinformation and denial of access to information also remain consistent concerns, limiting affected populations' ability to make informed decisions and access available support.

Additional risks observed in 2025, including psychological and emotional abuse, as well as theft, extortion, forced eviction, and destruction of property, further reflect the cumulative and compounding impacts of displacement. Overall, the trends suggest a shift from predominantly conflict-driven protection risks in 2024 to more systemic, resource-driven, and access-related risks in 2025, while serious protection concerns remain across both contexts.

The shift toward access-related protection risks in 2025 does not affect all displaced persons equally. Women from minority clans — particularly those heading households — face layered exclusion: social norms restrict their independent access to distribution points, clan-based gatekeeping mechanisms disadvantage households without male clan representatives, and minority status further limits their

ability to advocate within settlement governance structures. Persons with disabilities face overlapping barriers: physical inaccessibility of distribution sites, limited capacity to report violations, and exclusion from community-based protection networks. These compounded exclusion patterns are not fully captured by aggregate figures but are reflected in the low minority and disability violation figures — which should be read as evidence of monitoring gaps rather than lower risk."

A protection risk refers to the *actual or potential exposure of individuals or groups to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. In operational terms, it reflects:*

- **The intensity and damage or harm resulting from**
- **A human activity or a product of human activity**
- **Impacts affecting an individual or group of individuals**

The Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) monitors 15 standardized protection risks aligned with the Global Protection Cluster's Protection Analytical Framework, supporting consistent analysis and response.

Protection Response

In 2025, the protection response continued to operate under significant constraints that affected both the scale and consistency of service delivery. In several locations, weak or absent referral pathways limit access to specialized services, particularly for individuals at heightened risk. At the same time, funding shortfalls reduced the geographical coverage of protection actors and constrained the availability of comprehensive protection and GBV services.

These challenges had direct implications for internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially in hard-to-reach and newly displaced areas. Limited presence in some locations affected the timely identification, assessment, and follow-up of protection risks, while gaps in service availability restricted access to specialized support, including medical, legal, and psychosocial services. In many areas, response efforts relied on a small number of operational partners, resulting in uneven access to services across locations.

Within this context, UNHCR and Protection Cluster partners continued to play a central role in identifying protection risks and delivering targeted protection interventions. For IDPs, where comprehensive case management services were not consistently available, **Individual Protection Assistance (IPA)** remained a key modality among Protection Cluster partners to address urgent protection needs.

IPA is designed as a time-sensitive, one-off intervention to prevent, reduce, or mitigate exposure to protection risks, or to support individuals in recovering from the impacts of violations. In 2025, IPA supported **1,312 IDPs**, enabling the provision of immediate and tailored assistance to individuals facing acute risks, including survivors of violence and women and girls at heightened risk. This included one-off cash support, typically around USD 100, to facilitate safe access to essential services such as healthcare, legal support, and transportation. IPA was also complemented, where feasible, by facilitated referrals and protective accompaniment by case workers, helping individuals overcome barriers related to access, safety, and information.

The experience in 2025 further highlights the importance of **integrated protection responses at the onset of displacement**, whether driven by conflict or climate-related shocks such as drought. Early, coordinated protection interventions that combine protection monitoring, community engagement, referrals, and targeted assistance such as IPA allow for wider coverage and more timely identification of risks. In contexts where services are limited, integrated approaches help maximize available resources, ensure that individuals are reached through multiple entry points, and strengthen linkages between actors and sectors.

Beyond the provision of assistance, UNHCR and Protection Cluster partners continued to support IDPs through protection monitoring, case management, community-based outreach, and referral mechanisms, including protection desks and call centre services. These efforts helped sustain access to protection information and enabled the identification of at-risk individuals, even in areas with reduced operational presence.

Despite these efforts, the overall response remained constrained by limited resources, reduced service availability, and structural gaps in coordination and referral systems. IPA, while effective in addressing immediate protection needs, is by design a short-term and case-specific intervention and cannot substitute for comprehensive, sustained protection services. As a result, many IDPs continued to face barriers to accessing consistent and specialized support.

Nevertheless, the continued use of IPA and integrated protection approaches demonstrates UNHCR's ability to adapt its response in a constrained operational environment, ensuring that individuals at highest risk receive timely and life-saving support. Strengthening referral pathways, restoring service availability, and expanding integrated protection coverage remain critical to achieving more predictable and comprehensive protection outcomes.

Conclusion

In 2025, forced displacement in Somalia was increasingly shaped by **climate-related shocks**, with **drought emerging as the primary driver**, significantly altering both displacement patterns and protection risks. This marks a clear shift from 2024, when conflict and insecurity were the main drivers. While conflict-related risks remained present, the protection environment evolved toward more **structural and access-related challenges**, including discrimination, stigmatization, and denial of access to services and humanitarian assistance. These trends reflect growing pressure on already limited resources and systems in areas hosting displaced populations. This is further supported by IPC analysis, which shows that drought-affected areas are also those experiencing the most severe levels of food insecurity.

A critical component of the response in 2025 was protection monitoring, which enabled the timely identification of displacement trends, protection risks, and emerging needs. Through this system, flash alerts played a key role in providing rapid, evidence-based updates to humanitarian partners, triggering immediate response and informing prioritization. Beyond immediate action, these alerts also

contributed to humanitarian planning and resource allocation, ensuring that responses were better aligned with evolving needs on the ground.

Across all contexts, **gender-based violence (GBV)** remained a **persistent and widespread protection risk**, particularly affecting women and girls. At the same time, other violations, including physical violence, exploitation, and forced displacement, continued to affect diverse population groups, highlighting the complex and overlapping nature of protection risks in both **conflict-induced and climate-induced displacement** settings.

Despite significant **operational and funding constraints**, UNHCR and its partners continued to deliver **targeted protection interventions**, with a focus on identifying and supporting individuals at heightened risk. For internally displaced persons, **Individual Protection Assistance (IPA)** played a critical role in enabling **timely, flexible, and case-specific support**, particularly in areas where specialized services were limited or unavailable. These efforts were closely linked to protection monitoring, community-based outreach, and referral mechanisms, helping to sustain a minimum level of protection presence despite reduced capacity.

The findings also underscore the importance of **integrated protection responses at the onset of displacement**, whether driven by conflict or climate-related shocks. Approaches that combine **protection monitoring, early warning through alerts, community engagement, referrals, and targeted assistance** allow for **wider coverage, earlier identification of risks, and more effective use of limited resources**. In the context of constrained funding and uneven service availability, such integrated approaches remain essential to ensuring that protection responses are both timely and inclusive.

Moving forward, **strengthening protection monitoring systems and alert mechanisms among the Protection Cluster partners**, alongside restoring and expanding protection service coverage, will be critical. Continued investment in **referral pathways, inter-agency coordination, and community-based and prevention-focused programming** is needed to ensure that both immediate protection risks and longer-term vulnerabilities are effectively addressed. Sustained commitment to integrated, well-coordinated, and adequately resourced protection responses will be essential to improving protection outcomes across Somalia.

Looking ahead, the 2025 findings underscore the need for a more differentiated protection approach in Somalia that moves beyond aggregate sex- and age-disaggregated analysis. An intersectional lens is essential to understand how factors such as minority clan affiliation, disability status, household headship, and repeated or secondary displacement interact to shape vulnerability and access to services. While existing systems, including the PSMN, already capture relevant data, the priority now is to ensure this information is systematically translated into reporting, response planning, and resource allocation that reflect differentiated protection risks.

In urban contexts such as Banadir, these dynamics are further amplified by overcrowded informal settlements, forced evictions, and persistent housing, land and property (HLP) risks that drive cyclical displacement. Protection risks are also increasingly urban-specific, including GBV in dense living conditions, child labour, and barriers to essential services, often mediated by gatekeeper structures that shape access to assistance. Strengthening sub-national coordination mechanisms will be critical to ensuring timely identification and response to these evolving risks.

Resources_click to access			
> PSMN interactive dashboard Displacements	> PSMN interactive dashboard Violations	> PSMN interactive dashboard Protection risk	> PSMN products registry

About PSMN

The PSMN (Protection & Solutions Monitoring Network) is a UNHCR-led project that identifies and reports on displacemen ts, as well as the protection risks and incidents driving such population movements. On behalf of UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 10 local partners across Somalia conduct data gathering—primarily through interviews with affected communities and key informants—and monitor displacement trends at strategic locations.

To request further details on displacement, please contact **SOMMOPMN@UNHCR.ORG**

PSMN Strengths			
> Protection Analysis identify, assess, and understand protection risks and existing vulnerabilities	**> Real-Time Data** Provides timely and accurate protection & displacement information necessary to inform responsive and strategically targeted humanitarian responses	**> Utilizes local capacity** UNHCR partnered with NRC to mobilize and leverage local capacity in data collection through a network of 10 local NGOs and 60 monitors as of 2025	> The network captures information from the **point of origin, destination, triggers** of movement and the **priority needs.**

Data limitation

PSMN is a flow movement tracking and does not represent the stock of IDPs in Somalia. The same applies to the protection risks and violations as they are collected during displacements limited to the geographic coverage, the figures don't represent the total human rights violations in Somalia.

Methodology

Data is collected through a network of trained field monitors operating in key locations such as IDP settlements, transit points, and border areas. Information is gathered through:

- **Household-level interviews** with displaced persons, capturing demographic profiles, vulnerabilities, and reasons for displacement
- **Key informant interviews** to report on group movements and broader trends

Data collection relies on standardized tools to ensure consistency. Reports capture key variables including location of origin and arrival, drivers of displacement, and protection incidents. Sensitive personal data is not stored.

All data is uploaded to an online platform, where it undergoes verification and quality control by partner focal points before analysis and dissemination. The system enables near real-time monitoring of displacement trends and protection risks, supporting timely humanitarian response and evidence-based planning.

Acknowledgement

UNHCR extends its sincere appreciation to the Government of Somalia, donors, and all partners, clusters, and actors who contributed to the Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) in 2025, and whose collaboration and support made this analysis possible. In particular, UNHCR acknowledges the strong partnership with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), whose technical leadership and operational support were central to the implementation of protection monitoring activities across Somalia.

This work would not have been possible without the commitment of NRC's network of ten national partner organizations, who carried out data collection across diverse and often hard-to-reach locations. Through their close engagement with communities, these partners played a critical role in gathering timely and reliable information on displacement trends, protection risks, and community needs. Their efforts, often in challenging and resource-constrained environments, ensured that the realities on the ground are accurately reflected and inform humanitarian response and planning.

UNHCR also recognizes the broader humanitarian community, including UN agencies, NGOs, and coordination mechanisms, whose collaboration and use of PSMN data, including flash alerts, helped trigger timely responses and support evidence-based decision-making.

Finally, and most importantly, UNHCR expresses its deepest gratitude to the community members across Somalia who generously shared their time, experiences, and perspectives. Their willingness to engage remains at the core of this work and ensures that humanitarian action is informed by the voices, priorities, and needs of those most affected by displacement.

In partnership with

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

Thanks for the support from

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