Inter-Clan Conflict in Laashimo Valley, Sanaag Region, Displaces Approximately 9,000 People and Heightens Protection Risks

Displaced Families	Displaced Individuals	Women and Children	Cross-border movement	Deaths	Injuries	People with disabilities	Incident Date
1,500	9,000	85%	0	31	30		May 6 - 7, 2026

Background

Between 6 and 7 May, inter-clan conflict broke out in Laashimo valley, between Damalaxagare and Shimbiraale, near Carmala in Sanaag Region, displacing 1,500 households (approximately 9,000 individuals), of whom 85% are children and women.

The violence began over access to a water point and grazing land. Both communities are pastoralists, and ongoing drought has intensified competition over scarce resources, increasing tensions and conflict among nomadic communities. The latest clashes were triggered by long-standing unresolved tensions over revenge. Laashimo Valley remains difficult to reach due to years of unresolved hostilities and limited humanitarian presence. The security situation remains tense and unstable despite ongoing efforts by the government and clan elders.

The displaced individuals are currently hosted by local communities in Carmala, Shimbirale, Qodax, Muug-libaax, Degelo, Naylo gad, Rigooyin, Dhufeeco, and Qabdhac. Despite their limited capacities and resources, the receiving communities have generously accommodated the displaced families. However, the influx of IDPs has placed significant pressure on the already fragile community support system, which may overstretch resources if the situation remains unresolved. Emerging protection risks linked to lack of proper shelter, water, and safety are major concerns.

The fighting resulted in casualties, including 31 deaths and 30 injuries among the fighting groups. The scale and intensity of violence created widespread fear among pastoral communities and significantly increased protection risks for civilians. There are growing concerns over possible further displacement. As of 9 May, Puntland government deployed forces and established a military base to deescalate the tension.

The field assessment conducted by Action Youth Initiative Development (AYID) and Puntland Minority Women Development Organisation (PMWDO) included lengthy interviews and field observations in displacement locations, noting the urgency of humanitarian needs. Government officials, community elders, and traditional leaders are working to resolve disputes and bring warring parties to the negotiating table.

Protection Risks

Gender Based Violence: Women and girls reported that collective shelter arrangements in new locations pose serious protection risks, primarily due to the lack of privacy. Overcrowded and shared spaces prevent women and girls from sleeping, changing clothes, breastfeeding, or managing personal hygiene with dignity and safety. Many shelters lack secure doors, partitions, and protective materials, increasing insecurity, particularly at night. Poor lighting further heightens concerns about GBV risks when accessing latrines, water points, and other services after dark. Community members noted that existing facilities are not gender-sensitive and provide insufficient privacy, safety, and accessibility. As a result, fear and distress among displaced women and girls have increased, underscoring the urgent need for safer, more dignified, and gender-responsive shelter and services.

Psychological Distress and Mental Health Issues: Exposure of armed violence, killing, injuries and forced displacement inflicted psychological toll on children and their mothers and caregivers impacted mental deterioration. Children exposed to violence shows signs of anxiety, fear, withdrawal, sleep disturbances and emotional instability. Women who lost close relatives or witnessed casualities experience severe mental breakdown and emotional exhaustion. During a field assessment, a good number of women and children could be spotted with signs of mental deterioration. Mental and psychological wellbeing is seen as a top risk for children and mothers and caregivers.

Attacks on Civilians and Attacks on Civillians' Objects: The inter-clan violence resulted in civilian fatalities and injuries, as well as the destruction of civilian property and objects. The fighting destroyed shelters and livelihoods, forcing civilians to flee without essential items. IDPs informed monitors that they were not aware of the disagreement between the two clans that could result in displacement of such magnitude. The attacks occurred without any warning, leaving civilians with no time to prepare. The fate of older people and persons with disabilities who were left behind remains uncertain.

Forced Recruitment and association of Children in Armed Groups: The ongoing clan conflict and retaliatory violence increase the risk of child recruitment. Militias from both clans are reportedly mobilizing and regrouping to continue fighting. There are indications that leaders from both clans are mobilizing male community members to fight and protect their respective clans. Emerging reports also indicate that children were seen among clan members fighting alongside adults during the recent clashes. If the clashes continue, instability and displacement may weaken community-based protective mechanisms that normally help prevent children from participating in armed violence.

Urgent Protection and Humanitarian Needs

People in the affected area urgently need protection and humanitarian assistance to stay safe from inter-clan violence and displacement. Their most urgent needs are safe shelter, emergency household supplies, food, clean water, and sanitation. Injured and vulnerable people need access to health care. Women and girls need safe spaces that offer privacy, good lighting, and consider their needs. They also need services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Children urgently need protection, help finding family members, emotional support, and protection from recruitment into armed groups. Older people, people with disabilities, female-headed households, and those separated while fleeing need special attention and support. It is urgent to monitor protection, make safe referrals, and use community-based protection. Aid efforts should be sensitive

to the conflict to avoid causing harm or new displacement. Support should also reach local communities hosting displaced families with few resources.

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs): At least 1,500 households urgently require emergency shelter and non-food items (NFIs). Current living conditions in displacement sites do not meet minimum standards for safety or dignity. The absence of adequate emergency shelter exposes women and girls to heightened protection risks. Critical items—such as emergency tents, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, blankets, and other essential NFIs—are urgently needed to stabilize conditions. Severe overcrowding in improvised shelters is further exacerbating risks of gender-based violence and the spread of communicable diseases.

Food Assistance: Food gaps are a major concern in current displacement locations. Many families fled the Laashimo clashes without food, cooking utensils, or access to their livestock—losing both food and income sources. Host communities share what little food they have, but their resources are overstretched by drought and limited supplies. Displaced families now face less food and a limited dietary variety and must increasingly rely on community aid. Children, pregnant and lactating women, older persons, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households are at particular risk of acute food insecurity and negative coping strategies if they do not receive immediate food assistance.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): Lack of water, sanitation, and hygiene services remains a critical concern in the displacement locations. Displaced households have limited access to safe drinking water, and available sources are insufficient for both IDPs and host communities. Sanitation facilities are inadequate or absent, heightening the risk of open defecation, poor hygiene, and disease outbreaks. Women and girls face heightened protection risks when using distant or unsafe water and sanitation facilities, especially after dark. Immediate action is essential: urgently provide safe water, install emergency latrines, distribute hygiene kits, and implement comprehensive hygiene promotion in affected locations.

Protection and Psychosocial Support: Prioritise immediate protection and psychosocial support for affected populations, especially women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and families impacted by violence, loss, displacement, or separation during the clashes. Act now to provide protection monitoring, identify vulnerable individuals, ensure safe referrals, deliver psychological first aid and child-friendly spaces, conduct family tracing as needed, and guarantee access to specialised services for GBV survivors and other high-risk cases. Strengthen community-based protection mechanisms without delay to mitigate further harm and foster recovery.

Response Action

No humanitarian organisation is present at the displacement sites to provide immediate assistance, leaving displaced households and host communities in urgent need of life-saving services such as food, water, shelter, health care, protection, and psychosocial support. The absence of humanitarian actors sharply increases the immediate vulnerability of affected populations—especially women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and the injured—and may critically delay timely identification, referral, and response to urgent protection and humanitarian needs.

Access Constraint

Access to the affected locations remains constrained by insecurity, ongoing clan tensions, and the difficult terrain of Laashimo Valley. Limited humanitarian presence, poor road conditions, and fear of renewed clashes may delay assessments, referrals, and delivery of urgent assistance to displaced households and host communities.

PSMN monitors meeting displaced community in Shimbirale

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The PSMN (Protection & Solutions Monitoring Network) is a UNHCR-led project that identifies and reports on displacements, 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**