

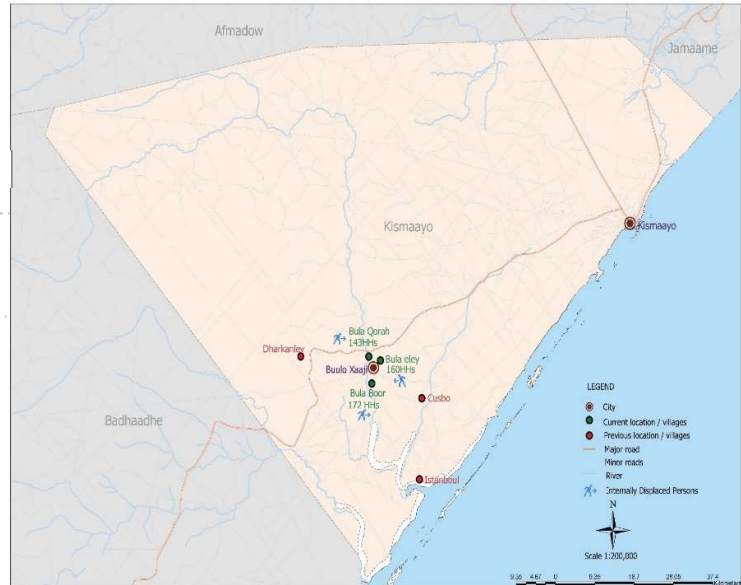
**2,850 INDIVIDUALS DISPLACED BY DROUGHT AND CONFLICT TO BUULO XAAJI**

**475 HHs**  
Displaced Families

**2,850**  
Displaced Individuals

Coordinates **Lat: - 0.63332 Long: 41.9821**

**Incident** 28 Jan 2025



**BACKGROUND**

On 28 January 2025, 475 families comprising 2,850 individuals arrived in Buulo Xaaji after being displaced by the ongoing drought conditions, activities of Al Shabaab and lack of opportunities and services in the West Kismaayo region of Jubaland. This prolonged drought has severely impacted the primary means of livelihoods in the area. Towns such as Istanbul, Cusbo and Dharkenley have been particularly affected, forcing many residents to flee to Buulo Xaaji.

The majority of those displaced belong to pastoral communities that traditionally rely on goats, sheep and other livestock for their livelihoods. The drought has disproportionately affected the most vulnerable groups within these communities, including children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Many displaced persons are currently living in makeshift shelters on the outskirts of Buulo Xaaji town.

In an interview with the Protection and Solution Monitoring Network (PSMN) team, a disabled mother of nine children without any means to support them, stated: "The drought has massively affected our way of life. Our livestock, which used to support us, has been lost, leaving us with no alternative income. Under the control of Al Shabab, there are no opportunities and services. I request support from the government and humanitarian organizations in Buulo Xaaji to support us."

The Jubaland Commission for Refugees and IDPs (JUCRI) echoed the urgent need for assistance for the displaced population in Buulo Xaaji, which has put pressure on already limited resources. This support is crucial not only for basic supplies, such as food and clean water, but also for adequate shelter and medical support for those with chronic illnesses. The displaced demographic includes a significant proportion of female-led households, many of them widows, orphans, separated children, and disabled persons, all of whom are in desperate need of focused protection and assistance. A rapid needs assessment is urgently required to further assess the specific vulnerabilities of the displaced population.

Below is the breakdown of the displaced population in Buulo Xaaji:

#	Previous Location	Current IDP Sites	Households
1	Istanbul	Bula Qorah	143
2	Cusbo	Bula Boor	172
3	Dharkenley	Bula eley	160
		<b>Total</b>	<b>475</b>

## PROTECTION RISKS

- **Child/Forced Family Separation:** Recent interviews conducted in Buulo Xaaji revealed that eight children have become separated from their caregivers in Cusbo. These cases were reported by parents in Buulo Xaaji, who were unable to specify which direction their children had gone. It is unclear whether the children have moved to different locations or if they are still in Cusbo, as well as who, if anyone, is currently with them. There is reportedly military activity around the areas of Cusbo and Dharkenley, further exacerbating family separation during displacement.
- **Gender-Based Violence:** The displaced population has reported four cases of gender-based violence (GBV) affecting young girls during their flight to Buulo Xaaji committed by armed men. This protection risk is critical and occurs almost with every displacement, leaving young girls and women without adequate safety measures. The current makeshift shelters further increase the risk of GBV, as these temporary accommodations do not deter offenders. Additionally, the land has not been officially allocated by any authority, and any decision to allocate it will ultimately rest with the hosting authority.
- **Child/Early and Forced Marriage:** The interviews documented five cases of forced marriages that occurred during their stay in Istanbul. The reasons for these forced marriages were linked to the economic hardships faced by the families, serving as a coping mechanism.
- **Challenges accessing essential services:** According to the interviews, seven individuals with limited mobility, disabilities, and chronic illnesses are especially vulnerable because they cannot access safe areas and essential services. It was noted that many people with disabilities were unable to be transported to Buulo Xaaji and remained behind, while only a few were successfully moved to their current location. Additionally, five elderly individuals with chronic illnesses have been identified, and they lack adequate healthcare.
- **Psychological, Emotional Abuse/Inflicted Distress:** The drought has led to significant economic hardship, which has also had psychological effects on families, particularly impacting parents and children. Parents reported noticing behavioral changes in their children from the way they interact with other children to lack of proper sleep. Parents too have exhibited signs of distress, such as becoming angry with their children over small issues. Many parents have struggled to communicate with their children in an age-appropriate manner.

## URGENT HUMANITARIAN NEEDS



**Food:** Due to the severe food shortage in Buulo Xaaji and the lack of humanitarian response, there is an urgent need for immediate access to comprehensive, nutrient-rich food supplies to combat malnutrition and safeguard the health of displaced individuals. It is critical to ensure that sufficient provisions are allocated to meet the specific dietary needs of vulnerable groups, including young children, the elderly, and pregnant and lactating women.



**Emergency Shelter:** The recently displaced IDPs in Buulo Xaaji are without shelter, leaving them exposed to harsh environmental conditions and significant protection risks. Emergency shelter kits are urgently needed to provide immediate relief, privacy, and security, particularly for female-headed households, children, and individuals with special needs. These shelters will not only protect vulnerable groups but also help restore a sense of normalcy and stability for those who have lost their homes.



**Communal Latrines:** It has been observed that the number of latrines used by the IDPs are for the host communities and are not enough to accommodate the growing displaced population. This has led to overcrowding at the few existing facilities, forcing many IDPs to resort to unsafe sanitation practices, which increases the risk of disease outbreaks. To prevent a potential public health crisis, immediate intervention from humanitarian organizations to support the construction of additional latrines and sanitation facilities is required.



**Safe Drinking Water:** Ensuring a consistent supply of potable water in Buulo Xaaji is imperative to prevent dehydration and waterborne illnesses, particularly given the scarcity of functional water wells and limited access to clean potable water. The risk of cholera, diarrhea, and other waterborne diseases is significantly heightened in overcrowded IDP settlements, where poor sanitation further exacerbates the situation. To mitigate this crisis, water trucking, well rehabilitation, and the establishment of sustainable water sources should be prioritized, safeguarding public health and preventing fatalities among the displaced population.



**Non-Food Items:** The availability of non-food items (NFIs) in Buulo Xaaji is limited, affecting drought-displaced communities' basic survival and well-being. Essential items such as soap, sanitary products, cooking utensils, and sleeping mats are indispensable for maintaining hygiene, ensuring warmth, and preventing disease outbreaks. Given the dire circumstances, humanitarian organizations are urged to prioritize the provision of NFIs to restore dignity and alleviate suffering among the affected population, and enhance the living conditions of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and the elderly.



**Ensuring the safety and protection of vulnerable populations:** Protection of vulnerable people, identification, registration and reunification processes for unaccompanied and separated children, urgently establishing GBV response and referral pathways to support the affected women and girls, providing targeted support for persons with specific needs including those with disabilities, the elderly and persons living with chronic illnesses, and providing psychosocial counseling and support services to the affected communities.

At the time of publishing this Flash Alert, there was minimal responses to the affected displaced population. The Area Based Coordination (ABC) for Kismayo is requested to activate the inter-sectoral minimum response package considered under the Integrated First-Line Response Framework (IFLR).



*Displaced communities meeting under a tree, lining up to fetch water and constructing makeshift houses at the outskirts of Buulo Xaaji.*

