

DROUGHT SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE

April 2023



In the Somali Region of Ethiopia, a man, who was first displaced by drought, and has recently been displaced by floods following heavy rains is one of the people who received core relief items from UNHCR on 18 April 2023. © UNHCR/Gulie Dore

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 April 2023, some 2 million had been internally displaced in Somalia and Ethiopia, while over 286,000 new refugee and asylum-seekers have crossed into drought affected areas of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia since January 2022.

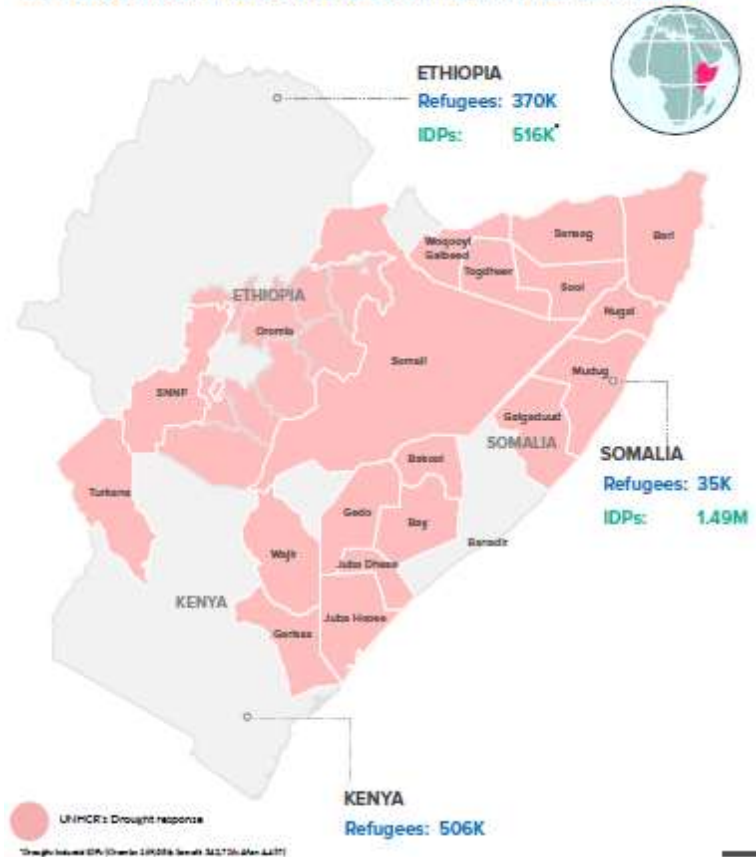
In **Ethiopia**, the condition of vulnerable pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in drought-affected Oromia and Somali regions, and parts of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's region (SNNP), is still extremely dire, and the urgency to further scale up the humanitarian response is high. The dramatic increases in food insecurity, malnutrition, displacements, as well as deteriorating health and protection indices and lack of access to clean water are some of the indicators of the concerning humanitarian situation. While recent spring rains have provided temporary solace through replenished surface water sources and rejuvenated pasture, this does not have a significant immediate impact on the restoration of decimated livelihoods. In addition, the same rains have caused floods leading to destruction of shelters/houses and public infrastructures, livestock death, and further displacements in some areas. From April – July 2023, 3.2 million people (out of targeted 13 million

people) are prioritized for assistance in drought affected areas, including Oromia (1.5 million), Somali (1.4 million) and SNNP (395,000) regions, according to the four-month Drought Response Operational Action Plan targeting most critical sectors for priority intervention in the most affected areas. ([OCHA Situation Report, April 2023](#)).

In **Kenya**, the drought situation continued to worsen in twenty-two Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (22) of the 23 ASAL counties. This is attributed to the failure of four consecutive rainy seasons. The number of people in need of food assistance stands at 4.35 million currently, although the impacts of the anticipated rains in May are expected to lead to a decrease of these numbers. Turkana County where the Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement are located is among the two arid and semi-arid counties in the Emergency Drought Phase as classified in March 2023. The historic drought had resulted in about 143,550 households amongst the host community being affected with 89,720 of these in dire need of food assistance. In addition, about 85,000 children below the age of 5, and 25,000 pregnant and lactating women required treatment for malnutrition with emergency conditions expected to persist.

In **Somalia**, the effects of climate change and insecurity made the operational environment challenging. The political and security situation in Las Caanood remained unpredictable, with no substantial peace negotiations on the horizon. The current rainy season has improved water and pasture access, but more rain is needed to recover from the worst drought in four decades. In April, 89,000 internal displacements were recorded, primarily due to drought (61,000) and flooding (16,000) bringing the overall number of internal displacements in 2023 to 912,000 (see [UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#)).

UNHCR'S DROUGHT RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND SOMALIA



UNHCR response

ETHIOPIA

SOMALI REGION

Refugees

In April, UNHCR distributed a one-off cash-in-hand assistance for nutrition to 7,896 vulnerable refugee households across the five Melkadida refugee camps via the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) system. Each household received 4,000 Ethiopian Birr (USD 75). The intervention was designed to improve their nutritional well-being and food security status that has been affected by the drought as well as incremental cuts to food assistance provided. The intervention targeted persons with disabilities caring for children under two, children with disabilities under two, and large families (10+ individuals) caring for children under two years old. Further support is needed to scale-up multi-purpose cash assistance for refugees, particularly for core relief items (CRIs), shelter, WASH, and protection support.

UNHCR is supporting the cholera outbreak response activities in the Liban zone, Melkadida region. The current round of outbreaks is mainly concentrated in Dollo Ado Woreda and has affected over 500 individuals since its start in February 2023 causing over 10 deaths. UNHCR supported training of 50 health workers in cholera case management; infection prevention and surveillance; facilitation of 21 health workers engaged in patient care;

provision of drugs for treatment; and rental vehicle for coordination and surveillance activities. UNHCR is also procuring four ambulances to be handed over to local hospitals for use by both host and refugee population.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In March and April, the Somali Region received exceptionally heavy rains that resulted in flooding and caused loss of lives, displacement of populations, and destruction of agricultural land, farm harvests, shelter, roads, bridges, water sources and other public infrastructure. According to a rapid assessment conducted by the Disaster and Risk Management Bureau (DRMB) and partners, the flooding has impacted 31 woredas in the Somali Region with a total of 45,416 families affected, and 25,844 families displaced. Reports from the local authorities indicate that 42 people have lost their lives and 14 have sustained injuries. More than 749 houses collapsed, and 53 schools were damaged and are in need of repair. 304 irrigation water pumps were damaged beyond repair. The flooding also affected planned humanitarian response activities, including distribution of Non-Food Items and the piloting of a multi-purpose cash distribution at Darsoo IDP site.

UNHCR in coordination with the local government Zone Office, distributed emergency food (rice, wheat flour, sugar and dates) to drought displaced communities that are also negatively impacted by ongoing floods. The first distribution targeted 250 households in Dollo Ado Woreda of Liban zone.

UNHCR distributed core relief items to 50 drought displaced households in Melkadida at the Old Peace Project Site. The households received plastic sheets, solar lanterns, 20-liter jerrycans and sleeping mats.

In partnership with six local partners and one local government zonal offices, UNHCR in Melkadida profiled displaced populations in Afder, Dawa and Liben zones targeted for the drought response. So far, UNHCR and partners have profiled internally displaced people across 66 sites and identified their needs. This information allows for effective planning of response, including provision on multi-purpose cash assistance.

OROMIA REGION

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

A multi-agency drought impact assessment was conducted from 3 -12 April in West Hararge Zone, (Oromia region) with UNHCR participation. The main findings are the following: protection risks include child abandonment, street children, child labour, early marriage, GBV and negative coping strategies due to food insecurity. Over 850,000 people were identified in need of food assistance out of which only 441,000 are beneficiaries of the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) and 26,000 are IDPs. Water access remains a challenge in the critically impacted Woredas in the Zone due to drought and infrastructure. A total of 753 out of 1,024 schools did not have any access to water, and over 242,171 students are critically impacted by the drought. 200 IDP drought-affected families were selected and jointly verified by UNHCR and the Disaster Risk Management Offices (DRMO) in the East and West Hararge Zones for early recovery cash-based interventions, and cash transfer processing is in progress. Verification of recipients of the second-round of multi-purpose cash assistance is also being conducted by UNHCR in preparation for cash transfer.

KENYA

DADAAB

As of end April, some 136,000 new arrivals had been profiled across the three camps in Dadaab - with Dagahaley hosting 50,296 individuals (37%), Hagadera 42,559 individuals (31%) and Ifo 43,112 individuals (32%). The profiling exercise in Ifo ended on 27 April, thereby phasing out the exercise entirely. Those who have not been profiled will instead be registered directly by the Department of Refugee Services (DRS) and UNHCR. In addition, 2,161 individuals (583 households) were individually registered in Ifo, raising the cumulative number of new arrivals registered to 11,983 individuals (3,440 households) by the end of April.

Health and Nutrition

To enhance access to health and nutrition services, UNHCR and partners continue to create awareness on available services, among new arrivals. For populations settling in the outskirts, outposts and outreach services continue to be provided to improve coverage and reduce morbidity and mortality. Medical outreach services provide malnutrition screening, immunization, treatment of common ailments, antenatal care, deworming and referrals for those requiring admission or specialized care. Surveillance activities were intensified, especially for

polio, measles, chikungunya, and dengue fever. Coordination engagements of all stakeholders remain in place for effective responses in terms of prevention and control of disease outbreaks.

A total of 1,303 cases with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) were admitted compared to 1,098 in March, while severe acute malnutrition (SAM) admissions rose by 87% compared to the previous month.

UNHCR health partners continued to intensify community screening and outreach services for those settled in the outskirts of the camps, especially for malnutrition screening, immunization, vitamin A supplementation and for linkages to service points in the health system. A total of 1,613 children under 5 were screened where 68 and 153 were referred for SAM and MAM management respectively. To enhance identification for timely referrals and prevention of complications, 2,200 mothers and caregivers were trained and issued with MUAC tapes to support in screening for acute malnutrition. There was regular engagement with UNICEF and the health partners to streamline the supply of therapeutic feeding.

Water and Sanitation

UNHCR through Relief, Reconstruction and Development Organization (RRDO) and the Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS) delivered 39 water truck trips to new arrivals in the outskirts of the three camps, and there were 50 trips to host community sites such as Bula Banaan, Daidai, and Darusalam within Dadaab township with a population 53,000 people.

Host Community Support

As part of the drought response and mitigation, UNHCR, the Danish Refugee Council and Garissa County Government Department of Livestock, distributed livestock feeds of 350 bales of hay and 350 bags of pellets to 140 drought-affected households with specific needs in Dadaab town and Alinjgur.

The prolonged drought had pushed many pastoralist nomads into poverty, leading them to settle in nearby villages to find livelihood opportunities or alternatively receive relief food. UNHCR, under drought intervention and relocation of host community residing in the now re-gazetted Ifo2, has 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.



Khadija's friends help her make a makeshift kitchen for her family. Khadija arrived to Dadaab late last year fleeing the drought in Somalia.
© UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

KAKUMA

By end of April 2023, there were a total of 18,109 new arrivals to the reception centres (RCs) in Kakuma and Kalobeyei since January 2023. At the end of April, Kakuma RC was hosting a total of 2,376 individuals and Kalobeyei RC 2,629 individuals. Population congestion at the two reception centres of Kakuma and Kalobeyei remains a major gap for the operation. Essential services such as pre-registration, verification, water, cooked meals, medical services, hygiene promotion, accommodation, and child protection are overstretched due to the high rate of daily influx.

The number of new arrivals in Kakuma and Kalobeyei increased noticeably bringing the total number of unregistered people to 9,453 as of 30 April 2023. Since the beginning of the year, a total of 1,953 refugee identity cards have been issued.

As part of an effort to decongest the reception centres, a total of 168 families of 462 people were relocated from Kalobeyei and Kakuma RC to the community and issued with full relocation packages (including core relief items, shelter, food and firewood).

Protection

Since January 2023, a total of 1,214 newly arrived unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs) were received, screened and assessed through Kakuma and Kalobeyei reception centres before relocation to the community and or placement in suitable alternative care. Since January, 662 newly arrived children were placed in various forms of alternative care arrangement among whom 612 were placed in kinship care; 13 children were placed in foster care and 37 children opted to stay in Child Headed Households. Cumulatively, 5,714 children are currently in various forms of care arrangements within the camps.

Health and Nutrition

The number of children presenting with acute malnutrition (severe and moderate) has increased in the treatment centers in 2023. A total 122 children under the age of five were admitted in the stabilization centre in April. The increase was attributed to increased cases of diarrhea in the camp and settlement due to water shortages and cases among the new arrivals. Four deaths were reported in the stabilization centre. The operation is working with UNICEF to acquire additional buffer stock for the response and partners are also mobilizing for additional human resource to manage the surge.

A fabricated container clinic has been installed at the old reception center in Kalobeyei. The structures are being used in health and nutrition screening of all new arrivals passing through the reception facility. It is also used in triaging of emergency cases to be referred to health facilities, including for treatment of children with severe and moderate malnutrition. One of the facilities is connected to water and electricity. However, due to an increase in the number of new arrivals at the reception center, the clinic waiting area has become too small and now needs an additional waiting space to reduce congestion and improve patient flow.

Shelter

A cumulative 4,259 transitional shelters have been constructed for the new arrivals including 50 for Persons with Special Needs. A cumulative 4,379 families (15,631 individuals) have since been relocated to occupy these shelters since January.

Cash Assistance

Cash for the construction of permanent shelters has been delivered to 240 households (1,128 individuals) in the Kalobeyei settlement. Refugees are reconstructing their houses and the process of construction is 99% completed. UNHCR has not been able to transfer cash assistance consistently for hygiene and energy since September 2022 due to funding gaps.

Host Community Support

UNHCR supported Turkana County Government Ministry of Health with in-kind donation of essential medicines necessary for the treatment of top five morbidities as well as medical complications in malnourished children. Additionally, a proportion of the host community living in Turkana West continued to access health and nutrition services provided in the health facilities within Kakuma refugee camp and Kalobeyei settlement. However, The National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) still indicates that 16.7% of children assessed in the sentinel sites in Turkana County have severe and moderate acute malnutrition. This value is higher than the long-term average of moderate malnutrition by 10.9 %. It is projected that the current trend will persist unless the prevailing drivers are adequately addressed.

SOMALIA

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Protection

The UNHCR-supported protection desks at IDP sites in Puntland's Bossaso, Garowe, and Gardo and Galkayo in Galmudug continued to serve as information hubs and referral points, reaching a total of 328 individuals who raised protection concerns due to a lack of access to basic services such as shelter, food and health.

In Sool and Togdheer regions in Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partners, reached 188 drought affected IDPs, of whom 50 persons with specific needs (PSN) were provided mobility devices, 27 individuals received psychosocial counseling, and the remaining 111 individuals benefitted from information and awareness sessions on the inclusion of PSN in different humanitarian services.

In Galmudug, to provide mental health support to pastoralists who lost their livestock due to the drought, UNHCR and its partner, rolled out roving psychosocial counseling services in close collaboration with the existing protection desks. In April, the team of three counselors provided 24 group and 10 individual counseling sessions.

In IDP sites in Bossaso, Burtinle, Gardo, and Garowe, UNHCR installed 16 street solar lights and rehabilitated 20 non-functioning street solar lights to mitigate against GBV and enhance the overall safety of the IDP sites.

Cash Assistance

In response to the drought, UNHCR distributed multipurpose cash assistance, cash for NFIs, and cash for emergency shelter to 3,255 households (19,800 individuals) in Baidoa, Beletweyne, Dhobley, and Dollow:

- In Baidoa, UNHCR distributed multipurpose cash assistance to cover the basic needs of 231 households (1,386 individuals), with each family receiving USD 90 and cash in lieu of NFI for 4 households (24 individuals), with each family receiving USD 100.
- In Beletweyne, UNHCR distributed cash in lieu of NFI assistance to 300 households (1,800 individuals), with each family receiving USD 100; cash in lieu of emergency shelter assistance to 700 households (4,200 individuals), with each family receiving USD 213; and multipurpose cash assistance to cover the basic needs of 390 households (2,340 individuals), with each family receiving USD 100.
- In Dhobley, UNHCR distributed cash in lieu of NFI assistance to 200 households (1,671 individuals), with each family receiving USD 100 and multipurpose cash assistance to 600 households (3,600 individuals), with each family receiving USD 90.
- In Dollow, UNHCR distributed multipurpose cash assistance to cover the basic needs of 600 households (3,600 individuals) and cash in lieu of NFI for 200 households (1,200 individuals). Families received a one-time payment of USD 110 for multipurpose cash assistance and a one-time payment of USD 100 for monetized NFI assistance.

To improve the living conditions across 25 IDP sites in Bossaso and Gardo in Puntland, UNHCR, through its partner, concluded site cleaning and site improvement activities using the cash-for-work modality that benefited 200 IDPs. In addition, 62 latrines were rehabilitated, and 45 latrines went through the desludging process in the aforementioned two locations.

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