

SOMALIA OPERATIONAL UPDATE

January 2024



During a monitoring visit, the Head of UNHCR Galkayo Sub Office stands in front of permanent shelters that UNHCR constructed to locally integrate 78 forcefully displaced families in Gardo, Puntland. © UNHCR

OVERVIEW

In January, 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 some 13,000 internal displacements in January, primarily due to floods and insecurity. Although there was respite from heavy rain that brought severe flooding in the last quarter of 2023, negative effects of the deluge remain, and climate change is expected to impact Somalia for the foreseeable future. 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.

Finding durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers, refugee returnees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in collaboration with the Federal Government of Somalia (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 January are listed below:

- In Kismayo, Jubaland, UNHCR, in coordination with partners and the Ministry of Public Works, relocated 138 IDP households (HHs) to shelters at the Luglow Durable Solutions site. The shelters and a police post were handed over to the IDP residents and local authorities, respectively. Likewise, at the Durdur IDP site in Burao of Somaliland, UNHCR, together with its partner, officially handed over hybrid shelters and land title deeds to 37 households.
- For the flood response, UNHCR, in collaboration with its shelter partner, conducted a vulnerability assessment exercise that aimed to identify 4,000 of the most vulnerable HHs in Beletweyne, Hiran region, and 1,800 of the most vulnerable HHs in Bardheere, Gedo region, who are in need of shelter/NFI assistance.
- In Galkayo, UNHCR concluded the biometric verification of 1,383 refugees and asylum seekers.
- The Protection Cluster published the Protection Analysis Update for Somalia, Kismayo district.

KEY FIGURES

PERSONS OF CONCERN

3.9M # of persons of concern to UNHCR Somalia

IDPs	3,864,000
Refugee Returnees (Jan 2020 - Jan 2024)	8,993
Refugees and Asylum Seeker	38,463

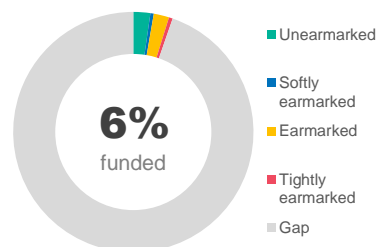
PARTNERS

29 # of partners implementing key UNHCR activities in 2024

Government	12
L/N NGO	9
INGO	8

FUNDING

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



POPULATION DATA

38,463

Refugees and asylum-seekers

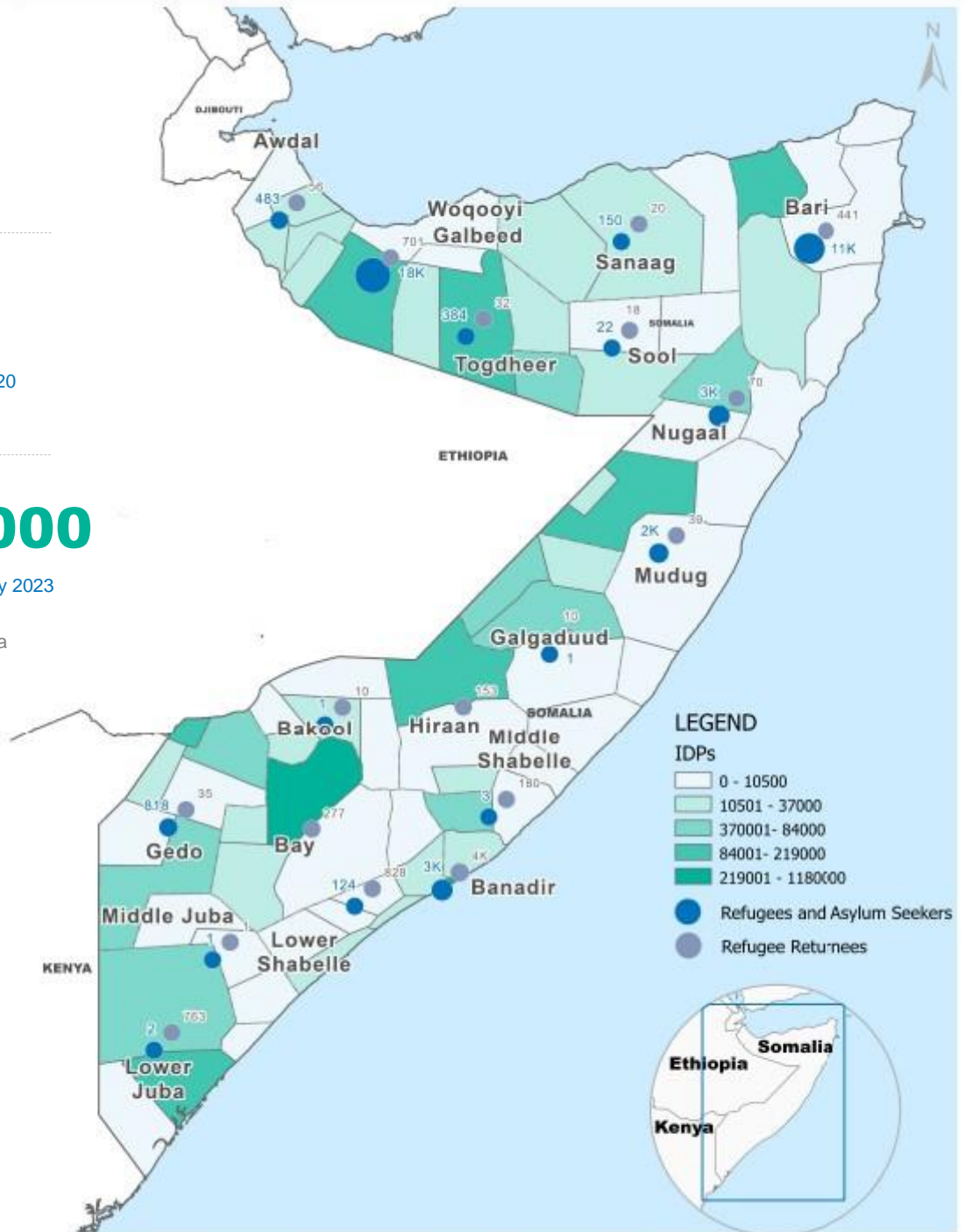
8,993

Refugee returnees from January 2020

2,957,000

Internal displacements since January 2023

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



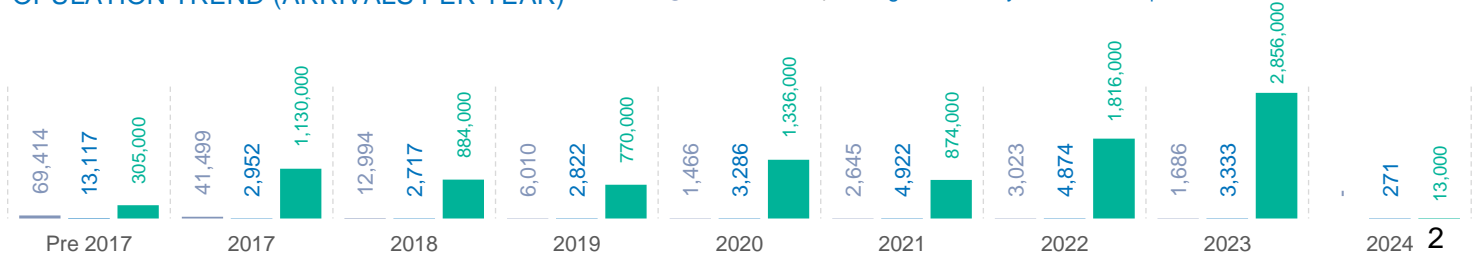
Sources of Data: UNHCR, HDX

Feedback: sommoprtn@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. The year 2023 was particularly devastating due to drought, heavy rains, flooding, and displacement caused by climatic shocks and conflict. Recurrent shocks, including climatic events, conflict, insecurity, and disease outbreaks, continue to exacerbate needs. Above-average rainfall is forecast for the next rainy season, starting in March, posing a risk to agro-pastoral livelihood. Moreover, the impact of the 2023 floods continues to be felt. About 4.3 million people remain acutely food insecure, and malnutrition rates among children under five remain high.¹

Rates of internal displacement owing to climate change and insecurity remain high. According to the UNHCR-led [Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), about 13,000 displacements within Somalia were recorded in January. Out of the total displacements during the reporting month, 7,000, or 54%, were attributed to flooding, and 6,000, or 46%, to insecurity or conflict. Food, shelter, livelihood support, and protection were the top needs of the displaced families on arrival at the place of displacement. The top three regions that received the greatest number of new displacements in January were Gedo, followed by Lower Juba and Banadir. 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/>.

Ongoing insecurity and conflict also contribute to a volatile operating environment for humanitarians. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)-led military operations against the non-state armed group (NASG), particularly in Galmudug State, and reprisal attacks by NASG across multiple locations in central and south-central Somalia continued into the new year, resulting in displacement, injuries, and deaths of many civilians.

In the political sphere, the FGS has expressed strong disapproval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland on 1 January. This agreement grants Ethiopia, a landlocked country, access to the sea in return for its recognition of Somaliland 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. However, a moment of political relief was experienced when Puntland State concluded its presidential election. Said Abdullahi Deni made history by becoming the first Puntland president to be re-elected for a second term. In his post-election speech, he underscored the importance of unity and forgiveness.

Somalia also hosts some 38,993 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, 8,993 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-hnrrp-summary>

Update on Achievements



Protection

Prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV)

- UNHCR, through its partner, identified and/or supported at least 45 new and existing GBV cases in January. Services to the survivors included case management support, safe house and meal support, psychosocial counseling, medical and legal referrals, the provision of hygiene kits, and cash assistance, among others.
- UNHCR, through its partners in Dollow and Mogadishu, strengthened activities within the available safe spaces, where women could gather and receive support. These spaces were designed to create a welcoming and comfortable environment, allowing the women to express themselves freely. The team conducted interactive discussions, covering topics such as stress management, coping strategies, and the impact of trauma on mental health.

Community engagement and awareness raising

- In Kismayo, UNHCR, through its partner, conducted indirect elections to form camp management committee (CMC) leadership structures in New Luglow and Eljale 1 IDP sites. 100 residents, 60 males and 40 females, from each site were proportionally selected and participated in the elections, representing the wider community. They successfully elected 14 CMC leaders at the New Luglow Site and 13 CMC leaders at the Eljale 1 Site.
- In Galkayo, UNHCR helped to elect a refugee and asylum-seeker committee comprised of seven individuals, including three women. The committee will play a crucial role in advocating for the rights and needs of the refugee community, fostering community engagement, and serving as a liaison between the refugees and relevant stakeholders. This committee was elected based on equitable community representation and took age, gender, and diversity (AGD) criteria into account. It represents various ethnicities, including Yemenis, Oromos, Amharos, and Somalis. The voting process was overseen by UNHCR, its partners, and local authorities and drew 150 male and female voters.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR provided 345 forcibly displaced people, including those with special needs, with a variety of services, including mental health and psychosocial counseling (MHPSS), case management and referral support, physiotherapy support, and general counseling, through the protection desk, joint counseling desk, and hotlines run by partners. At the joint counseling desk at the Peaceful Co-existence Center (PCC), most of the advice sought was for concerns about financial insecurity, followed by queries about refugee status determination (RSD).



UNHCR's partner staff conducting counseling at the Peaceful Co-existence Center (PCC) in Hargeisa, Somaliland . © Diversity Action Network (DAN)

Legal assistance

- In Somaliland and Puntland, UNHCR, through its partner, provided legal assistance to 315 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. Out of the 269 legal cases registered in Somaliland, 259 were resolved, and the rest remained active.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR's legal partner monitored 34 police stations and temporary detention centers in Maroodi-Jeeh and Sahil regions and facilitated the release of one asylum-seeker through mediation. They also identified three additional asylum-seekers who will appear before the court, with UNHCR providing support through lawyers from its partner.
- In January, forced eviction cases were reported in many parts of Somaliland, mainly Burao, where 138 individuals were evicted from five IDP sites without prior notice. In Hargeisa, 20 HHs (120 individuals) were evicted from three IDP sites, and in Erigavo, 13 HHs (78 individuals) were evicted.
- In Laascaanood, 20 HHs (120 individuals) faced eviction at four IDP sites. All the evicted IDPs were provided free legal counseling and assistance through a collaborative dispute resolution mechanism to solve issues between the landlord and the affected population. The support was provided by paralegals from UNHCR's partner, the partner's staff, and IDP community committees, who initially identified and provided relevant support. Furthermore, 70 HHs

(420 individuals) who returned to Laascaanood from nearby areas and the border areas with Ethiopia were also forcefully evicted after settling in public and private properties upon their return.

Registration, reception, and reintegration support

- In Berbera, Somaliland, UNHCR and its partners received and provided basic services, including biometric registration and counseling on services available in Somaliland, to 61 refugee new arrivals (59 males and 2 females). Likewise, UNHCR and its partners also received and provided preliminary support, including registration, to four unassisted spontaneous Somali refugee returnees (3 males and 1 female) from Yemen in Berbera. Another 20 Somali refugee returnees from Sudan, Egypt, and Libya were received in Hargeisa via the UNHCR-IOM's voluntary repatriation program.
- In Bossaso, Puntland, UNHCR and partners received 26, including 15 unassisted spontaneous Somali refugee returnees and 11 refugees, who were provided accommodation.
- UNHCR's government counterpart in Somaliland, the National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA), registered 123 refugee, asylum-seeker, and Somali refugee returnee HHs (180 individuals). The NDRA also commenced the renewal of around 12,000 identity documents for refugees and asylum-seekers that are set to expire or have expired. In January, a total of 4,092 identity documents were renewed.
- In Galkayo, UNHCR concluded the biometric verification of 1,383 refugees and asylum seekers, who also received identity certificates following the verification exercise. Likewise, the UNHCR office in Galkayo also registered 12 refugees and asylum-seekers.
- In Mogadishu, UNHCR prepared and released reinstallation grant cash assistance for 706 Somali refugee returnees, mainly from Yemen, Libya, and India, who arrived in October, November, and December 2023.

Resettlement

- UNHCR facilitated the resettlement of a two-member refugee family in Finland. Although Somalia does not have a regular relocation quota, this family, categorized under 'women and girls at risk', was exceptionally chosen for resettlement.



Flood Response

- UNHCR, in collaboration with its shelter partner, conducted a vulnerability assessment exercise that aimed to identify 4,000 of the most vulnerable HHs in Beletweyne, Hiran region, and 1,800 of the most vulnerable HHs in Bardheere, Gedo region. The primary goal of the exercise was to identify and respond to the shelter and NFI needs of the most vulnerable households, who were displaced by the rains and floods in the last quarter of 2023.
- In Baidoa, UNHCR completed a three-day ProGres training for 15 enumerators who are tasked with enrolling flood-affected IDPs, who will receive shelter materials, using ProGres and the Biometric Identify Management System (BIMS), which are UNHCR's registration, identity, and case management tools that have a centralized repository system that generates globally unique identities for the people we serve while eradicating duplications. The enrolment, which is scheduled to commence on 4 February, is intended to promote a comprehensive and targeted response for IDPs, as well as effective coordination among stakeholders involved in IDP assistance and protection.
- The Deputy Commissioner of the Hirshabelle Commissioner for Refugees and IDPs (HCRI) in Jowhar received a boat and 50 life jackets from UNHCR. These items will be instrumental in conducting search and rescue operations during future flood events, a recurring issue in Jowhar during the rainy seasons. The boat and life jackets are scheduled to be officially handed over to the Jowhar Municipality in February.



UNHCR dispatched a rescue boat to Jowhar to conduct search and rescue during floods. © HCRI



Shelter and NFI

- In Kismayo, Lower Juba region in Jubaland, UNHCR, in coordination with partners and the Ministry of Public Works, relocated 138 IDP HHs to shelters at the Luglow Durable Solutions site. While doing so, the protection needs of persons with disabilities and elderly persons were put forward as a priority. The shelters and a police post were handed over to the IDP residents and local authorities, respectively. The handover ceremony was graced by the Second Deputy President of Jubaland, Mr. Abdikadir Hajji Mohamud, and other government officials.
- At the Durdur IDP site in Burao, Togdheer region of Somaliland, UNHCR, together with its partner, officially handed over 37 hybrid shelters and land title deeds to 37 households comprising 222 individuals. Key government officials, including the Chairperson of the NDRA, the Deputy Mayor of Burao, and the Governor of the Togdheer region, attended the ceremony. Speaking on behalf of the beneficiaries (estimated 1,000 HHs), the community committee chairperson highlighted key needs of the IDPs, such as lack of health and education facilities, limited livelihood opportunities, and shelter assistance.
- In Gardo, Puntland, UNHCR, together with its partners and the Gardo municipality, monitored the quality of the recently completed construction of 78 permanent shelters at the Shabelle Durable Solutions site. Gardo municipality confirmed that it has secured an additional land parcel that can accommodate more than 500 families, facilitating durable solutions for forcefully displaced families, the IDPs in particular, through local integration.
- In Dhobley, Lower Juba region of Jubaland State, UNHCR, through its partner, rehabilitated 20 solar light systems, helping the residents of the Danwadag IDP site have enough light during the night to reduce GBV instances and better protect the camp residents.
- In Dollow, Gedo region of Jubaland State, UNHCR, through its partner, installed solar electricity and a new water system at the transit center, which is used to register and verify refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees.



Handover of shelters and land title deeds at the Durdur IDP site in Burao, Somaliland. © UNHCR



Education

- In Puntland, there are 4,379 refugee and asylum seeker students enrolled in primary and secondary schools, with 3,567 (1,716 girls and 1,851 boys) being at the primary level and 812 (376 girls and 436 boys) at the secondary level in Galkayo, Gardo, Garowe, and Bossaso. UNHCR, through its partner, paid pending school fees from August to December 2023.
- In Mogadishu, UNHCR, through its partner, paid school fees for 565 primary school (277 girls and 288 boys) and 234 secondary school (110 girls and 124 boys) refugee and asylum-seeker students.
- In Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner, completed verification of 44 primary and 14 secondary schools. The information is instrumental in the effective allocation of resources and other support to the schools and beneficiaries.



Health

- In Mogadishu and Somaliland, UNHCR's partners delivered primary, secondary, tertiary, or maternal and child health care services to 1,313 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 Beletweyne, UNHCR, through its partner, organized the graduation ceremony for 40 IDPs (33 females and 7 males), who went through rigorous livelihood training. All trainees received a start-up kit consisting of a tailoring machine, polyester sewing threads, a dry iron, Somali Baati dresses, sewing needles, and scissors. The livelihood trainings are aimed at empowering the forcefully displaced population with skills and knowledge that help them earn a living, become economically self-sufficient, and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid and other external support.

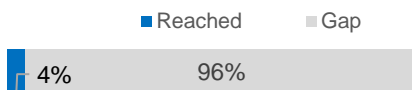


Cluster Coordination and Leadership



116K

of beneficiaries reached by the Protection Cluster and the AoRs



3.8 M People in need

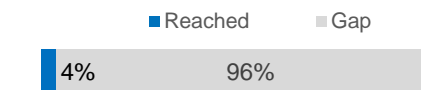
2.7 M People targeted

173 M Funding required



51K

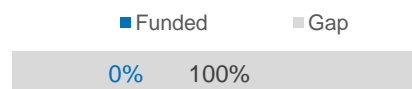
of beneficiaries reached by the Shelter Cluster



4.6 M People in need

1.4 M People targeted

80 M Funding required



1.7M

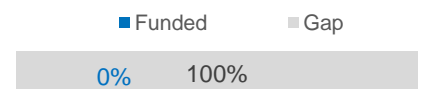
of beneficiaries reached by the CCCM Cluster



3.3 M People in need

2.7 M People targeted

61 M Funding required



Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster's 2024 response plan has been made public. This plan is anchored on four strategic pillars: protection of civilians, response prioritization, integrated approaches across sectors, and operationalization of frontline protection responses. With each of these pillars, the Protection Cluster seeks to add value to the inter-sectoral coordination and response and, thus, to the Centrality of Protection across the humanitarian response in the country. Read the full publication on the strategy [here](#).
- The Protection Cluster published the [Protection Analysis Update for Somalia, Kismayo district](#). Conflict and climatic shocks are the main causes of Somalia's complex and multifaceted displacement crisis. This displacement is often characterized by the protection risks faced by the displaced populations. With particular focus on Kismayo district, the main drivers of displacement include conflict and drought, as per the Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) in Somalia, before the onset of flooding in the last quarter of 2023. The populations in Kismayo district currently face the following protection risks:
 - Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access,
 - Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups,
 - GBV, and
 - Child and forced family separation.

The Protection Analysis Update for Kismayo district has already reached more than 7,000 people globally.

Shelter Cluster

- In January, the Shelter Cluster partners reached 50,838 individuals, out of which 37,436 individuals received plastic sheets, offering them temporary shelter and protection from the climatic elements; 12,212 individuals received NFI kits, ensuring access to essential household items; and 1,200 individuals received transitional shelters, which were aimed at meeting long-term shelter needs.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster

- Site verification assessments, in coordination with partners, local authorities, and other stakeholders, were conducted at 35 IDP sites in two districts, namely Baardhere and Luuq, both in Jubaland. A total of 22,843 HHs (136,518 individuals) were verified to be living at the assessed sites.
- Service monitoring activities were conducted across 1,898 IDP sites, covering 34 districts, under the administration of 17 partners. 585 sites reported receiving new arrivals within the last month, and 85% of sites with new arrivals received community awareness activities on the availability of services.
- In January, the number of issues raised through the CCCM-managed complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) stood at 3,694. Most of the complaints raised were attributed to food security, shelter/NFI, and WASH.
- The CCCM partners conducted 34 site-level coordination meetings and coordination meetings with the local authorities and service providers. In Deynille, Adaado, Baidoa, Hudur, Abudwak, Dhusamareb, Guri'el, and South Galkayo, these meetings created a platform to strengthen collaboration between various stakeholders and addressed site-level concerns. Camp Management Committees (CMCs), local authorities, and service providers' discussions focused on improving service delivery, establishing effective communication channels, and addressing the needs of displaced persons and the most vulnerable host community in the area. In Kahda, area-based site-level coordination meetings, involving humanitarian partners, local authorities, and the CMCs, conducted joint rapid needs assessments, shared information between stakeholders, and mobilized partners to provide services meeting minimum standards and address service gaps within catchment areas.
- CCCM partners conducted an awareness-raising campaign at sites in Baidoa, Kismayo, and Dhobley to spread awareness about the risk of flooding. Awareness messages also included anti-aid diversion information and a list of available humanitarian services and partners providing such services. A total of 20,947 females and 10,067 males participated in these sessions.
- The CCCM partners conducted site improvement activities, including the establishment of 40 drainage systems at IDP sites in Dayniile, Galakyo, Dhusamareeb, and Baidoa. Partners carried out a total of 95 regular clean-up campaigns in 15 sites, using disaster risk reduction (DRR) tools in an incentivized cash-for-work approach, whereby 564 women and 474 men received USD 60 for the cleaning activities.

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the Somalia Operation in 2024 amount to **USD 9.4 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 softly earmarked contributions to UNHCR in 2024 | USD

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 | **Ireland** 13.6 million | **Belgium** 11 million | **Australia** 10.7 million

Algeria | Angola | Armenia | Estonia | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Sweden for UNHCR | Thailand | Türkiye | Private donors

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LINKS

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