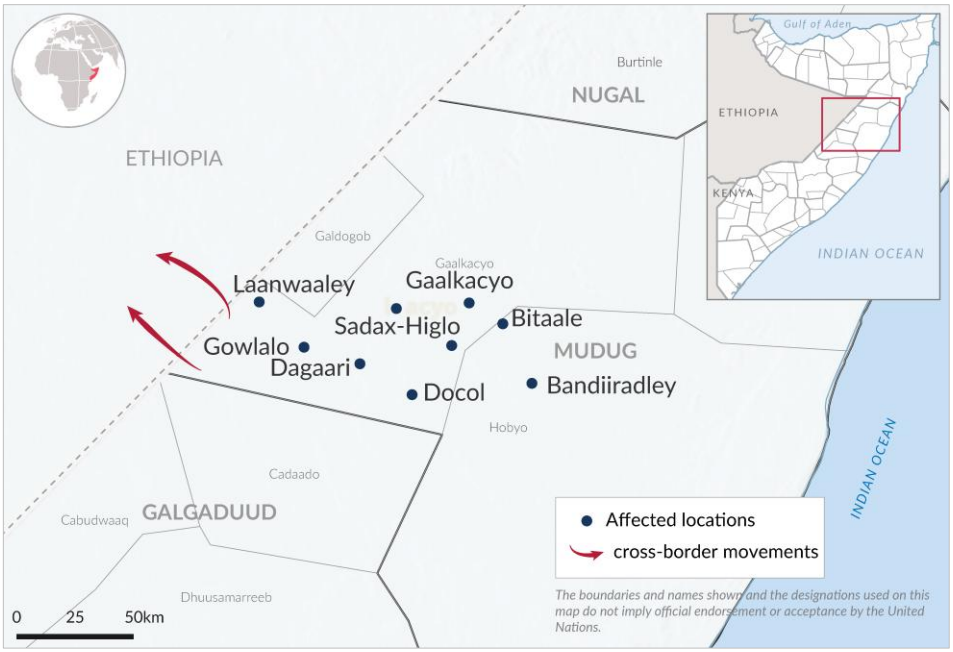
DROUGHT-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT IN GAALKACYO DISTRICT, MUDUG REGION

Displaced Families	Displaced Individuals	Cross-border movement	Deaths	Injuries	Incident Date
3,500	21,000	1,230	0	0	22 June 2026

BACKGROUND

Somalia continues to face a severe and prolonged drought crisis driven by consecutive failed rainy seasons, extreme temperatures, and environmental degradation. These conditions have worsened water scarcity, depleted grazing resources, increased livestock losses, and weakened household coping capacities across drought-affected areas.



In Mudug Region, particularly Gaalkacyo District, below average and erratic rainfall has failed to restore resources or graze land, severely affecting pastoral and agropastoral communities. Livestock deaths, declining household income, and worsening food insecurity have forced increasing numbers from drought-affected villages including Bandiiradley, Dagaari, Sadax-Higlo, Gowlalo, Saaxwanaag, Docol, Bitaale, and Laanwaaley-to flee in search of water, pasture, basic services and humanitarian assistance. Newly arrivals are settling in informal sites, makeshift shelters, and host communities in and around Gaalkayo, placing additional pressure on already overstretched water, WASH, health, and protection services and heightening the risk of resource-based tension. Secondary and cross-border movements toward Wardher, Doollo, Buuhoodle, Sool, and Qorilugud have also been reported, underscoring the need for continued protection monitoring to track displacement trends, identifying risks, and inform timely humanitarian response.

Between 18 June and 22 June 2026, the Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network has recorded approximately the displacement of approximately 3,500 households, (around 21,000 individuals) across Galkayo District due to severe drought and deteriorating living condition. Displacement remains ongoing and is expected to increase if drought conditions persist. Urgent support is needed in water access, food assistance, livelihoods, shelter, health, WASH, and protection to prevent further displacement, livelihood collapse, and worsening humanitarian conditions.

PROTECTION RISKS

The worsening drought and consequent displacement in Gaalkacyo District have significantly increased protection risks for affected populations, particularly newly displaced families living in informal settlements, makeshift shelters, and open areas. The loss of livelihoods, limited access to water and basic services, overcrowded living condition, and growing pressure on host communities have heightened the vulnerability of women, girls, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, minority groups, and female-headed households, exposing them risks of GBV, family separation, psychosocial distress, exclusion from humanitarian assistance, and escalating inter-community tensions.

Family Separation: At the time of reporting, no confirmed cases of unaccompanied or separated children were identified. However, ongoing displacement movements continue to increase the risk of family separation, particularly for children living in overcrowded informal settlements where community-based protection mechanisms are limited. Children from female-headed households and highly vulnerable families remain at heightened risk of neglect, exploitation, and other protection concerns.

Psychological and Emotional Distress: Displaced populations, particularly children, women, older persons, and other vulnerable groups, are experiencing elevated levels of psychosocial distress due to prolonged drought, loss of livelihoods, repeated displacement, and uncertainty regarding access to basic needs. Children are increasingly exposed to emotional distress associated with hunger, disrupted social structures, and unstable living conditions, while adults face heightened anxiety linked to food insecurity and resource scarcity.

Loss of Livelihoods and Productive Assets: The majority of displaced households have experienced significant losses of livelihoods and productive assets due to prolonged drought conditions. Large-scale livestock losses, depletion of household assets, and reduced income opportunities have severely weakened household coping capacities, increasing dependency on humanitarian assistance.

Gender-Based Violence: Women and girls face heightened risks of gender-based violence, including exploitation, harassment, and abuse within displacement settings. Overcrowded living conditions, lack of privacy, inadequate shelter arrangements, and limited access to safe spaces further increase protection risks. Female-headed households, widows, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women remain particularly vulnerable.

Community Tensions and Social Cohesion Risks: The continued influx of displaced populations is placing increasing pressure on already scarce local resources, particularly water, grazing land, and food supplies. Competition over these limited resources may heighten tensions between displaced households and host communities, increasing the risk of localized conflict and protection incidents.

URGENT PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Emergency Shelter and Core Relief Items: Most displaced households are currently residing in makeshift shelters or temporary structures that provide inadequate protection from harsh weather conditions, extreme heat, and insecurity, exposing them to significant shelter and protection risks. Immediate support is required through emergency shelter materials and core relief items, including plastic sheeting, shelter kits, sleeping mats, blankets, and essential household items.

Water Access and Emergency Water Trucking: Severe water shortages remain among the most urgent humanitarian concerns. Traditional water sources have largely dried up, and many displaced households lack the financial means to access water through private suppliers. Immediate emergency water trucking and sustainable water interventions are urgently required to ensure safe and equitable access to water for both human and livestock consumption.

Food Assistance and Livelihood Support: Displaced households have experienced significant losses of livestock, food stocks, and income sources, resulting in worsening food insecurity and weakened household resilience. Immediate food assistance is urgently required to prevent further deterioration in food consumption and reduce harmful coping strategies. Particular attention is needed for children under five, pregnant and lactating women, and other vulnerable groups.

Protection Services: Urgent scale-up of protection services is required to address heightened risks faced by displaced populations, including gender-based violence, child protection concerns, psychosocial distress, and risks faced by older persons and persons with disabilities. Protection desks, case management, referral services, child protection interventions, GBV services, psychosocial support, and community-based protection mechanisms are needed.

Health and Nutrition Services; Access to healthcare remains limited in displacement sites, increasing vulnerability to disease outbreaks, malnutrition, and preventable health complications. Mobile health and nutrition services are urgently required, with prioritization of children under five, pregnant and lactating women, older persons, and individuals with chronic health conditions.

WASH Support: Access to sanitation facilities and hygiene services remains critically inadequate. Urgent WASH interventions, including hygiene kit distribution, emergency sanitation infrastructure, water storage support, and hygiene promotion, are required to mitigate public health risks and reduce disease outbreaks.

Monitoring and Coordination: The fluid humanitarian situation and ongoing displacement trends require continuous protection monitoring and displacement tracking to support evidence-based humanitarian response planning. The Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) will continue monitoring population movements, protection concerns, humanitarian access constraints, and evolving needs through community-based information networks and field-level protection monitoring mechanisms.

Livestock grazing in drought-affected areas of Gaalkacyo District, where pasture depletion and water scarcity continue to affect pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods©PSMN.

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**