

SOMALIA

As at 8 April 2020

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

8 confirmed cases

0 confirmed cases related to UNHCR's persons of concern

As at 8 April, eight COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in Somalia and currently [no confirmed cases related to UNHCR's persons of concern](#). The latest confirmed case in Mogadishu of an individual with no travel history means infection took place by way of community transmission.

Necessary travel and schooling restrictions imposed by Somalia in response to the global pandemic have resulted in the suspension of certain activities implemented by UNHCR, including programmes related to refugee status determination, resettlement interviews, and repatriation of Somali refugee returnees.

Somalia has one of the most protracted and complex humanitarian crises in the world. With over 2.6 million [internally displaced persons \(IDPs\)](#) living in over 2,000 highly congested settlements, two-thirds of whom are minors, there is [exceptionally high risk for wide-spread community transmission of the virus](#). Somalia has extremely limited capacity, including with regard to diagnosis and treatment, to prevent and respond to an outbreak of COVID-19.



A displaced individual sanitizing hands prior to receiving a kit of basic and domestic items in Dollow.

UNHCR RESPONSE

Leveraging the strength of our partners as per the Federal Government's *National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19*, and attendant Humanitarian Country Team's (HCT) *COVID-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan*, UNHCR Somalia's scenario-based *COVID-19 Operations Response Plan* aims to mitigate the risk of contagion and protect against shocks among the world's most vulnerable: IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers, refugee-returnees, and vulnerable hosting communities. UNHCR's operational plan for COVID-19 provides hygiene supplies and support to medical facilities, raises awareness about the pandemic, contextualizes public-health information for those with specific needs (such as illiterate persons), and provides cash assistance and non-food items. Highlights of UNHCR's actions related to COVID-19 include the following:

- **Access to territory:** As nations have appropriately clamped down on border movements, UNHCR will continue to ensure [respect for international human rights and refugee protection standards](#) to allow those who seek refuge in Somalia to do so through quarantine and health checks. While voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees is currently suspended, it may be that refugees or spontaneous returnees may encounter severe protection risks as UNHCR has already observed and responded to.
- **Advocacy:** UNHCR is advocating to the Government on the need for an immediate [moratorium on evictions](#) in the context of COVID-19. This year more than 48,000 persons have been evicted from their homes (268,000 in 2019).
- **Basic items:** The most vulnerable displaced households will receive multi-purpose [cash assistance](#) to cover basic items.
- **Direct support to government:** UNHCR donated [43 tents](#) to Government partners (30 in Hargeisa and 13 in Mogadishu) to serve as screening at border points, quarantine, and/or treatment centres.
- **Health:** UNHCR and partners started [informing](#) persons of concern on basic steps to protect against the COVID-19 targeting approximately 123,000 persons. Displaced persons may use a [hotline](#) through which they can report suspected cases. Distribution of [hygiene kits](#) which include soap or hand sanitizers to 76,000 persons and [sanitary materials](#) to 3,000 women are underway.
- **Protection and displacement monitoring:** UNHCR leads the [Protection and Return Monitoring Network](#) and the [Somalia Protection Monitoring System](#) and reports on forced displacement and protection concerns where COVID-19 is a contributory factor.
- **Training of IDP site leaders:** UNHCR started [building capacity of IDP site leaders](#) on prevention and response to COVID-19 who will further educate displaced persons in IDP sites. Many IDPs are illiterate and the only way to raise awareness is disseminating messages orally through IDP site leaders.
- **Shelter and NFI:** High-risk IDP sites are being targeted for decongestion and upgrading of shelter and provision of non-food items (NFI), with plans for UNHCR to support [27,600 IDPs](#) living in high density IDP sites for decongestion subject to availability of additional land, shelter upgrade and provision of NFI.
- **Livelihoods:** UNHCR is exploring and supporting business opportunities arising as a result of COVID-19 (e.g. production of face masks and other medical apparel).
- **Hand-washing facilities:** UNHCR plans to install 19 [hand-washing facilities](#) at health centres and reception centres in Bossaso, Dollow, Hargeisa and Qhardo, benefiting approximately 800 persons per day.

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