

UNHCR has scaled up its protection response and cash assistance to reach more than 250,000 drought affected individuals in 2022

Situation Overview

Somalia remains on the frontline of climate emergency, with the failure of four consecutive rainy seasons. The ongoing drought has affected some 7.8 million people (Source: UN OCHA) and according to the UNHCR-led [Protection Returns Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), more than 1 million people have been displaced due to the drought in 2022 alone. In pockets of Baidoa and Buur Hakaba districts of Bay Region, famine is projected by the Integrated Food Security Classification (IPC) Famine Review Committee by the end of the year, if urgent humanitarian aid is not scaled up and sustained.

The drought has disproportionately affected women, children, persons with disabilities, and those from minority/marginalized groups/clans. According to Gender Based Violence (GBV) AoR assessment, 79 per cent of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are women and children, many of whom are not only at risk of food insecurity but also in danger of sexual violence, exploitation, abuse, and psychological harm due to breakdown of social support. The PRMN reported that 57 per cent of protection violations perpetrated in a displacement setting were against women and girls. The GBV AoR assessment results further reveal an uptick in the number of GBV incidents in IDP setting, including 35 per cent of women and girls felt unsafe to move freely, 17 per cent increase in intimate partner violence, and 10 percent increase in rape cases.

The effects of climate change, persistent insecurity, armed conflict, extreme poverty, and soaring food prices have eroded the resilience of millions of Somalis and increased vulnerabilities.



UNHCR and partner conducting Vulnerability Assessment with a female headed household in Baidoa. ©UNHCR/ Abdikarim Mohamed Noor

UNHCR and Partners' Response

BENEFICIARIES

	Protection Interventions	188,787
	Core Relief Items	146,000
	Cash Assistance	105,183
	Emergency Shelters	33,000

In Somalia, UNHCR is part of the inter-agency drought response and leads Protection and Shelter/NFI clusters and co-leads Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster and the Somalia Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Inter-Agency Network, which is working with partners to support integration of PSEA into sectoral responses.

The Protection Cluster has been providing hands-on technical guidance and support on protection mainstreaming to partners. For instance, it has developed easy to use tip sheets/tools with

recommended actions to mainstream Protection in Food Security, Nutrition, and CCCM responses. Similar tools are also being developed for WASH, Health, and Shelter clusters. Moreover, Protection Cluster has also developed and shared a protection mainstreaming mapping and tracking tool to help clusters track their protection mainstreaming initiatives.

Considering that the Centrality of Protection requires collective action to address critical protection risks, UNHCR has advocated with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to endorse recommendations to integrate HCT Centrality of Protection objectives into the 2023 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) / Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

As part of the ongoing Vulnerability Assessment (VA) and targeting exercise, which is being conducted in coordination with local authorities and partners, UNHCR has assessed approximately 40,000 IDP HHs. Based on the assessment, more than 16,000 vulnerable HHs have been assisted with various assistance, such as provision of core relief items (CRIs) and shelter assistance, cash assistance, and specialized protection services, in some of the worst drought hit parts of

Somalia, including Baidoa, Banadir, and Dollow. More vulnerable IDPs will be reached through similar interventions in coming weeks. Additional gaps and unmet needs identified during the VA exercise will be addressed through existing inter-agency referral mechanisms and coordination structures.

UNHCR continued to scale up its protection response, including implementation of gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mitigation, and response interventions and training of partners on code of conduct, PSEA, and protection/GBV mainstreaming in Baidoa, Galkayo, and Dollow. 19 mobile and static Protection Desks have been established in Baidoa, Banadir, Beletweyne, Dhobley, Dollow, Galkayo, and Kismayo. The Protection Desks will help identify vulnerable individuals who are in need of assistance, enhance outreach and communication, and identify trends by studying the information collected at the settlement level to complement ongoing protection monitoring analysis. Moreover, reception/counselling desks set up across IDP sites improved UNHCR's field presence and coordination, community engagement, and information sharing.

UNHCR has reached more than 188,787 individuals through aforementioned protection services.

Lifesaving assistance through the provision of shelter and CRIs, either in-kind or monetized, continued.

Unmet needs

Somalia's longest drought in at least 40 years continues to drive high levels of humanitarian needs. According to the PRMN data and assessments conducted by UNHCR and partners targeting drought affected displaced population, food, livelihood support, shelter, water, and protection violations against women and children were identified as the top needs and protection concerns.

Drought affected IDPs belonging to minority/marginalized clans, elderly without support, people living with disability, and at-risk women and children among others are more vulnerable and face heightened protection risks.

UNHCR is working with partners and seeking additional funds to meet the current urgent needs.

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Approximately 146,000 IDPs and host communities have received CRI kits which are comprised of basic household items such as kitchen sets, blankets, and jerry cans. Likewise, to date, more than 33,000 IDPs have benefited from shelter support.

The overall number of drought affected people who received cash assistance from UNHCR has nearly doubled since September 2022. This year, UNHCR has supported some 35,518 vulnerable refugees, asylum-seekers and returnees with cash assistance to help them mitigate against the drought and meet their basic needs. Likewise, 69,665 IDPs and host community members have received multipurpose and emergency cash grants, allowing the drought affected families to prioritize and address their immediate and short term needs with dignity. In forthcoming week, additional vulnerable displaced families will be targeted with cash assistance.

Other multi-sectoral drought response activities supported by UNHCR include IDP site improvement works such as rehabilitation of drains and installation of street solar lights. CCCM partners also worked with Nutrition actors to screen new arrival children at risk of malnutrition and making referrals to feeding programme. In South-Central Somalia and Puntland, sustainable livelihood activities were underway to build resilience of drought affected displaced families.

