

UNHCR SOMALIA BRIEFING SHEET

November 2011



General Situation

Somalia generates the third highest number of refugees in the world (after Afghanistan and Iraq). As of 21 November 2011 there were **951,850 Somali refugees**, mainly hosted in Kenya, Yemen, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Tanzania and Uganda and almost **1.5 million** Somalis internally displaced within the country, settled mainly in the South-Central region.

287,204 Somalis also sought refuge in neighboring countries in 2011 while another **41,000** were internally displaced, mainly in South Central Somalia, in particular from the capital, Mogadishu.

Somalia is the most affected country within the Horn of Africa by the ongoing drought, widely regarded as the worst in 60 years. Consecutive seasonal rain failures have led to sky-rocketing food prices, in a country already devastated by two decades of civil war.

An estimated 3.7 million Somalis are now in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Increasingly, Somalis are leaving their homes, walking thousands of kilometres in search of food, most of them ending up in IDP settlements within Somalia and refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, in extremely malnourished conditions.

Since the fall of the Siad Barre's regime in 1991, Somalia fell into the hands of different militias, who divided the country along clan lines. There have been at least 15 attempts to re-establish a national government, the last of which brought to power Sheikh Shariif Ahmed, at the end of January 2009. Although the establishment of the new Transitional Federal Government was perceived with optimism by the Somali population and the International Community, Shariif is facing overwhelming challenges, as armed opposition groups continue deadly attacks on the Government and African Union peacekeeping forces, and still control large parts of Somali territory.

Most of Somalia continues to be in security level 5 (high), with Mogadishu and other areas on level 6 (extreme). Ongoing conflict continues to restrict humanitarian access and hamper delivery of life-saving assistance.

2011 Key Facts and Figures

Number of Beneficiaries: 1,466,963

Refugees 2,113

Asylum seekers 5,850

IDPs 1,459,000

Number of Staff Members: 102 (36 in Nairobi, 66 in Somalia)

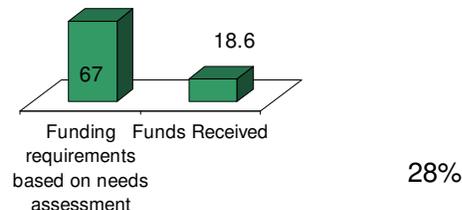
Office Presence: 7 Offices

1 Branch Office (Nairobi)

2 Sub-Offices (Hargeisa, Bossaso)

5 Field Offices (Garowe, Galkayo, Dollow, Doble, Mogadishu)

UNHCR Somalia Funding Situation in USD millions as at end October 2011



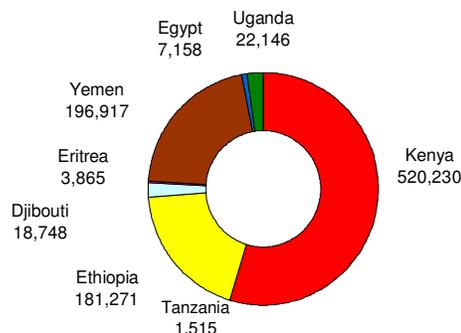
Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Somalia hosts a total of **2,113 refugees** and **5,850 registered asylum seekers**, mainly from Ethiopia. UNHCR's refugee operation is focused in the regions of Somaliland and Puntland, with the overwhelming majority of the refugees and asylum seekers (approximately 70% of the refugees and 90% of the asylum seekers) being hosted in Somaliland and Puntland respectively.

In the absence of a formal national asylum framework, the situation of refugees in Somaliland and Puntland is essentially insecure and the overall protection context remains weak. This is particularly highlighted by arbitrary detention of recognized refugees, as well as the hostility and discrimination towards "foreigners" which impedes access to the (limited) socio-economic opportunities available to the local population. Refugees do not have legal rights to work, and access to protection through law enforcement and justice mechanisms are limited.

UNHCR carries out refugee status determination (RSD) under its mandate and also provides health, education, shelter and legal assistance to all recognized refugees, in addition to targeted assistance to extremely vulnerable households of asylum seekers.

Somali refugees in the region as at 21 November 2011 Total 951,850



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IDPs

As of end October 2011, the number of IDPs in Somalia is estimated to be approximately **1.5 million**. Among them, one million Somalis fled Mogadishu in 2007 and 2008, following an outbreak of violence between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and insurgents starting (February 2007). Nearly **410,000** of them now live in makeshift shelters along the road linking Mogadishu to Afgooye, some few kilometers to the west of the capital.

Following relative improvements in the security situation in Mogadishu between February and April 2009, over 65,000 internally displaced people and refugees had traveled back to the capital from various areas of South Central Somalia and Somaliland, as well as from neighboring countries, such as Kenya and Yemen. Nonetheless, continued escalating fighting between Government forces and armed opposition groups, have led to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing their homes in Mogadishu (over 300,000 in 2010 alone).



A woman on the move with her family, in the streets of Mogadishu.

UNHCR Somalia co-chairs the Protection Cluster with the Danish Refugee Council, coordinating protection policies and the implementation of protection programmes targeting 1.5 million IDPs in Somalia. Important components of the work of the protection cluster are the protection monitoring and the population movement tracking systems that allow all humanitarian agencies to have accurate data on the number and needs of beneficiaries, to use as a basis for their programming.

UNHCR also co-chairs the Shelter and NFIs Cluster with UN Habitat. Its coordination work allows all actors to jointly plan NFIs distributions, avoiding overlaps and gaps. The shelter activities have two main components: temporary and permanent shelter. While UNHCR is mainly responsible for the implementation and coordination of programmes related to the temporary shelter, UN Habitat is the focal point for the coordination of permanent shelter.

Distributions of emergency / temporary shelter materials and other relief items and protection cum livelihood interventions are the activities carried out by UNHCR in favour of IDPs.

So far and in response to the current famine crisis in Somalia, UNHCR has distributed over 27,000 emergency assistance packages (EAPs) for nearly 270,000 people in Mogadishu and southern Somalia. These EAPs include kitchen sets, sleeping mats and plastic sheeting that would aid the most vulnerable population in crisis.

Mixed Migration

Tens of thousands of people from the Horn of Africa risk their lives to escape conflict, poverty and recurrent drought, by undertaking a dangerous journey through Somalia and across the Gulf of Aden to reach Yemen. Many die during the journey, while others are subjected to abuse and injury at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers. The majority of the persons attempting to use these routes come from two main areas: Ethiopia (Oromo, Ogaden, and Tigrinya regions) and Somalia (Somaliland and South Central regions).

The rates of human smuggling continue to rise every year. While in 2007, 29,500 people tried to cross the Gulf of Aden, in 2008 the number rose to 50,000 with more than 1,000 dead during the journey, and to 77,802 in 2009. In 2010 alone, over 53,000 migrants embarked on the same precarious journey across the Gulf. As of end October 2011, **84,656** people, including **23,079** Somalis, crossed into Yemen, desperate to find better economic opportunities as well as peace for the asylum seekers who flee from persecution and war.

UNHCR Somalia, together with IOM, leads the Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF); a task force of humanitarian agencies in developing policies and coordinating responses to protect migrants and asylum seekers who could potentially be smuggled. All the activities implemented try either to prevent smuggling or to respond to urgent needs of its victims.



One of the victims of human smuggling from Somalia to Yemen being buried on the Yemeni shore of the Gulf of Aden. A. Webster/UNHCR

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To improve the protection of the population, local authorities are trained and sensitized to respect the rights of the migrating population. Through radio messages and leaflets, UNHCR tries to inform as many people as possible about the asylum procedures existing in the regions of Somaliland and Puntland, to make all potential refugees aware of the fact that there is an alternative to risking their lives trying to cross the Gulf of Aden. The information campaign also warns against the dangers of crossing and the limited opportunities available in Yemen, especially for Ethiopians, who are not recognized as prima facie refugees and, in some instances, are reportedly forcibly returned to their country of origin.

UNHCR also carefully registers all potential asylum seekers. All new mothers and expectant women, as well as all female headed families and elderly people, receive special items and shelter material. Psycho-social support and medical assistance is also provided to the vulnerable. In particular, HIV positive asylum seekers receive special attention and assistance in medical centers. In some cases, UNHCR provides subsistence allowances to vulnerable families in need.

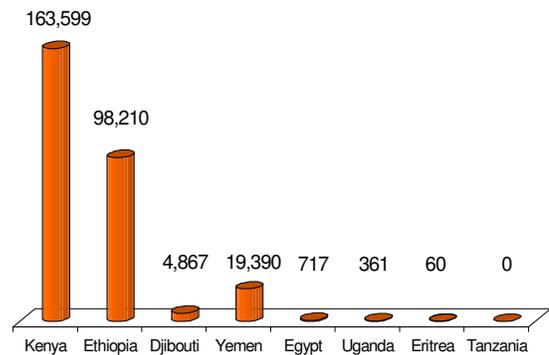
Year	Total Departures	Somalis	Non Somalis
2008	50,091	33,019	17,072
2009	77,802	32,988	44,744
2010	53,487	18,873	34,614
2011	84,656	23,079	61,577



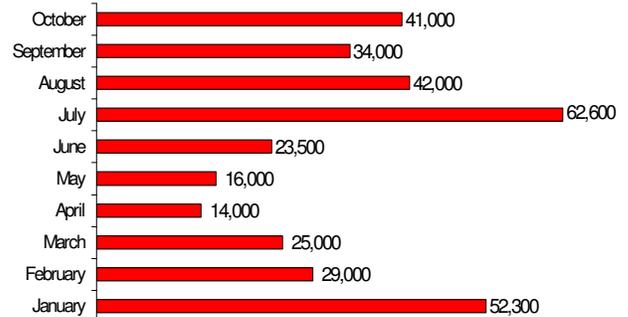
Ethiopian women in Bosasso, Northern Somalia, waiting on the shores of the Gulf of Aden for a boat that will transport them to Yemen

A. Webster/UNHCR

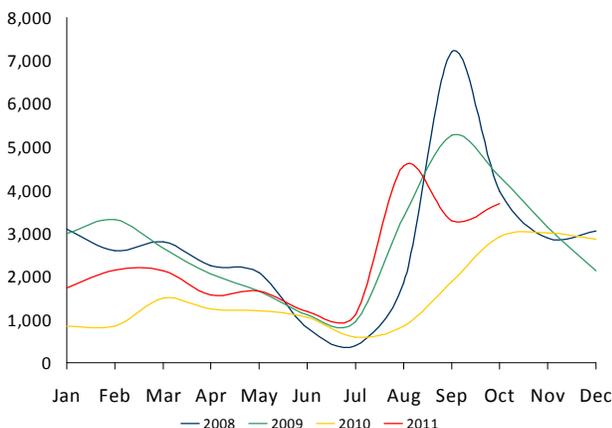
Somali Refugees received in countries of asylum in 2011 Total 287,204



Internal Displacement of Somalis in 2011



New arrivals on the shores of Yemen



UNHCR Somalia Major Donors in 2011:

Brazil, Canada, European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), France, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Spain, Switzerland, Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), Peace Building Fund (PBF), Private Donors in Australia, China, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

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UNHCR Web Portal/Horn of Africa Crisis <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>

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