

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

June 2006



Political developments...

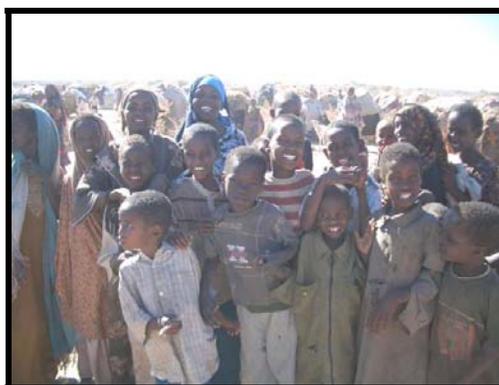
The Union of Islamic Courts which earlier took control of Mogadishu in June extended its control to the town of Jowhar, 90km north of Mogadishu. Jowhar is the administrative capital of Middle Shabelle region and has been the seat of the main UNICEF office in Central/Southern Somalia. In an effort to broker peace, a delegation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Union of Islamic Courts met in Sudan under the auspices of the Arab League. Following the meeting, a major rally was held in Mogadishu to express support for the talks. However, it turned tragic when a Swedish journalist was shot dead. The chairman of the Union expressed sorrow at the killing and sent condolences to the journalist's family and government of Sweden.

The Union of Islamic Courts has formed a Council of Shura and elected Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys as the head of the Council in Mogadishu while Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, was elected as the head of an executive committee in charge of the courts' administration, which will implement the council's decisions.

(Editor's note: In early July, the Union wrested control of an area in Mogadishu controlled by the last remaining key member of the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-terrorism, Abdi Hassan Awale – Qaybdiid. The Islamic Courts militia extended control to Balad and Belet Weyne towns.)

On 9 June, 2006, 10 people including a clan leader were killed in an exchange of fire between the TFG Presidential guard and militia allied to a local clan. Elders mediated to resolve the dispute that led to the conflict. On 14 June, the TFG Parliament voted in favour of allowing foreign peacekeepers into Somalia, a move opposed by the Union of Islamic Courts.

In Somaliland, President Dahir Rayale Kahin of the self-declared republic of Somaliland (also known as Northwest Somalia) toured Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda and Ethiopia to enhance cooperation and to seek the recognition of Somaliland which is yet to be recognized despite having declared sovereignty in 1991.



Time for smiles amid the adversity of harsh conditions in Somalia. Despite conflict and the absence of social services, children in Somalia can still afford a smile, an encouraging sign for humanitarian organizations working to improve their welfare. Credit: Paula.Vazquez-Horyaans

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Special events...

Day of the African child: UNICEF supported commemoration of the Day of the African Child on 16 June in different locations. In Somaliland, festivities were organized in Borama, Hargeisa, Berbera and Burao towns. Children's participation was one of the key elements of the festivities. In Puntland, the celebrations were held in internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps where UNICEF has put up tent schools to exemplify the importance of ensuring children get an education. The Day was set aside in 1991 by the precursor of the African Union, the Organization of African Unity, to commemorate the day when the first child victim, Hector Petersen, was killed during the protests by children in Soweto against learning in Afrikaans.

In Mogadishu, Central/Southern Somalia, key events of the celebration covered a five-day period. The celebrations were organized by UNICEF partner, Somali Peace Line. Among activities were media discussion forums, airing of messages of public interest to promote protection of children and speeches, sports and drama performances.

Fundraising: SOS Hermann Gmeiner Sheikh Secondary School, in Burao, Somaliland is to benefit from funds raised by friends of the late Richard and Enid Eyeington a couple that used to

teach in the school that was murdered in October 2003.

They had worked in Africa for more than 30 years. Four men were convicted of the murder in November 2005 and sentenced to death by firing squad.

Survey: UNICEF continues to make preparations for the carrying out of a Multiple-Indicator Cluster Survey. Previous surveys were conducted in 1997 and 1999. The survey seeks to provide a good perspective of key issues and statistics as they relate to children and women. It is scheduled to start in August 2006.

Health and Nutrition update...

Training: Thirty midwives and nurses from Togdheer, Sanaag, Awdal and Sool regions of Somaliland were trained in Burao to improve life saving skills in reproductive health. In Bossaso, Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') and Central/Southern Somalia, health workers were trained in skills related to malaria and measles treatment.

Malaria: Following an increase in malaria cases in Hargeisa, testing for incidence of malaria was conducted in surrounding villages and drugs for treatment provided.

UNICEF Operational Areas...

Northwest Zone – Hargeisa Office

Awdal
West Galbeed
Togdheer
Sahil
Sool
Sanaag

Northeast Zone – Bossaso Office

Bari
Nugal
Mudug

Central and Southern Zone – Baidoa, Jowhar and Mogadishu

Galgaduud
Hiran
Middle Shabelle
Lower Shabelle
Benadir
Lower Juba
Middle Juba
Gedo
Bay
Bakool

Supplies: Various medical supplies that included insecticide treated nets (ITNs) were distributed in various locations in Somalia.

A one week public awareness campaign was conducted in Hargeisa focusing on control of micronutrient deficiencies including Iron Deficiency Anaemia and Vitamin A Deficiency. In Central/Southern Somalia, 8,200 pregnant women attending ante-natal care at maternal and child health centres were provided with iron-cum-folic acid supplementation. About 6,200 children benefited from supplementary feeding in Central/Southern Somalia.

About 1,500 severely malnourished children were admitted for rehabilitation at therapeutic feeding centres. Currently UNICEF is airlifting emergency nutrition supplies from Nairobi to the Wajiid and other accessible location in the South as a measure of improved emergency supplies provision. Capacity building for national NGOs has also been embarked as a strategy to providing nutrition rehabilitation to the inaccessible regions Southern Somalia.

Emergency

Following a fire at Bullo Mingis internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in Bossaso, UNICEF provided emergency relief supplies to 270 families. The supplies included blankets, plastic sheeting and jerry-cans.

Water and environmental sanitation update...

Projects: Construction of various water projects continued in various locations. Among them was the Arabsio water system in Somaliland. The Hafun Water project was completed. It supplies water to Hafun, the worst affected location by the Tsunami of 26 December 2004. Hafun is in Puntland. Other rehabilitation and construction works for water projects took place in Baidoa and Jowhar, Central Somalia.

Supplies: 3,000 gunny bags were provided to Balcad town residents for flood control. Other items donated included wheel barrows, shovels, rakes, pick axes and brooms that were given to Balcad town for hygiene promotion and a clean-up campaign. Chlorine for treatment of drinking water supplies was also distributed.

Training: Somali Red Crescent Society trained 200 people from flood-affected communities in Middle Shabelle region in sanitation and hygiene. A five-day training course in hygiene and sanitation was carried out for teachers in Puntland.

Calm helps polio campaigns

Recent calm in the Somali capital allowed the humanitarian community to immunize 99% of Mogadishu children under five, against polio. According to UNICEF Somalia Representative, Christian Balslev-Olesen, some 286,000 children were immunized in a round of vaccinations held between 11 and 13 June 2006. He described the level of success as 'unprecedented' noting that such a high level of coverage had never before been attained in Mogadishu.

Education update...

School for the blind: Somaliland Vice President Ahmed Yusuf Yasin inaugurated a school for the blind in Hargeisa, Somaliland's capital. The school was established through the Force Foundation of The Netherlands.

Enrolment boosted: Nine-hundred fifty out-of-school children were registered in IDP camps in Merka, southern Somalia. This was part of the Back to School initiative that seeks to register children to prepare them for a return to learning. In Qoryoley, another 3,600 children were registered. Meanwhile, three school tents were erected at El-Ahmed school in Tsunami affected area of Merck district.

Training: Forty education advisers (mentors) from Somaliland were trained as trainers in school management and administration. They will train 534 head teachers in July. Twenty eight members of community education committees from different regions of Somaliland were trained in school sanitation and hygiene. Similar training is planned for 60 primary school teachers in July. Twenty-eight trainers of head-teachers from Puntland commenced training to enable them impart skills among head teachers in July. 1,042 primary school teachers from Huddur, Wajid, Mogadishu and Merka were trained in basic knowledge and skills related to teaching. Besides professional issues, the trainees were taught about peace, conflict resolution and basic facts on HIV/AIDS.

Construction: Three schools in Somaliland are nearing completion with construction of girls' only schools expected to start soon in Burao and Erigavo. Construction of toilet facilities for two schools in Borama and three in Hargeisa is also in the planning. Various construction and rehabilitation works continued in different locations, among them setting up of foundation works for erection of school tents.

Nomadic education: UNICEF education staff participated in a forum held in Kenya to discuss how to reach nomadic populations in Africa. It was attended by some 68 participants from the Commonwealth Secretariat, government of Kenya and UNICEF offices in, Kenya, Nigeria, Botswana, Namibia, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia.

Supplies: 120 sets of school furniture were distributed to Gol-khatumo and Bo'ame Primary schools in Sool region and Haji Kheyr, Budunbuto and Barwayn Primary schools in Nugaal region. In Central/Southern Somalia books, stationery and blackboards were provided to seven schools and primary alternative education sectors that provide learning for those unable to attend formal learning.



A pregnant woman rests outside a dwelling in Somalia earlier this year. UNICEF works to ensure better health for women and children in Somalia. *Credit: Vazquez-Horyaans*

Youth development update...

Training: A total of 131 youth from Puntland were trained in leadership and organizational development skills. Other training was conducted in youth participation in governance in Garowe for youth trainers from Bossaso, Gardo, Garowe and Galkayo. The latter training was done in collaboration with We Are Women Activists and UN Habitat. In Central/Southern Somalia, training in governance was conducted for 75 youth

from Adale, Jowhar and Bullo-Burte towns.

Website development: The UNICEF-supported website for Somali youth (hellosomaliyouth.net) is up and running with input from youth in different parts of Somalia.

Youth polls: Under a regional initiative to document youth opinions through polling, UNICEF supported a youth poll in Merka, Belet Weyne, Hargeisa and Bossaso. A total of 500 youth were polled in the exercise, the results will be available next month.

HIV/AIDS update...

Support to women: 30 leaders from women NGOs were trained in HIV and AIDS in Merka. The training is part of the Women to Women Initiative which will be rolled out in all three zones to accelerate greater protection of women and girls against HIV infection.

HIV advocacy: The HIV advocacy video *Somalis on HIV and AIDS: taking action, making a difference* was pre-tested and is being finalized. The video is part of UNICEF's advocacy efforts to mobilize action among leaders to respond to HIV and AIDS. Plans are in the pipeline to launch HIV/AIDS awareness programmes on Somaliland TV.

Child protection

Monitoring of child protection violations continued in Somaliland through collaboration with the Somaliland Youth Development Association (SOYDA) in Mandera, Berbera, Sheikh and Burao.

Visits were made to three prisons to ascertain the status of juvenile prisoners in Mandera, Berbera and Burao. No child prisoners were held in Berbera while in Burao, non-formal education was being provided to 32 prisoners.

Demobilization: A meeting was held in Nairobi to draw up a demobilization, demilitarization and rehabilitation strategy for child/teen soldiers.

Advocacy: Sensitization of local communities and authorities took place in Puntland to enhance protection of children. This resulted in some communities drawing up child protection action plans.

KOOR Editors meeting: Young editors from different locations came together in Hargeisa to prepare the next edition of *KOOR*, a youth magazine, which features young people's voices and concerns. A five day HIV and AIDS training followed the meeting, where the editors learned new information on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support - and how to report about it.

Communication for development

Training: Thirty five people were trained in participatory integrated community development which seeks to promote dialogue and community participation in development initiatives supported by donors and partners.

Emergency response: UNICEF helped in social mobilization following a fire in an IDP settlement in Bossaso, 'Puntland'. The fire in the Bulo Elay and Mingis settlements affected 510 families.

School clubs: School clubs are being promoted as an avenue for enhancing children's awareness of various issues related to their welfare.

Youth broadcasting: Video programmes produced by members of youth groups under the youth broadcasting initiative were distributed to video parlours. The productions cover issues including HIV/AIDS, female genital cutting, immunization, polio eradication, hygiene and sanitation, cholera prevention, breastfeeding, girl education and malaria prevention.

In Kismayo, the programmes were shown in locations that included IDP camps, video centres, health facilities and youth centres. They were viewed by at least 2,000 people.

In Baidoa, following a meeting with local video owners in the town, five centres started showing two programmes per night as people crowded to watch the World Cup matches in Germany.

Similar shows were organized at the premises of local NGOs and youth groups, women and local authorities in the towns of Baidoa, Wajid, Huddur and Kismayo.

In Wajid and Huddur, the video programmes were integrated into teacher training sponsored by UNICEF. During the training, about 300 participants took part in discussions relating to HIV and AIDS, girl education, female genital cutting, hygiene and sanitation and immunization.

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Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.