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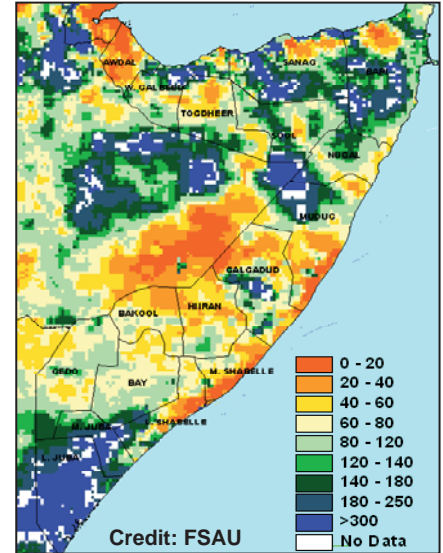
# Somalia Humanitarian Overview

Vol. 1 Issue 2 - February 2008

## Main Developments

- ❑ With the start of the next rainy season at least a month away, humanitarian partners are expanding response to the severe water shortage and deepening drought affecting a wide swath of Somalia's central regions and Hiraan, as well as the Northwest.
- ❑ A cholera/Acute Watery Diarrhea outbreak in the Gedo region of Southern Somalia near the Kenyan border town of Mandera has killed at least 13 and stricken more than 700. Difficulty accessing the area and limited supplies are hindering response.
- ❑ One of the insurgent radical groups has claimed through public statements responsibility for a range of incidents this month affecting civilians and the humanitarian community – from a grenade attack on the UN compound in Mogadishu to a bombing in a shanty area in Bossaso which injured scores of civilians.
- ❑ Mogadishu continued to be the theater of shelling, mortars and use of roadside and improvised explosives. Access to key areas in the city, such as Bakara market, was completely blocked at times during February due to security operations conducted by the Transitional Federal Government and Ethiopian troops.
- ❑ 'Double displacements' are being recorded for newly displaced as security operations and conflict extends into areas where IDPs have fled for protection.
- ❑ Despite the access and security issues, humanitarian agencies are gearing up response where possible. Staffing levels are increasing in key areas such as Marka and Dhuusamarreeb. A base at the K50 airstrip will become operational in March, allowing a more regular presence of UN international staff to the Afgooye corridor, where the intervention on behalf of 240,000 internally displaced people continues.

Rainfall estimates as % of normal  
- Deyr rains (Oct - Dec 2007)



Credit: FSAU

*The Somalia Humanitarian Overview, a monthly analysis of the humanitarian situation and trends produced by OCHA Somalia.*

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### Drought hits Somalia

Poor rains during the 2007 October-December Deyr season and the failure of 2007 April-June Gu season rains have resulted in a serious water shortage and deepening drought conditions in Somalia's central regions, Hirir and extending into the northwest. At least 850,000 people are affected including IDPs (330,000 in Galgaduud, 350,000 in Mudug and 170,000 IDPs). The Government of Puntland has appealed to humanitarian agencies to assist drought-affected areas in the northwest. Water catchments for both humans and livestock are near empty.

A majority of people in Galgaduud are pastoralists and rely on livestock grazing for their livelihoods. The situation is exacerbated by a mixture of negative influences: fuel (needed to run water pumps and transport water) prices are high while livestock prices have dived. With rising hyperinflation, the price of purchased water is far beyond the capacity of most pastoralist communities. According to some reports, pastoralists in Galgaduud and Mudug cannot migrate with their livestock due to the surrounding

insecurity and have been paying for trucked water – 200% higher than the regular prices – for their livestock for many months now.

Rates of global acute malnutrition are already extreme in the Central regions of Galgaduud and Mudug, for example 17.2% and 15.9% in the Hawd and Addun pastoral livelihood

zones respectively, leaving people vulnerable to outbreaks. This region is also hosting the second highest number of new IDPs (170,000) after the Shabelles (200,000). Given that the next rainy season is not expected to start until April, the situation is expected to worsen for at least another month and massive intervention is required.



Drought conditions in Somalia's central regions of Galgaduud, Mudug and have forced thousands of people and animals to travel for miles in search of water. Most wells have run dry while those remaining cannot serve the population. Credit: CARE Somalia

## Drought Response

NGOs are responding with proposals for the quick repair of boreholes and emergency water trucking. Water trucking is the biggest and most immediate priority. The International Committee of the Red Cross has massive ongoing interventions in water delivery. Several other NGOs including Concern, Action Contre la Faim and International Rescue Committee are doing water trucking and planning for expansion.

During the first half of February, CARE completed a food aid distribution in Galgaduud and South Mudug regions targeting about 230,000 people with 4,288 metric tons of rations. The UN Humanitarian Air Service will scale up flights to areas in Central Somalia, such as Dhuusamarreeb, to better access the area. For the longer term, rehabilitation of existing water sources, such as boreholes, shallow wells and water yards, are a priority. Some projects of drilling new bore holes and water harvesting through dams are also possible longer term response. However, a comprehensive water survey would have to be conducted before drilling many boreholes to ensure the water table is not negatively affected. Much also depends on the upcoming *Gu* season rains: if they fail, emergency interventions may have to extend beyond April.

The Humanitarian Response Fund is available for quick emergency response funding and six organizations have projects for emergency drought response in the pipeline.

### AWD/Cholera

Thirteen people have died in an outbreak of acute watery diarrhea in Belet Xaawo (Gedo

border town of Mandera. Nearly 700 people have been affected. Recently Mandera reported a similar outbreak, but while people affected on the Kenyan side of the border are benefiting from medical attention and information campaigns to stop the spread. Limited access to health services in Gedo due to the prevailing security situation is still a challenge, but NGO Gedo Health Consortium is responding to the outbreak assisted by WHO and local authorities. The surrounding drought is aggravating the situation: Acute Watery Diarrhea and cholera can be common during dry season due to the deterioration in both water quantity and quality.

### Mogadishu

More than 50,000 people have left Mogadishu since the beginning of the year, according to UNHCR's Population Movement Tracking. The rate of displacement from Mogadishu has somewhat slackened compared to the massive movement in late 2007, an understandable trend given that some 60% of the city's population already fled during the year. However, new IDPs are experiencing secondary and even tertiary displacement, when the areas they have fled to come under attack or become unstable. This trend is happening in Mogadishu and beyond. When the insurgent group Al Shabaab briefly took over the town of Diinsoor in late February, about 100 people, most of them IDPs, fled the town for fear of military repercussions. Similarly, when Ethiopian troops were reinforced in Dhuusamarreeb, Galgaduud region, nearly two-thirds of the town's population fled. Many of them were already IDPs and now doubly displaced.

The usually fierce fighting between the TFG supported by Ethiopian troops and

continued and has spread significantly to other areas during the month. The month has been characterised by displacement, assassinations and deaths and slowed humanitarian response. There continues to be a general deterioration of security in the capital, including increase landmine and roadside bomb incidents. The day the President returned to Somalia, the presidential palace was target with a mortar attack.

Some positive developments last month were reversed in February. Ethiopian forces had briefly withdrawn from the Bakara market, following an intervention from the Prime Minister and lobbying from the Somali business community. However, the main road to the market was closed off later in the month and troops were returned. Looting by TFG forces was also reported. One of the heaviest clashes during the third week of February was in Suqa Holana and Bakara when Ethiopians launched a security operations. Mortars, heavy machine guns and rocket propelled grenades were used, killing about eight civilians in the process. In one particularly gruesome incident, eight women, mainly *khat* traders were killed when their mini bus was hit by a roadside bomb. According to admissions into Mogadishu's two main hospitals, some 270 people were admitted suffering from war-related wounds in February, bringing the total since the beginning of the year to 572.

### Protection concerns

The continuing – and increasing numbers – of targeted political assassinations has been alarming. In just the first two months of 2008, there have been 28 individual assassinations, an average of one every other day since the beginning of the year. There have been additional murders of Somali civilians whose motives were unknown but are likely related to their perceived political affiliation.

Two Mogadishu District leaders, while not officially linked to SAACID's 'wet feeding' programme, were very supportive of it, were murdered within 24 hours of each other. One was actually on his way to the kitchen to assist the staff with a problem when he was killed. The kitchen was closed for the day. In just one week in Belet Weyne, three different TFG officials were shot and killed. The brother of the newly appointed Minister of Information was shot in front of his home by TFG soldiers. Interviews with Somali

## Main Travel Route for Aid Convoys in Somalia

Route	Distance	Days to Travel	Check Points	Costs*per 35 metric ton truck Jan. 2007
Ceel Waq-Waajid	274.26	6	21	
Kismayo - Jamaame	52.07	1	13	
Mogadishu-Afgooye	28.49	2	8	\$50-\$150
Berbera- Laas-Caanood	336.75	2	12	
Hargeysa-Zela	381.00	2	5	
Kismayo - Jilib	97	3	8	\$150

The table above shows five key travel routes in Somalia that aid agencies rely on to move assistance and access populations. While some checkpoints are official, many are impromptu and the picture can change day by day. Even so, the matrix above gives a sense of the costs – in both time and money – travel through Somalia. Credit: Logistics Cluster

refugees this month in the Dadaab IDP camp in Kenya raised the threat killings for support or perceived support of the opposition/TFG as a key factor in their flight from Somalia. Thus far, six people working with humanitarian organizations have been killed in Somalia during the year. In the first week of February, an employee of the local NGO SAACID was shot and killed while at work at the Mogadishu soup kitchen. While the incident appeared to be aimed at him as an individual, and not at the NGO or the work it is carrying out, the incident highlighted the dangerous and volatile working environment.

### Bossaso Protection Issues

On the evening of 5 February, a powerful explosion ripped through a densely



A victim of the 5 February bomb blast in Bossaso recovering at the Bossaso hospital. A bomb exploded at a site where Ethiopians waiting for the opportunity to cross to Yemen lived. International Office for Migration is in Bossaso to discuss and handle the relocation of the victims and possible transfer of those in need of further treatment to a hospital in Addis Ababa. Credit: OCHA

populated area next to the port in **Bosasso**, causing death and destruction. The site is well-known as a place where Ethiopians migrants attempting the journey across the Gulf of Aden and on to Yemen gather with their families congregate. Twenty-four people were killed and another 55 wounded, many of them severely. Seven people had limbs amputated. Later, an insurgent group claimed responsibility for the attack in a written statement on their website. The UN condemned this **brutal act of violence** that targeted unarmed civilians.

Following the explosion, local authorities instructed the police to demolish the shanty houses still standing as part of their security operations. Hundreds of so-called 'mixed migrants' were left homeless and forcibly relocated. Claiming lack of space

and resources, Bossaso hospital officials attempted to discharge many of the severely wounded victims, many of whom were recovering from recent amputations of one and even both legs.

Aid agencies delivered emergency assistance to support the affected. Jerry cans, mosquito nets and plastic sheeting were delivered to those who lost their shelters. The humanitarian response also included paying victim's hospital bills, providing additional tents, construction of latrines and extending the water supply. About 500 migrant families remain homeless residing in mosques, around Bossaso beach, basement of buildings and are still vulnerable to attacks.

The most serious concern was the **threat of forceful deportation** of all mixed migrants

including, the bomb blast victims from Bossaso. For the injured, OCHA and UNHCR intervened with the Puntland authorities at various levels to ensure the victims were not moved out of the hospital before it was safe to do so. As the Somalia Humanitarian Overview went to press, more than 40 people with serious injuries

were still in the hospital.

The possibility of transfer to a third country, where the victims would get both asylum and medical care, was also being investigated as many of those affected have expressed a willingness to return to their home country or be relocated if they can get support. The International Office of Migration arrived in Bossaso to discuss and handle the relocation of the bomb blast victims issue and possible transfer of the critical cases to a hospital in Addis Ababa.

The Puntland cabinet set out a policy and determined the priorities for the victims, including:

- ◆ identification and registration for those who wish to return voluntarily;
- ◆ facilitated return; wregistration of asylum seekers;

◆ increasing the dissemination campaign on the risks and problems along migration routes.

### Mixed Migration

Despite the dangerous journey and the ongoing information campaigns, the mixed migration phenomenon continues unabated. In fact, it appears to be increasing. In the first two months of the year, about 1,700 people have arrived at the Yemen coast in February.

In a separate and unrelated incident in Bossaso, two days after the bomb blast, a serious fire tore through the Bossaso IDP camps. Shelters of 800 families were destroyed. The aid agencies and local community responded with aid for the victims ranging from donations of utensils, plastic sheets and blankets and food rations for families.

### Humanitarian Space

The security **threats directed at aid workers** throughout Somalia, including random and targeted violence, kidnapping threats and general criminality, continues to curtail the movement of humanitarian staff as well as the efficiency of the aid operations. There were two kidnapping attempts during the month. An international staff member of the NGO German Agro Action was kidnapped on 12 February outside of Ceerigaabo (Erigavo), Somaliland, despite being accompanied by two armed Special Protection Unit police. He was rescued, unharmed, the next day by the police.

The second attempt took place in Sakow, near Bu'aale. Though unsuccessful, NGOs were recommended to relocate their international staff from the area. While the three previous kidnappings in December 2007 took place in the Puntland region, these recent attempts happened in Somaliland and South/Central respectively, indicating the kidnapping threat against internationals is country-wide.

Additionally, on 26 February, a UN mission traveling in Puntland came under fire at an unofficial checkpoint manned by militias about 85 km outside of Garowe. One SPU guard was injured and all travel outside of Garowe town was temporarily suspended.

Several missions during the months had to be cancelled, particularly to Afgooye, Mogadishu and Bu'aale, affecting operations. For example, a blanket food distribution for 40,000 children in Afgooye will be delayed due to the cancellation of many missions

for security reasons. A WFP distribution had to be temporarily suspended in Diinsoor due to fighting amongst TFG forces and insurgents.

The **Juba Valley** is also becoming particularly difficult. As mentioned above, the NGO World Vision staff in Sakow were threatened by a group of local militiamen, some of them masked, in what appears to be a dispute and competition for aid resources between Bu'aale and Sakow. During the month three agencies, MSF-Holland, Horn Relief and World Vision, withdrew from the Juba Valley.

Elsewhere, in **Puntland**, MSF Spain decided to close all its activities in Bossaso as a consequence of the abduction of two of its staff last December. In an official statement, MSF noted that the 'implicit contract' between MSF and the people with whom they work and rely on for security had been broken and the organization had "no choice but to close their activities."

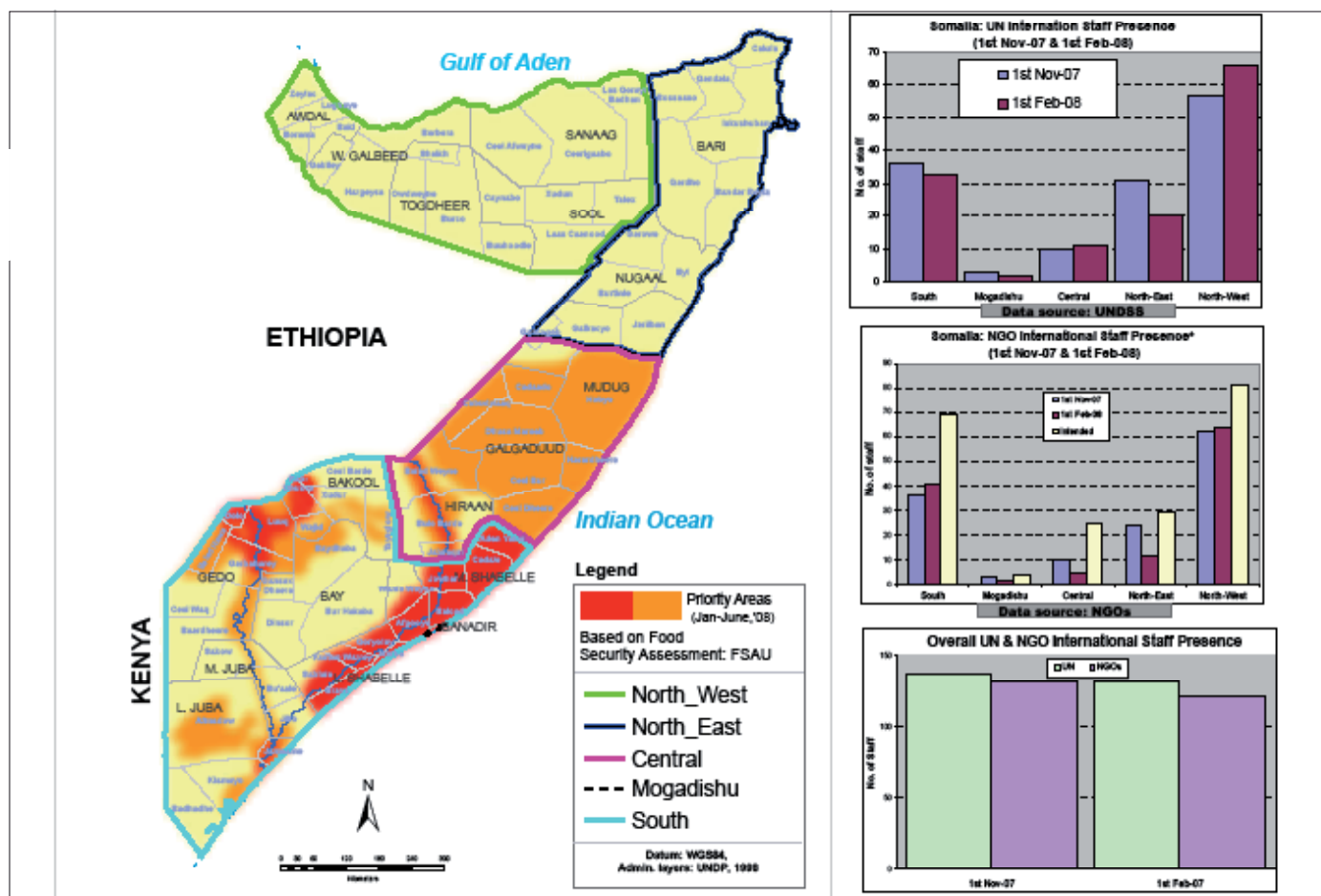
### No break in UN Somalia Operations

In response to the series of serious security incidents that directly targeted the UN and NGO community in the past four weeks – the attack on MSF-Holland, the several attempted kidnappings, and finally a hand grenade attack on the UN compound in Mogadishu – the UN was forced to temporarily suspend official travel and 'missions' to the field for several weeks in February. The UN halted temporarily all official travel to a few key areas – Afgooye, Mogadishu and Kismayo – while an assessment of the overall security situation was conducted. Contrary to what was reported in some media outlets, there was never any "suspension of operations" by the UN Agencies in Somalia.

#### Of note:

- ◆ UNICEF is treating an average 15,000 malnourished children every month in South/Central Somalia in 110 feeding centres.
- ◆ Two hijacked ships have been held for more than two weeks in the seas off Eyl, off the eastern Somali coast. US warships have shelled the area to prevent fresh supplies from getting to the hijackers.
- ◆ There were nearly 400 reported checkpoints in all Somalia by the end of February.
- ◆ The new UN HC/RC a.i. William Paton went on a four-day mission to Somalia. One of the issues raised was the promise of a TFG focal point for the Humanitarian Community who still has not been appointed.

## International Staff Presence in Somalia



The map above shows the level of international staff presence in Somalia and the changes due to the deteriorating security situation over three months from early November 2007 to early February 2008. While international staff presence doesn't tell the full story, it is one indicator of the shrinking humanitarian space in Somalia. The dark yellow and orange areas in South and Central Somalia have been identified as humanitarian priority, staff levels of UN and NGO agencies are higher in the North-West and North-East areas of the country. The past three months have seen a modest decrease of staffing levels in South Central, and the number of people working in South Central falls short of the amount of people planned to work in the area. UN and NGO agencies are working at over 40 percent below their intended human resources capacity.