



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – SOMALIA

Situation Report # 8 – 29 February, 2008

Main Developments

The drought in central Somalia is worsening. With severe water shortage and limited grazing for livestock, many pastoralist families are facing destitution. Field reports indicate that most of the traditional water catchments are dry or drying up, putting additional stress on the few functioning boreholes. Water shortages in Mudug and Galgaduud regions are particularly acute. With the ongoing long *Jilaa* dry season (January to end March), there is urgent need to upscale the humanitarian assistance in the affected areas until the next harvest season (late July/August). The main priorities are water and food. Humanitarian agencies in Mudug and Galgaduud are responding to the crisis. In Galgaduud, UNICEF and partners are currently providing tankers of water, constructing shallow wells and installing water pipes. Agencies are also supporting 12 maternal child health centers and four health post serving over 20,000 children under five in the region. In addition, over 38,000 children under five have access to therapeutic feeding center and out-patient treatment centre for severely malnourished children.

In Dhuusamarreeb town, Galgaduud region, the security and humanitarian situation is worrying following the arrival of Ethiopian troops on Friday 22 February. According to field reports, about two-third of the town's residents have fled the town as they fear possible confrontation between Ethiopian troops and anti-government groups. The humanitarian situation in this area is already overstressed due to the drought and influx of displaced from Mogadishu.

On 26 February, heavy fighting took place in Dinsor town, Bay region, between TFG forces and anti-government groups who briefly took control of the town. World Food Programme had to suspend an ongoing food distribution due to the fighting affecting more than 10,000 vulnerable beneficiaries. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recorded an estimated 100 people have fleeing Dinsor town following the fighting.

According to UNHCR, 700 people were displaced by the ongoing fighting in Mogadishu during the past week, bringing the total number of displaced this year to 51,000. In 2007, an estimated 700,000 people were displaced by the fighting in Mogadishu.

There has been an outbreak of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) with 13 deaths recorded out of 696 cases reported in Belet Xaawo (Gedo) since 21 January near the border of Somalia and Kenya. NGO Gedo Health Consortium has been responding to the outbreak with the involvement of the district health board, the community and with support from WHO to manage the caseload.

During the past week, CARE Somalia distributed food aid to 8,850 beneficiaries in Adale and Adan Yabaal districts, Lower Shabelle.

Puntland

On Thursday 27 February, more than 40 people died (most of them Somalis), when their boats capsized off Yemen coast, bringing the total number of deaths or missing in 2008 to about 200. With the ongoing insecurity in Southern Somalia and deteriorating economy, crossings in 2008 are anticipated to rise to record-high compared to previous years.

During the past week another security incident targeting aid workers took place in Puntland. On 26 February a UN convoy on its way from Garowe to Bossaso came under fire from unknown gunmen while approaching a check-point around 85 kilometers from Garowe. The mission, which was escorted by the Special Protection Unit, escaped safely.

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