

SOMALIA POST REFUGEE RETURN MONITORING SNAPSHOT

February 2022



UNHCR and partners receiving new arrivals from Yemen in Berbera. © UNHCR

This post-return monitoring (PRM) snapshot presents selected, and cumulative findings of data obtained from seven rounds of interviews conducted with Somali refugee returnees in Somalia. With the PRM data collection exercise having commenced in November 2017, the latest seventh round of interviews was undertaken between November and December 2021. The cumulative data set presented in this snapshot is based on interviews with 2,869 returnee households (HHs) across different return locations in Somalia. This PRM exercise follows the previous post-return monitoring snapshot issued by UNHCR in September 2021. Unless otherwise specified, the results outlined in this snapshot are cumulative.

The Somalia situation features as one of the world's largest forcibly displaced populations with an estimated 3.8 million displaced Somalis, including 800,000 Somali refugees outside the country, and the remainder as internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Somalia. Most Somali refugees are hosted in Kenya (286,867) and Ethiopia (225,877), Yemen (75,470), followed by Uganda (55,579), and Djibouti (14,329) (Source of data: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/91131>).

UNHCR Somalia resumed repatriation from Kenya since December 2020, with fit-for-travel COVID-19 measures agreed on and put in place by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and WHO. The Assisted Spontaneous Return (ASR) programme, in collaboration with IOM, for returnees from Yemen remains suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic related movement restrictions and testing challenges. The UNHCR Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, in collaboration with UNHCR Somalia, is closely following up with IOM and UNHCR Yemen on the resumption of the ASR programme from Yemen.

Contextualizing the findings

- Between November and December 2021, a total of 398 interviews in PRM round 7 were carried out by telephone (99%) and face-to-face (1%). The telephone numbers of respondents were randomly selected from lists of returnee households (HHs) who have been assisted to return by UNHCR and partners between 2014 and 2020.
- The respondents comprised of returnees from Kenya (374), Yemen (23), and Ethiopia (1). There were challenges faced during the survey where many respondents were unavailable especially the contact number of spontaneous/unassisted returnees. Of the 398 sample households, only 7% of the unassisted returnees were reached. This affected the analysis and comparison between assisted and unassisted returnees.
- Overall, approximately 62% of the respondents were female, among whom 58% were reported as heads of household. The total number of individuals in the surveyed households was 17,214 in the period of January 2018 to December 2021, representing approximately 19% of all 91,828 returnees who have returned to Somalia.

KEY STATISTICS

INTERVIEW DETAILS



Household interviews between 2018 – 2021, comprised of 17,214 individuals.

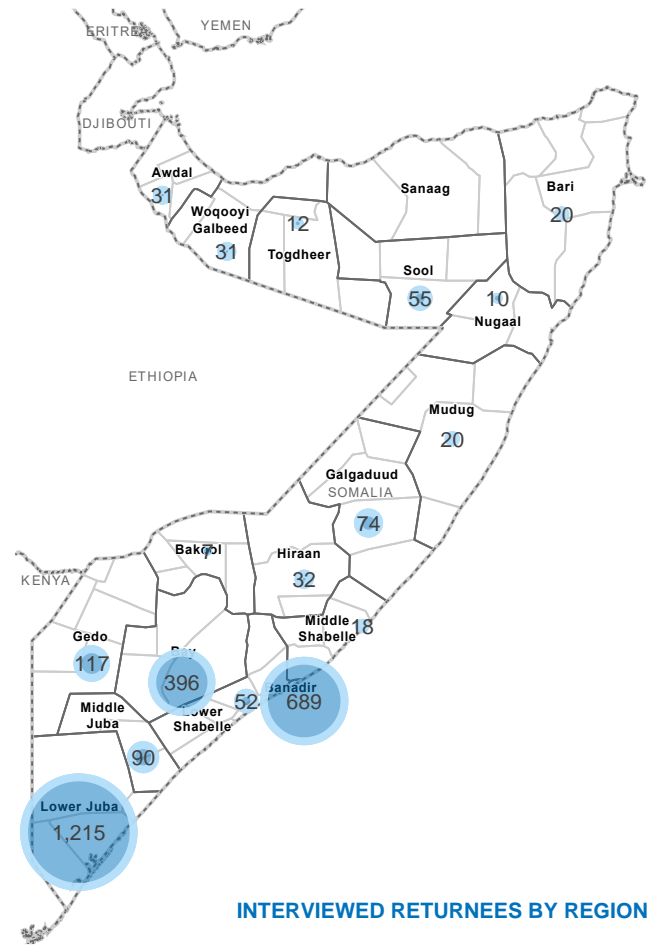
RESPONDENTS' GENDER



INTERVIEW TYPE

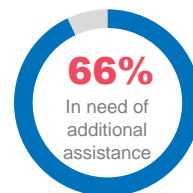
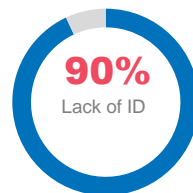
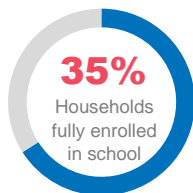
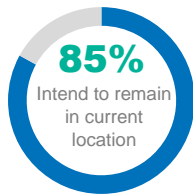


RETURN TYPE



PRM ROUNDS BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

PRM ROUNDS	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Kenya	Libya	Other	Yemen	Total
2018 - Round 1 (Q1)	1	2	758		1	3	765
2019 - Round 2 (Q1)	4		294		1	11	310
2019 - Round 3 (Q4)			198			3	201
2020 - Round 4 (Q2)	5	1	296		9	87	398
2020 - Round 5 (Q4)		47	285	2		38	372
2021 - Round 6 (Q3)	10	94	71	31	3	216	425
2021 - Round 7 (Q4)		1	374			23	398
Total	20	145	2,276	33	14	381	2,869



1. RETURN DECISIONS

The PRM round 7 survey indicates that **96%** of the respondents are satisfied with their decision to return. The satisfaction level has increased since the first PRM survey was conducted in 2018, at which time **94%** of the respondents were satisfied with their decision to return. Overall, **91%** (Fig. 1) of the respondents were satisfied with their decision to return. The most frequently cited reasons throughout the PRM between 2018 and 2021 have consistently been as follows: family reunification (**59%**), and the ability to return and live in their places of origin (**19%**).



Fig. 1: N=2,869

The most frequently cited reasons for not being satisfied with the decision to return were separation from family (**35%**), limited livelihoods opportunities (**17%**), and lack of assistance and support from authorities (**13%**).

Satisfaction level by Region

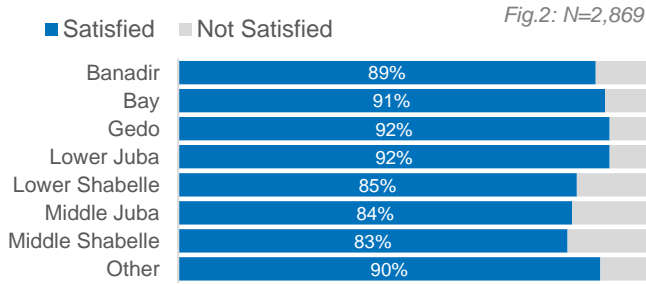


Fig. 2: N=2,869

A total of **48%** of the respondents reported that they decided to return to Somalia due to improved security condition in their places of origin, followed by opportunities for livelihood (**14%**), and fear of closure of Dadaab camp in Kenya (**7%**).

Overall, **85%** of the respondents stated that they intend to permanently remain in their current location. The top three reasons given by those who did not intend to stay in their current locations were: desire to be closer to family (**37%**), limited livelihoods opportunities (**19%**), and limited access to basic services (**15%**).

Out of the **15%** of the respondents who did not intend to stay in their current location, more than half (**54%**) expressed an intention to move to other locations in Somalia, while **35%** were considering returning to their previous country of asylum, and **11%** were considering to move to a new country of asylum.

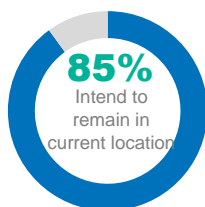


Fig. 3: N=2,869

Of the households interviewed since 2018, **24%** indicated that they currently reside in what is informally referred to as an "IDP settlement". The regional distribution of the **76%** of households who reside in settlements among host communities is as follows: Lower Juba (**53%**), Banadir (**25%**), Bay (**9%**), Middle Juba (**5%**), Gedo (**4%**), and other regions (**4%**).

2. SAFETY AND SECURITY

Overall, **94%** (Fig. 4) of respondents reported that no member of the household had been threatened, intimidated, or experienced violence since returning to Somalia.



Fig. 4: N=2,869

While **90%** of respondents informed that they could move freely in their community and surrounding district, the survey result indicates respondents who had returned from Ethiopia (Fig. 5) had relatively less freedom of movement than those who had returned from other countries of asylum (**24%** of refugee returnees came from Ethiopia stated that they could not move freely). The most cited reasons for limited movement were roadblocks (**25%**), gatekeepers (**21%**), explosive remnants of war (**18%**), presence of armed actors (**18%**), as well as fear of gender-based violence (**16%**). While most of the reasons seemed to be associated with security issues across Somalia, "gatekeepers" as one of the most cited reasons may imply potential issue of human rights abuses, and accountability, as well as diversion of humanitarian aid.

Freedom of movement by country of asylum

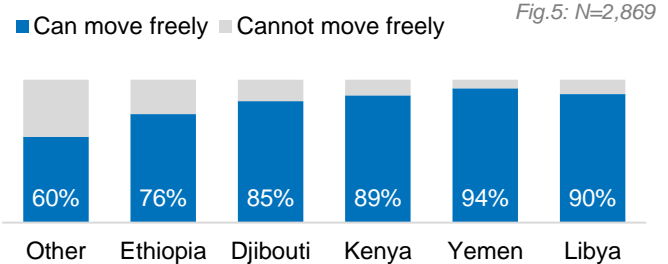


Fig. 5: N=2,869

3. DISCRIMINATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

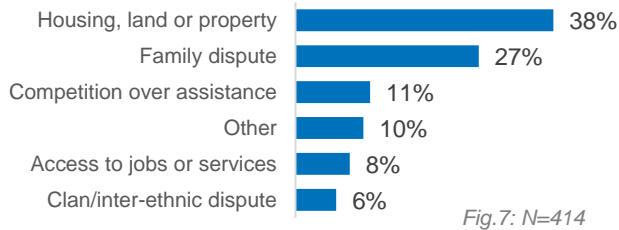
Most respondents (**91%**) (Fig. 6) indicated that they had not faced discrimination on the basis of being a returnee and most respondents (**88%**) reported not having been subject to clan/ethnicity-based discrimination.



Fig. 6: N=2,869

Many respondents (**68%**) feel accepted by the host community (non-returnee). Most (**88%**) stated that they had not experienced disputes with other (non-returnee) members of the community, while the remaining **12%** reported disputes with others (non-returnees), with the main traditional causes relating to housing, land, or property issues (**38%**), followed by family disputes (**27%**) and competition over jobs and humanitarian services (**19%**). (Fig. 7)

Reasons for disputes



Over half (62%) of the returnees believe that they have influence over decision making within their community.

4. SHELTER AND HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY

Overall, 81% (Fig. 8) of the respondents have not been evicted from their housing, land, or property since their return to Somalia. As well as 69% of the respondents did not expressed risk of being evicted.



Fig.8: N=2,869

Overall, 81% of the respondents live in housing that they do not own and 33% are living in makeshift shelters of corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheeting, 24% live in temporary shelter, and 22% live in makeshift shelters without CGIs (Buul). In addition, 69% of households reported lacking proof of occupancy of the place they currently live in. 54% of the households reported that they are still living in makeshift shelters (CGIs, Buul, and temporary shelter) for more than 2 years and have been exposed to harsh weather condition, lack of privacy, risks of gender-based violence and child protection concerns including child labor, abuse, and exploitation.

With more than 80% not owning their shelter and almost 70% lacking written proof establishing right to their home such as a rental agreement, instead reliant on verbal agreements with their landlords, there is a high degree of informal arrangements – including living with relatives, or squatting – potentially leading to protection concerns, including housing insecurity and risk of eviction.

The lack of home and property ownership is greatest in Lower Shabelle, Banadir and Middle Shabelle regions, where over 90% of respondents do not own property. (Fig. 9)

Property ownership by region

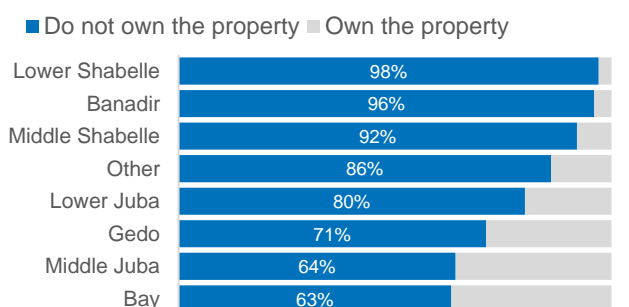


Fig.9: N=2,869

5. EDUCATION

Overall, only 35% (Fig.10) of respondents indicated that all children in their household attend school regularly. Overwhelmingly, households in which not all children attend school regularly cite cost (71%) as the primary obstacle, followed by 10% due to distance to schools. 28% of children are enrolled in private school while 10% are in Government schools. (Fig. 11)

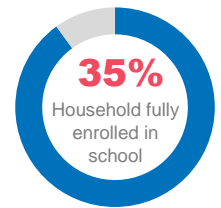
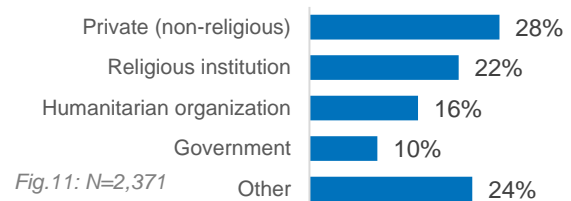


Fig.10: N=2,869



6. HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND LIVELIHOODS

Overall, 59% (Fig.12) of returnee households reported insufficient sources of income to meet the needs of the households, which often rely on casual day labour, business/self-employment, and humanitarian assistance. The various reasons cited for lack of livelihoods include the following: the unavailability of jobs (43%), lack of equipment needed for running a business (15%), and the long distance to employment opportunities (12%). Furthermore, 64% of the respondents indicated that remittances or support from family members were reduced after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

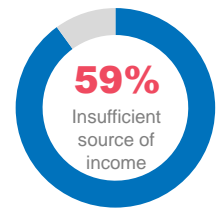


Fig.12: N=2,869

7. DOCUMENTATION

Overall, 90% (Fig.13) of households reported that all or some members do not have government-issued ID. However, 84% of those households also reported that lack of ID has not resulted in any issues since their return. Out of the 312 households (16%) who reported challenges due to the lack of documents, 54% indicated trouble accessing services while 28% reported challenges at checkpoints.

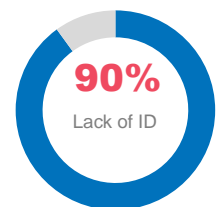


Fig.13: N=2,869

Formal identification is a primary means to access rights and, to some extent, services. Furthermore, while legal documentation processes for the planned upcoming federal elections are yet to be finalized, possession of government-issued identification may reduce the risk of disenfranchisement and potential exclusion.

8. COVID-19 PADEMIC

In 2021, **66%** (Fig. 14) of respondents indicated that they require extra assistance since the breakout of COVID-19. The three (Fig. 15) most preferred types of assistance were cash (34%), access to health services (33%), and access to livelihoods (11%). Less than one third (29%) stated they have received health services, information on COVID-19 (30%), and Cash (29%) from the following primary sources: NGOs/UN (55%), friends and family (20%), government (14%), and local communities (10%).

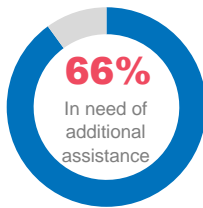


Fig. 14: N=2,869

Additional assistance for COVID-19

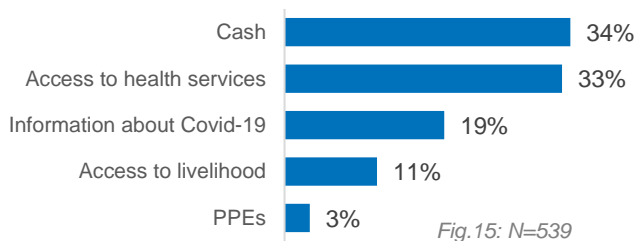


Fig. 15: N=539

9. COMPARISON BETWEEN ASSISTED AND UNASSISTED RETURNEES

Since 2020, UNHCR has included unassisted returnees in the PRM sample to see if UNHCR's assistance yielded a greater impact as compared to unassisted returns. Recent PRM findings (data as of December 2021) confirm that those returnees assisted by UNHCR indicated relatively higher satisfaction than those unassisted (92% vs. 82%). Some 38% of unassisted and 22% of assisted returnees currently reside in IDP sites. Assisted returnees also indicated slightly higher intentions (85% vs. 81%) to remain permanently in their current locations. Almost half of the unassisted households indicated that their children attend schools compared to that of assisted indicating 27%. Access to markets has been perceived comparatively more likely by those assisted than that of unassisted (84% vs. 55%).

	Assisted	Unassisted
Satisfied upon Return	92%	82%
Reside in IDP sites	22%	38%
Remain in current Location	85%	81%
Children attending school	27%	44%
Access to market	84%	55%

METHODOLOGY

Since December 2014, UNHCR has assisted approximately 16,000 households to voluntarily return to Somalia. In the current PRM system, 2,869 household-level interviews (19% of the total) have been carried out by telephone and face-to-face from 2018 to date. The households sampled for telephone interviews were randomly selected from the lists of telephone numbers provided to returnee households on arrival with the goal to ensure representation by year of arrival and region of return. Once interviewed, households are not re-interviewed in subsequent rounds. Face-to-face interviews were carried out following COVID-19 preventive protocols and targeting returnee households residing in communities known to UNHCR and partners (NCRI and NRC). Important to note, The National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI) took part in the data collection for Banadir region, while NRC collected data for the remaining regions.

The findings presented in this snapshot represent a selection of findings from UNHCR's post-return monitoring exercise, round 7. More comprehensive data is available and will be used in discussion with partners and stakeholders, and for planning purposes.

Although further exploration and analysis at the field level is needed, the findings suggest that more investment is required to strengthen provision of basic services and infrastructure in priority return areas. There is an urgent need to invest in sustainable livelihoods opportunities, and scale-up access to micro-finance and inclusion of returnees into social safety nets / social protection mechanisms of the Government for returns to remain sustainable. Emphasis must be placed on;

- addressing housing, land and property concerns in collaboration with the relevant authorities.
- addressing legal documentation related protection concerns to mitigate the risk of exclusion to services.
- safe identification, referrals and provision of tailored support to persons with specific needs and at risk groups.
- area-based/ whole-of-society and community-based protection approaches.
- transition into longer-term development type of programmes.

Post-return monitoring is an ongoing activity of UNHCR that will continue throughout and be expanded in 2022.

JOINT ANALYSIS

The PRM findings provide insights to the current situation of returnees in Somalia, as well as guide the formulation of recommendations on how to address identified issues. Together with the national durable solutions secretariat of the Government and other durable solutions partners, detailed joint analysis sessions will be conducted as new findings arise with the following objectives:

- a rigorous approach to ensure that each result is given due consideration.
- findings/conclusions may be validated through consensus of actors or partners with different viewpoints (or where consensus not reached, formally documented with rationale).
- external information and expertise maybe used to triangulate findings.

NEXT STEPS IN 2022

The purpose of post-return monitoring is to support key areas within UNHCR's protection and solutions mandate:

- to ensure return is informed, voluntary and conducted in a safe and dignified manner.
- to support the sustainability of returns and reintegration.
- to feed into continuously adjusted evidence-based programming.
- to monitor and follow up on protection issues.
- to provide area-based information to prospective Somali refugee returnees in countries of asylum.

Existing needs assessment activities such as the country-wide Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA) also inform facets of post-return monitoring. In 2022, UNHCR will continue working with existing partners including OCHA and REACH to ensure adequate representation of refugee returnees in national needs assessment to harmonize indicators within the agreed frameworks and strategies.

The National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NRCI) will continue to jointly implement the PRM Round 8 data collection activity in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) as part of NRCI's primary role in facilitating voluntary repatriation and post return monitoring. This initiative will not only enhance coordination but also contribute to conducive protection environment and promote sustainable return and reintegration through a whole-of-government approach.

DONORS

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have directly contributed to the UNHCR Somalia operation in 2021



CONTACT

Magatte Guisse, Representative, UNHCR Somalia
guisse@unhcr.org | +252 611634665 | +90252012100

Marco Lembo, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Somalia
lembo@unhcr.org | +254 714 524 339 | +254 736 999 782

Katie Ogwang, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Somalia
mailto:ogwangk@unhcr.org | +252 619 505 084

