

Protection Cluster Update

Weekly Report

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IASC Somalia

• Protection Monitoring Network (PMN)

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This update provides information on the protection environment in Somalia, including apparent violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law as reported during the last two weeks through the IASC Somalia Protection Cluster monitoring systems. Incidents mentioned in this report are not exhaustive. They are intended to highlight credible reports to inform and prompt programming and advocacy initiatives by the humanitarian community and national authorities.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) began the planned eviction operations of people, including a large number of protracted internally displaced persons (IDPs) in public buildings in Mogadishu. The Population Movement Tracking (PMT) data indicates that during the reporting period over 2,500 IDPs were evicted from Hamar Wayne, Waberi and Shibus districts of the capital and arrived in Wadajir and Hodan districts. Through discussions with government officials, the humanitarian community expressed their concern with regards to eviction operations in the coming weeks, while emphasizing the importance of finding alternative accommodation for the IDPs.

Fighting between Al Shabaab forces and forces supporting the TFG continued in Lower Juba, Middle Shabelle and Banadir regions resulting in over 3,300 security related displacements. While the majority of people from Kismaayo, Baadhedee and Afmadow districts of Lower Juba region fled to the border town of Dhobley those displaced from Afgooye area of Lower Shabelle region arrived in various districts of Mogadishu to seek protection.

Tensions in Hiraan region also continued to rise, including outbreaks of guerrilla warfare and two bombings carried out by Al Shabaab targeting Ethiopian military. Increased insecurity in Hiraan region consequently resulted in protection violations by armed forces, including the arbitrary arrests of suspected Al Shabaab members, as well as restrictions of movement of civilian population as a result of curfews.

The PMT data indicates that cross border movements declined during the past two weeks. The number of refugees returning from Kenya and Ethiopia has declined with some 800 refugees arriving in Somali border towns compared to approximately 3,300 people arriving during the last two weeks of January. In addition to taking advantage of prosperous Deyr seasonal rains in Somalia and revive their agricultural activities in their places of origin, the refugees stated that ‘lack of livelihoods’ and ‘insecurity’ in the refugee camps still the main reasons for their return.¹

The fighting that first erupted on 26 January between Sool, Sanag Clan militias (SSC) and Somaliland forces resumed in Buuhoodle district of Togdheer region on 9 February following the declaration of the Khaatumo State.² A report suggests that the fighting resulted in over 1,000 families being displaced within Buuhoodle district.³ This number is to be confirmed. Continued tensions in the area raises concerns about the probability of Somaliland beginning a conflict with the semi-autonomous region of Puntland, particularly after Puntland's President Abdirahman Mohamud (Farole), warned the Somaliland authorities of fomenting disorder in Buuhoodle.⁴

In light of ongoing armed conflict in Somalia and limited humanitarian access, particularly in Al Shabaab controlled areas; the United Nations warned of a crisis in Somalia, despite the announcement indicating the end of famine.⁵ During the reporting period, the operation of humanitarian agencies was severely affected on 31 January when Al Shabaab's administration for Affairs of Foreign Agencies (OSAFA) retracted the permission for International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to operate in the areas under their control due to distribution of expired food.⁶ This allegation was however rejected by ICRC, saying that no expired food was distributed among the population, although they did admit that six percent of the food intended for distribution in their control had been spoiled due to extreme heat, moisture and exposure to heavy rain.⁷

MOGADISHU (BANADIR)

Following an announcement issued by the TFG of public buildings, on 31 January, the TFG forces began an unplanned eviction of individuals from the buildings intended for rehabilitation.⁸ Reports indicate that people, including IDPs have so far left the buildings located in Hamar Wayne, Waaberi and Shangani districts of Mogadishu and are arriving mainly in Waaberi and Hodan districts.⁹ Reports further indicate that some residents were arrested by the Police when they refused to leave the buildings.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Al Shabaab's guerilla attacks in Mogadishu persisted over the past two weeks¹¹ in Dayniile, Heliwa, Yaaqshiid and Karaan districts, including IED attacks, as well as over nine hand grenade attacks,¹² resulting in at least 35 civilian casualties. The fiercest clashes took place in Tiida & Bangala areas of Dayniile district.¹³ The prevailing insecurity continues to restrain the work of humanitarian agencies and consequently the provision of basic services.



- Approximately 2,000 IDPs were evicted by TFG force from Polytechnic Institute in Waaberi district. The majority of these moved to Wadajir district.¹⁴ (8 February)
- At least 11 civilians were killed and 15 others injured when a suicide bomber detonated a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) in a café in the vicinity of the Muna Hotel in Hamar Weyne district. Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁵ (8 February)
- Two civilians were killed and at least three others wounded when an unidentified man attacked TFG soldiers with a hand-grenade in Medina district.¹⁶ (2 February)
- A boy was injured when an explosive device detonated while he was playing with it in Medina district of Mogadishu. The boy lost one of his eyes and one arm.¹⁷ (1 February)
- An unknown number of young men suspected of links with Al Shabaab were arrested by the TFG security forces in Hamar Jajab and Hamar Weyne districts of Mogadishu.¹⁸ (31 January)
- A prominent Somali journalist and the director of Shabelle Media Network shot outside his home Jiro-Miskiin area of Medina district. He is the third Shabelle Media Network director to be murdered since 2007.¹⁹ (28 January)

- One civilian was injured in cross fire when TFG soldiers and police officers exchanged fire in Wardhigley district over the ownership of a building at the former National Fair Centre. Six similar cases have been recorded in Mogadishu since the beginning of the year.²⁰ (30 January)
- Reports indicate that some 100 men and boys fled Afgooye district of Middle Shabelle region and arrived in Yaqshiid district of Mogadishu after Al Shabaab demanded that all males participate in the ‘holy war’ against the TFG and allied forces.²¹ Since the beginning of the year over 250 people have fled to various districts of Mogadishu escaping forced recruitment.(6 February)

NORTH-WEST (AWDAL, WOQOYOI GALBEED & TOGDHEER)

On 9 February fighting resumed between SSC Clan militias and Somaliland forces in Buuhoodle district of Togdheer region when a delegation of Dhulbahante elders from Buuhoodle were due to travel to Hargeisa to hold talks with Somaliland authorities. The fighting resulted in unknown number of displacements within Buuhoodle district.²² The situation remains tense in the area and may escalate in the coming weeks remains unresolved.

Nevertheless, a recent report indicate that sexual gender based violence (SGBV is increasing in the Stadium IDP settlement in Hargeisa with an estimated 30,000 people.²³ The increase is mainly due to lack of police presence, poor shelter, as well as livelihood opportunities. Since the beginning of the year PMN recorded 26 SGBV cases in North-Western regions of Somaliland, including domestic violence, rape, FGM and forced marriage among others.



- A pregnant IDP woman living in Burao district of Togdheer region was severely beaten by her husband.²⁴(9 February)
- A 15 years old girl was reportedly raped in Jarmalka village, Burao district of Togdheer when she was returning from a shop. The girl received medical assistance. The family of the victim and the perpetrator are addressing the issue through traditional system.²⁵ (1 February)
- A 20 years old woman was raped by an unidentified man in Burao district of Togdheer region. The survivor received medical assistance at Burao General Hospital and the case was reported to the Police. ²⁶(1 February)

NORTH-EAST (MUDUG, NUGAAL & BARI)

A boat carrying 58 migrants from Marero coast, Bossaso to Yemen capsized following engine break down. The tragic incident resulted in 11 migrants drowning and 34 others missing. The witnesses on board explained that smugglers forced 22 passengers overboard. 14 passengers survived including two women, one child and 11 men. The boat wreckage was found by Puntland marine forces. The survivors were brought to Bossasso General Hospital in critical condition.²⁷ A record 103,000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants from the Horn of Africa made the journey across the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea in 2011.²⁸ To alert people planning to cross the Red Sea or the Gulf of Aden, UNHCR teamed up in 2009 with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other partners to spread awareness about the dangers- but people still keep making the perilous crossing.

HIRAAN & GALGADUUD

The situation in Belet Weyne district, Hiraan region remains tense, as Al Shabaab guerilla style attacks also began here over the past two weeks which caused great fear among the civilian population. Consequently, the Ethiopian forces imposed long hours of curfew in towns, severely restricting the freedom of movement and daily activities of the civilians. Residents expressed discontent over the ongoing curfews in Belet Weyne district during the reporting period.²⁹ There are concerns that continued restrictions on civilian populations by TFG allied forces may increase popular support for Al Shabaab.



- The Al Shabaab administration in Dhusamareeb district of Galgaduud region ordered the closure of a health clinic after the managers failed to pay registration fees. The Centre was re-opened after the local community intervened.³⁰ (5-6 February)
- A man and his son were reportedly arrested by security forces in Belet Weyne district of Hiraan region for having links with Al Shabaab militias.³¹ (4 February)
- Following a number of hand grenade and IED attacks in Belet Weyne district, the Ethiopian forces arrested a number of people suspected of being involved in the attacks.³² (3 February)
- A man suspected of being an Al Shabaab member was reportedly executed by Shabelle alley State (SVS) militias without trial.³³ (3 February)
- An unidentified man hurled a hand grenade at Ethiopian troops in Hawa Tako village, Belet Weyne district of Hiraan region, resulting in random shots by the soldiers which resulted in at least four civilian casualties.³⁴ (1 February)

LOWER & MIDDLE SHABELLE (SHABELLE HOOSE & DHEXE)

Heavy fighting erupted between Al Shabaab and TFG/AMISOM forces in Afgooye district, particularly in Jazeera village, Lower Shabelle region.³⁵ PMT data indicates that the fighting in Afgooye resulted in over 1,400 displacements mainly to various districts of Mogadishu over the past two weeks. Furthermore, Al Shabaab continued stepping up its conscription of fighters, including children to join the “holy war” against the TFG allied forces.



February)

- At least five boys were reportedly recruited as child soldiers by Al Shabaab in Mahaday, village of Middle Shabelle region.³⁶ (6 February)
- Armed clashes erupted between Al Shabaab militias and local pro government Abgal militias in Jowhar district when Al Shabaab militias attempted to destroy a local religious centre run by a prominent female religious figure. Al Shabaab militias finally managed to destroy the religious centre after they defeated the local militia.³⁷ (3

BAY, BAKOOL & GEDO

The trend of Somali refugees returning from Ethiopia to border town Dollow, Gedo region for harvesting stopped during the reporting period, most likely due to permission licence requirements by the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) - the government entity responsible for the implementation of refugee protection and assistance activities in Ethiopia, as well as incidents of Ethiopian army turning back refugees who have not obtained permit.

Tensions remain high in Luuq and Belet Hawo district of Gedo region, as well as Bakool region due to increase military build-up in the area, which is challenging the humanitarian access. Reports indicate that people are being robbed by unknown bandits near the town of Luuq, Gedo region or being stranded inside areas where fighting is still going on.³⁸ Through out the week Al Shabaab administration in Bay and Bakool multiplied calls to local residents to unite against a possible offensive by TFG allied forces.³⁹



- Some 60 IDP returned to Tayeeglow district of Bakool region from Belet Weyne district of Hiraan due to increased discrimination faced in Belet Weyne. A report indicates that IDPs originating from Bay and Bakool regions have been arrested or targeted by the armed forces in Belet Weyne, as they were suspected of supporting Al Shabaab insurgents in the district. ⁴⁰(7 February)
- Some 140 IDPs, who were forcefully returned from Mogadishu, arrived in Seynilow village, Wajiid district of Bakool region, following the announcement made by the Mayor of Banadir that every IDP must be back their place of origin. The TFG reportedly provided transportation support and one month of food rations.⁴¹ (5-6 February)

LOWER & MIDDLE JUBA (JUBA HOOSE & DHEXE)

The trend of Somali refugees returning from Kenya to border towns of Lower and Middle Juba regions continued during the reporting period. According to PMT data over 750 refugees arrived in Dhobley and Baadhedee over the past two weeks.

Armed clashes between Al Shabaab militias and anti-Al Shabaab forces also intensified in Afmadow district and particularly Hoosingo town, Baadhedee district of Lower Juba region, resulting in takeover of Baadhedee district by the Kenyan forces.⁴² Throughout the reporting period, airstrikes were reported in both locations resulting in an unconfirmed number civilian casualties, as well as residents fleeing to Bulo Haji town seeking protection and food. However, the humanitarian access, including in the areas gained by Kenyan forces remained a challenge. According to FSNAU, humanitarian access in Lower Juba remains of particular concern, as high numbers of acutely malnourished children continue to be reported and access to treatment services remains severely restricted.



- A female khat seller was shot in the abdomen by Al Shabaab militia man, when he tried to arrest her in Hawatako village, Jamaame district of Lower Juba region. The victim was taken to Kismaayo General Hospital where she died shortly after. ⁴³(9 February)

- Eight IDP families were reportedly evicted from the ex- Somali Marine base building by Al Shabaab militants in Farajano town of Kismaayo district, Lower Juba region. The families moved to Tawakal IDP camp.⁴⁴(7 February)
- An IDP man accused of cooperating with banned international INGOs was arrested in Gobwein village of Kismaayo town, Lower Juba region and was later tortured by Al Shabaab militias to admit to the charges. The man is still in the custody. ⁴⁵(6 February)
- Six men were forcefully recruited by Al Shabaab militia in Kismaayo town of Lower Juba region. The whereabouts of the men are unknown. ⁴⁶(2 February)

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¹⁷ ibid

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²⁹ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 7 February 2012

³⁰ Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld

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⁴⁶ Report by IASC protection cluster partner received on 4 February 2012