

SOMALIA POST REFUGEE RETURN MONITORING SNAPSHOT

SEPTEMBER 2021



UNHCR staff member spending time with the returnees at the Reception Centre in Berbera while waiting for a transportation to their final destination. © UNHCR

This post-return monitoring (PRM) snapshot presents selected and cumulative findings of data obtained from six rounds of interviews conducted with Somali refugee returnees in Somalia. With the PRM data collection exercise having commenced in November 2017, the latest sixth round of interview was undertaken between August to September 2021. The cumulative data set presented in this snapshot is based on interviews with 2,471 returnee households (HHs) across different return locations in Somalia. This PRM exercise follows the previous post-return monitoring snapshot issued by UNHCR in May 2021. Unless otherwise specified, the results outlined in this snapshot are cumulative.

The Somalia situation features 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 displacement persons (IDPs) within Somalia. Around 660,000 Somali refugees are hosted in Kenya (40% of the total refugee population) and Ethiopia (31% of the total refugee population). The remaining are reported to be in Yemen (23%), and Uganda (6%). (Source of data: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=M1jOiZ>).

UNHCR Somalia resumed repatriation with limited capacity from Kenya since December 2020, with fit-for-purpose COVID-19 measures agreed on and put in place by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in collaboration with 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 August and September 2021, a total of 425 interviews in PRM round 6 were carried out by telephone (88%) and face-to-face (12%). 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 Yemen (216), Ethiopia (94), Kenya (71), Libya (31), Djibouti (10) and various other countries (13). Returnees from different countries of asylum have been included to compare and better understand the situation depending on the displacement history.
- During PRM round 6, at 49%, approximately half of the total respondents were unassisted returnees to allow comparisons to be made between assisted and unassisted returnees regarding the effectiveness of return and reintegration assistance for the assisted returnees. This explains the lower number of respondents from Kenya, compared to the previous PRM rounds.
- Overall, approximately 64% of the respondents were female, among whom 58% were reported as heads of household. The total number of individuals in the surveyed households was 15,826 in the period of January 2018 to September 2021, representing approximately 17% of all 91,828 returnees who have returned to Somalia.

KEY STATISTICS

INTERVIEW DETAILS



Household interviews between 2018 – 2021, comprised of 15,826 individuals.

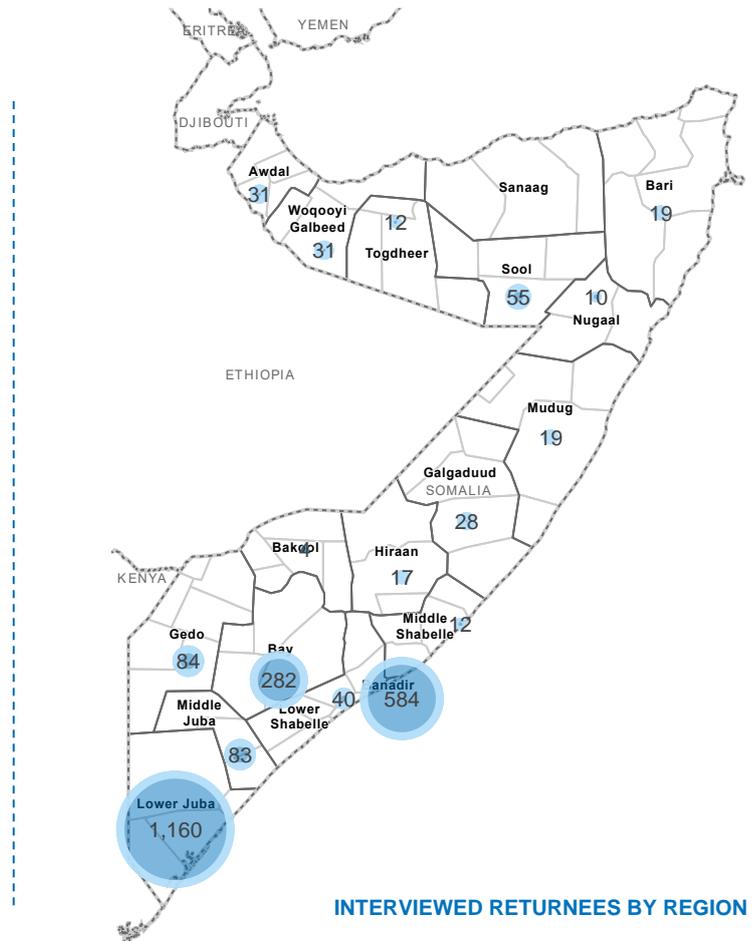
RESPONDENTS' GENDER



INTERVIEW TYPE

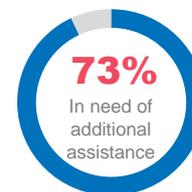
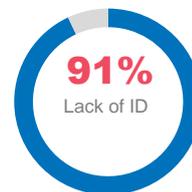
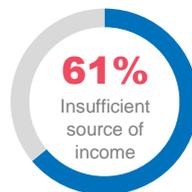
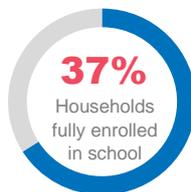
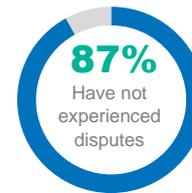
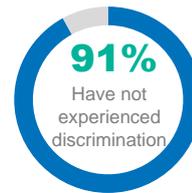


RETURN TYPE



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
Total	20	144	1,902	33	14	358	2,471



RETURN DECISIONS

OVERALL FINDINGS (2018-2021)

The PRM round 6 survey indicates that **87%** of the respondents are satisfied with their decision to return. The satisfaction level has decreased slightly since the first PRM survey was conducted in 2018, at which time **94%** of the respondents were satisfied with their decision to return. Overall, **90%** (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 (**54%**), and the ability to return and live in place of origin (**22%**).



Fig.1: N=2,471

The most frequently cited reasons for not being satisfied with the decision to return have consistently remained the lack of assistance and support from authorities as well as limited livelihoods opportunities.

Satisfaction level by Region



Fig.2: N=2,471

A total of **45%** of the respondents reported that they decided to return to Somalia due to improved security in their places of origin, followed by opportunities for better livelihood (**15%**), and fear of closure of Dadaab camp in Kenya (**8%**).

Overall, **84%** of the respondents stated that they intend to permanently remain in their current location. The top three reasons given for those who did not intend to stay were to be closer to family (**37%**), limited livelihoods opportunities (**18%**), and limited access to basic services (**14%**).

Out of the **16%** 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 moving to a new country of asylum.



Fig.3: N=2,471

Of the households interviewed since 2018, **23%** indicated that they currently reside in what is informally referred to as an "IDP settlement". The regional distribution of the **77%** of households who reside in settlements among host communities is as follows: Lower Juba (**48%**), Banadir (**24%**), Bay (**10%**), Gedo and Middle Juba (**4%**), and other regions (**14%**).

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=2,471

While **89%** 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 (**17%**), 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 misappropriation of humanitarian aid.

Freedom of movement by country of asylum

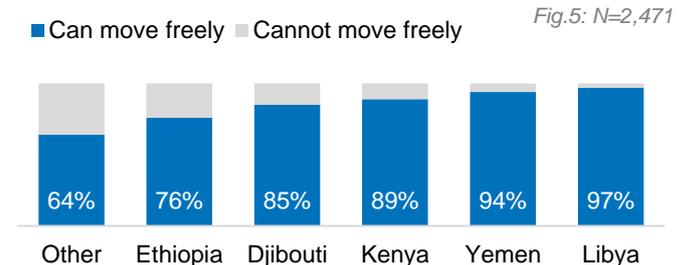


Fig.5: N=2,471

DISCRIMINATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

The vast majority of respondents (**91%**) (Fig.6) indicated that they had not faced discrimination on the basis of being a returnee and **89%** of the respondents reported not having been subject to clan/ethnicity-based discrimination.



Fig.6: N=2,471

72% of the respondents feel accepted by the host community (non-returnee). Most (**87%**) stated that they had not experienced disputes with other (non-returnee) members of the community, while the remaining **13%** reported disputes with others (non-returnees), with the main traditional causes relating to housing, land, or property issues (**38%**), followed by family disputes (**25%**) and competition over jobs and humanitarian services (**21%**). (Fig.7)

Reasons for disputes

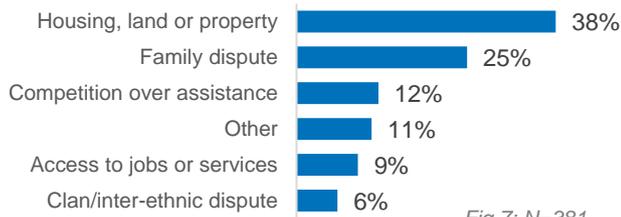


Fig.7: N=381

Over half (56%) of the returnees believe that they have influence over decision making within their community.

SHELTER AND HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY

Overall, 80% (Fig. 8) of the respondents have not been evicted from their housing, land or property since their return to Somalia, with relatively higher percentage of respondents indicated to have been evicted (32%) in 2020, compared to average 20% of respondents stated having not been evicted overall. As well, 68% of the respondents do not fear becoming evicted.



Fig.8: N=2,471

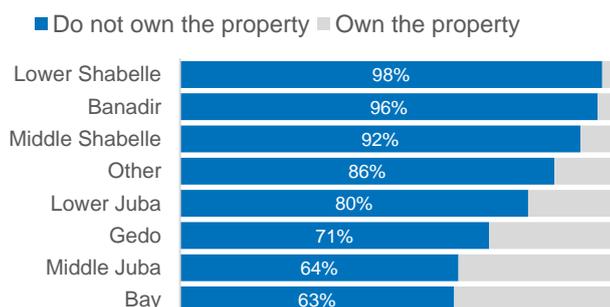
Overall, 82% of the respondents live in housing that they do not own and 34% are living in makeshift shelters of corrugated galvanized iron (CGI) sheeting, 27% live in temporary shelter, and 23% live in makeshift shelters without CGIs (Buul). In addition, 66% of households reported lacking proof of occupancy of the place they live in.

With more than 80% not owning their shelter and almost 70% lacking written proof establishing some 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 their place of residence. (Fig. 9)

Property ownership by region

Fig.9: N=2,471



EDUCATION

Overall, only 37% (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 11% are in Government schools. (Fig. 11)

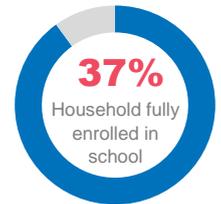


Fig.10: N=2,471

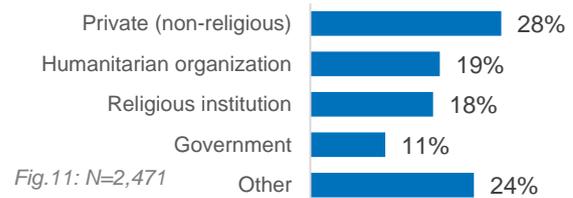


Fig.11: N=2,471

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND LIVELIHOODS

Overall, 61% (Fig.12) of returnee households reported that their sources of income are insufficient 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 (39%), lack of equipment needed for running a business (16%), and the long distance to employment opportunities (13%). Furthermore, 65% of the respondents indicated that remittances or support from family members were reduced after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.

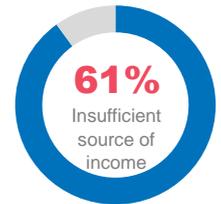


Fig.12: N=2,471

IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Overall, 91% (Fig.13) of households reported that all or some members do not have government-issued identification documents. However, 82% of those households also reported that lack of IDs has not resulted in any issues since their return. Out of the 312 households (18%) who reported challenges due to the lack of documents, 54% indicated trouble accessing services while 28% reported challenges at checkpoints.

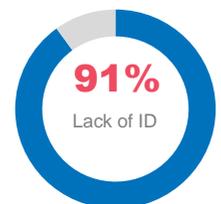


Fig.13: N=2,471

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.

COVID-19

In 2021, 70% (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 access to health services (40%), cash (35%), and access to livelihood (12%). Furthermore, 31% stated that they have received health services, Information on COVID-19 (29%), and Cash (29%) from the following primary sources: NGOs/UN (59%), government (17%), friends and family (12%), and local communities (11%).

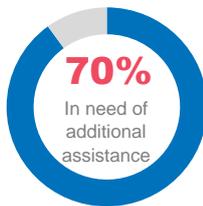


Fig. 14: N=2,471

Additional assistance for COVID-19

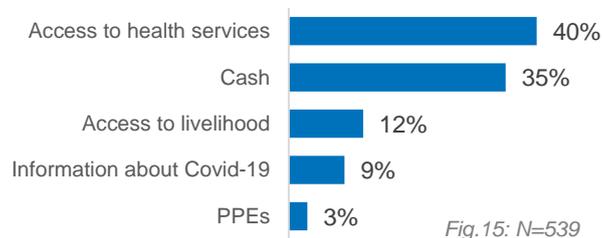


Fig. 15: N=539

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 September 2021) confirm that those returnees assisted by UNHCR indicated relatively higher satisfaction than that of unassisted (91% vs. 82%). Some 39% of unassisted and 21% of assisted returnees currently reside in IDP sites. Assisted returnees also indicated slightly higher intentions (85% vs. 80%) to remain permanently in their current location. Despite both groups indicating the inability to pay for school fees as a reason for children not attending school, more than half of assisted households indicated that their children attend school compared to that of unassisted indicating 31%. Access to markets has been perceived comparatively more likely by those assisted than that of unassisted (80% vs. 45%).

	Assisted	Unassisted
Satisfied upon Return	91%	82%
Reside in IDP sites	21%	39%
Remain in current Location	85%	80%
Children attending school	37%	31%
Access to market	80%	45%

METHODOLOGY

Since December 2014, UNHCR has assisted approximately 16,000 households to voluntarily return to Somalia. In the current PRM system, 2,471 household level interviews (15% 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 with households within communities containing returnees known to UNHCR and partners, and thus may not be strictly constitute a random sample.

The findings presented in this snapshot represent a selection of findings from UNHCR's post-return monitoring exercise, round 6. 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 in strengthening the service infrastructure in return areas and in developing livelihoods opportunities, access to micro-finance and inclusion of returnees into social safety nets/ social protection mechanisms for returns to be sustainable. Particular emphasis must be placed on

- addressing housing, land and property issues in collaboration with the competent authorities.
- addressing legal documentation to avoid the risk of exclusion to services.
- identifying and addressing the needs of persons with specific vulnerabilities.
- 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 2021.

JOINT ANALYSIS

In 2021, UNHCR and external durable solutions partners and other relevant stakeholders will discuss the preliminary PRM findings which aim to share insights to the current situation of returnees, as well as to formulate recommendations on how to address the identified issues and make improvements. More detailed joint analysis sessions will be conducted as new findings arise with a particular objective of the followings:

- 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 can be used to triangulate or shed further light on findings.
- recommendations for joint inter-agency action can be made and agreed.

NEXT STEP FOR 2021

The purpose of post-return monitoring is to support key areas within UNHCR's 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 nationwide Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA) can also inform facets of post-return monitoring. The intention in 2021 is to continue working with existing partners such as OCHA and REACH to ensure an adequate representation of returnees within the national needs assessment and to further harmonize indicators within the agreed frameworks.

The National Commission on Refugees and IDPs (NRCI) will jointly implement the PRM Round 7 data collection activity with Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) as part of NRCI's primary role in the pre and post return process of voluntary repatriation. This will enable enhanced coordination for conducive protection environment and promoted 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



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