

DROUGHT SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE

December 2022



An internally displaced mother sets up shelter after arriving at the Haya Suftu camp in Ethiopia. Hundreds of thousands affected by severe drought and conflict have been displaced in search of food, shelter and water for their families and livestock. © UNHCR/Mary-Sanyu Osire.

Situation Overview

The Horn of Africa region continues to experience the longest and most severe drought on record, threatening millions with starvation. Relentless drought and high food prices have weakened many people's ability to grow crops, raise livestock and buy food. The dramatic food insecurity situation in drought affected areas is expected to persist, driving high humanitarian needs well into 2023, with a high likelihood of a sixth failed season in March-May 2023. Harvests have yielded little and water sources have dried up. As conditions continued to worsen, hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to flee in search of water, pasture and assistance.

According to UNHCR's [latest dashboard of displacement](#) affected populations, by the end of December 2022, some 1.70 million had been internally displaced in Somalia and Ethiopia, while over 90,000 refugees have crossed borders from Somalia and South Sudan into drought affected areas of Kenya and Ethiopia this year.

Somalia is in the midst of a climate emergency that is showing little signs of abating and is uprooting lives and livelihoods of millions. Five consecutive below par rainy seasons, brought about by climate change, has resulted in the longest drought the country has witnessed in more than 40 years. According to the UNHCR-led [Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), the catastrophic drought has displaced more than 1.4 million people since 2021. Thousands of Somalis have also fled to neighbouring countries to seek assistance. Many people have lost their livelihoods and their coping capacities have been stretched too thin to recover from the drought. The situation is further compounded by persistent insecurity and armed conflict, soaring food prices, and extreme poverty. These multiple shocks have exacerbated protection risks and pre-existing inequities. Although the projected famine in Baidoa and Buur Hakaba districts between October and December 2022 was averted, according to the [Integrated Food Security Classification \(IPC\) analysis](#) from 13 December, there is a strong possibility of famine between April and June 2023, if the next rainy season fails and if humanitarian assistance is not sustained. Over 8.3 million Somalis are expected to face crisis level (IPC Phase 3) of acute food insecurity by June 2023, including 727,000 facing catastrophic levels of extreme hunger (IPC Phase 5).

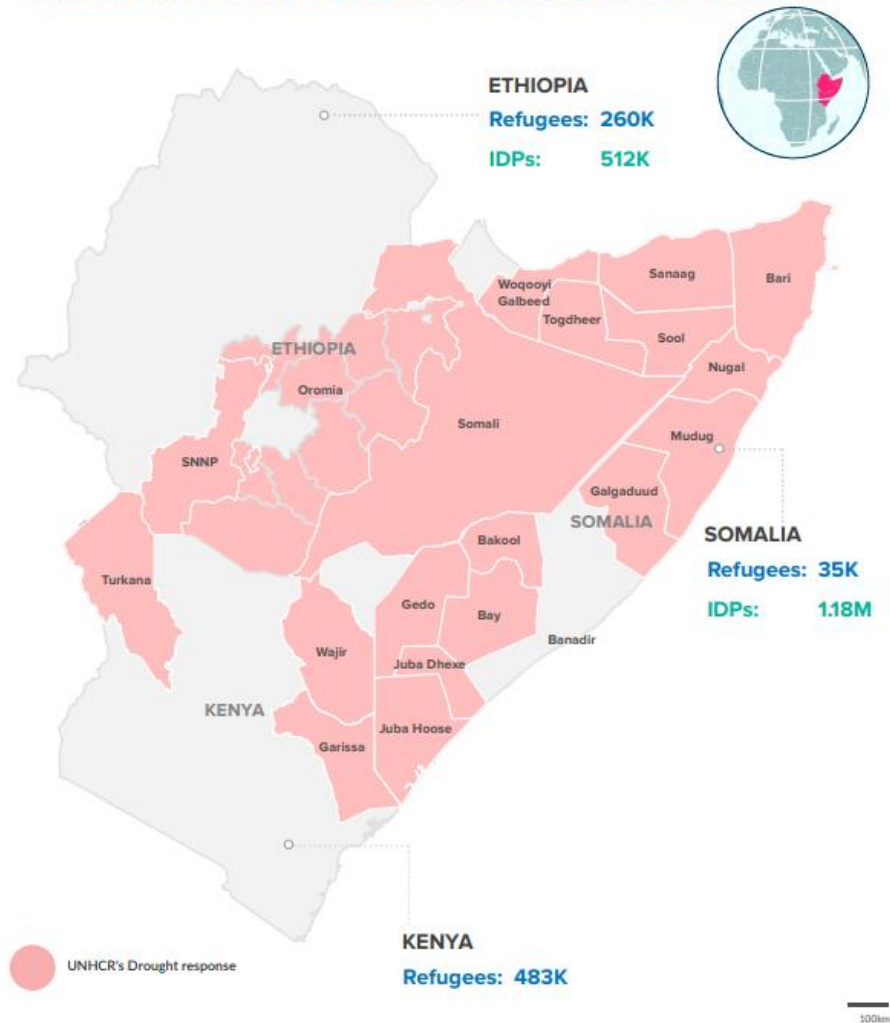
In **Ethiopia**, the drought conditions continue to affect the lowland areas in the south and south-east of the country, especially the Somali, Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples regions, where the crisis is having a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities. The vast southern reaches of Ethiopia, which border Kenya and Somalia, are on the frontline of this crisis. The people who live in places such as in the Borena Zone in Oromia region on the border with Kenya are now heavily reliant on humanitarian aid. As of December 2022, an estimated 12 million people remained food insecure, while nearly 9 million people have been targeted for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) assistance across the drought-affected areas, according to OCHA.

Children and care givers, in particularly, have been bearing the brunt of the drought, with reported increase in psychosocial distress and a resort to negative survival means. Recent inter-sectoral assessments indicate that child labor, street-begging and a surge in school dropouts and early marriage cases were observed in drought-affected areas. In Somali region, due to drought and inflation coupled with insecurity, children are leaving home in search of work to feed their families. This trend has resulted in a high rate of family separations.

The drought is also causing a health crisis where health risks related to complications from malnutrition and disease outbreaks have increased at a time when access to health services has decreased. The cholera outbreak in parts of the Oromia and Somali regions is still not contained. In Melkadida (Somali region), UNHCR-supported nutrition centres run by International Medical Corps (IMC) have confirmed an increase of patients over the past months, linked to the impact of the ongoing drought and a reduction in food rations. Across the five refugee camps in Melkadida, many families are relying on (sharing among the whole family) nutrition supplements that are meant for lactating mothers and malnourished children.

In **Kenya**, the drought situation remains critical in 22 of the 23 Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) counties due to the late onset and poor performance of the much-anticipated October-December short rains. Turkana county, that includes Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement in Turkana West is currently under its highest phase (alarm phase), according to the [National Drought Management Authority \(NDMA\)](#) December Bulletin. Turkana West did not receive any rains in December which has exacerbated the drought caused mainly by four failed consecutive rainfall seasons, among other factors. Dadaab continues to receive new arrivals from Somalia, mainly due to factors related to drought, insecurity, and climate change and lack of basic services among others, in parts of Somalia.

UNHCR'S DROUGHT RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA, KENYA AND SOMALIA



UNHCR response

SOMALIA

In response to the drought, UNHCR has been delivering life-saving assistance and protection response to persons with specific needs in displaced populations and host communities in tandem with the authorities and partners. As the lead or co-lead of Protection, Shelter/NFI, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) clusters as well as the Somalia Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Inter-Agency Network, UNHCR has taken an active role in enhancing coordination of the inter-agency drought response at national and sub-national levels and supported the mainstreaming of protection across the inter-agency response.

The UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) data continued to provide up to date information on internal displacement caused by drought, which informs the humanitarian response of the UN and partners. According to the [December 2022 PRMN update](#), over 1.8 million individuals were displaced internally within Somalia in 2022. In December alone, 85,000 new displacements were recorded, of which 67,000 individuals were displaced by the drought and 16,000 due to conflict/insecurity. The displaced families faced multiple protection risks and identified food, livelihood, health, shelter, and water as their priority needs.

SECTORAL RESPONSE

UNHCR finalized a framework for collaboration to mainstream protection across field locations with WFP and organized a training for WFP staff in Baidoa on the use of the protection mainstreaming tools in the context of the delivery of food and cash assistance. Cluster partners, including Food Security, WASH, and Housing Land and Property (HLP) received PSEA training and were introduced to the reporting mechanisms in Somalia to support the scale up of protection activities. Likewise, with UNICEF and UNPFA, UNHCR developed Letters of Understanding (LoUs) to collaborate on child protection, education issues, and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response. UNHCR collaborated with OHCHR, Protection Cluster, and Minority Rights Organizations (MROs) to prepare recommendations for an advocacy paper developed with PRMN data to highlight the impact of drought and food insecurity on displacement and protection.

The scale up of UNHCR's protection response to the drought continued through a variety of interventions. UNHCR has established 23 mobile and static Protection Desks, which serve as entry points to specialized protection services, in Baidoa, Banadir, Beletweyne, Dhobley, Dollow, Galkayo, and Kismayo. The Protection Desks have received more than 4,300 complaints and feedbacks from the affected community and referred more than 1,400 cases to service providers. Separated and unaccompanied children were provided with psychosocial support and counseling, and referrals to nutrition facilities. Families at risk of being evicted from their homes due to loss of income received legal counseling. Furthermore, to strengthen GBV prevention and mitigation efforts, partners were trained on code of conduct, PSEA, and protection/GBV mainstreaming; and awareness and information campaigns targeted the community members. UNHCR has reached more than 200,000 individuals through these protection services and awareness raising campaigns.

Lifesaving and basic needs assistance was provided through the distribution of multipurpose cash, shelter assistance, and core relief items (CRIs). Approximately 230,000 IDPs and host communities have received CRI kits in 2022 which are comprised of household items such as kitchen sets, blankets, and jerry cans. In addition, 46,000 IDPs benefited from shelter support. More than 106,000 vulnerable IDPs, refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees received cash assistance, which helped them to prioritize and address their immediate and short term needs with dignity.

Other multi-sectoral drought response activities supported by UNHCR include sustainable livelihood and CCCM interventions. In Puntland, Somaliland, and across South Central Somalia, UNHCR worked with more than 6,000 IDPs, including pastoralists and fishing communities, to strengthen their resilience through skills trainings, small business grants, and in-kind support (donkey carts, fishing equipment, boats, etc.). CCCM partners continued to work with Nutrition actors to screen new arrival children at risk of malnutrition and make referrals to feeding programmes.



The catastrophic drought ravaging Somalia is putting communities on the brink of famine. Thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes in search of humanitarian assistance including food, shelter, and safe drinking water. ©UNHCR/Nabil Narch

ETHIOPIA

SOMALI REGION

The current drought has affected more than half of the livestock population in the Somali Region, with over 2 million livestock having died, according to an assessment conducted by the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) between 21 November and 5 December 2022 within 11 zones of the region.

The findings indicate that because of the poor rainy seasons, combined with heavy depletion of water sources due to rising temperature levels, water surface pockets have begun to drain gradually. According to the report, the number of persons in need of assistance has increased to 3.4 million because of the drought and disease outbreaks. Major gaps in protection responses (GBV, child protection and education) were observed with limited partners present in the assessed locations. Intensive advocacy to complement the efforts of the government is required.

Melkadida: In view of the worsening drought conditions, UNHCR is stepping up its IDP response in Liban, Dawa and Afder zones of the Somali Region in coordination with partners, especially local stakeholders, and regional authorities. More than 184,000 households of displaced individuals reside in the three zones. In 2022, UNHCR through its partners reached 2,193 vulnerable households (14,411 individuals) with Core Relief Items (CRIs) in Bokolmanyo, Filtu, Dekasuftu and Kersadulla woredas of Liban Zone. The items included blankets, sleeping mats, solar lantern, sleeping mats and jerrycans. In response to a cholera outbreak in Kersadulla and

Guardhamole, UNHCR provided support to the local authorities by training health workers on cholera outbreak management, facilitated monitoring missions by technical teams from the regional office in Jijiga and awareness through 1,000 educational posters on cholera for the zonal health office. Under multi-purpose cash assistance, 650 vulnerable households received 5,000 ETB (around \$93) per household through Awash Bank in cash in Filtu and Dekasuftu woreda of Liban Zone. The cash assistance will help the households to address their basic needs and mitigate critical protection risks.

UNHCR also agreed with UNICEF (WASH Cluster lead) to improve the water supply system in Filtu Woreda of Liban Zone. UNHCR contributed USD 250,000 USD to assist a total of 167,000 IDPs and members of the host community to access water from the project. The project implementation is in progress and expected to be completed in early 2023. Across the five refugee camps of Melkadida, 125 household latrines are under construction and have reached 20 per cent completion; 25 communal latrines with six stances are at 25 per cent completion; the Bokolmanyo water reservoir retention wall is at 20 per cent completion rate; and WASH facilities at the Transit Centre in Dollo Ado stand at 60% completion. In Melkadida and Bokolmanyo refugee camps, UNHCR is also installing water pumps.

As part of the efforts to address climate adaptability and resilience in drought affected communities in Somali Region, UNHCR and the Ethiopian Government's Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) with support from IKEA Foundation are promoting inclusive long-term development and climate adaptation through investments in agriculture activities.

UNHCR, in collaboration with the RRS, and the Woreda Agriculture Office are undertaking a pilot program on wheat production in Buramino, Hilaweyn and Kobe irrigation schemes. The training for farmers is provided by experts from the Regional Agriculture Bureau who are working closely with the Woreda Agricultural Office to ensure that local capacity is equally developed for sustainability. To support the government 'Crop and Care' initiative, cooperatives that receive support from UNHCR have offered 45 hectares of land for the pilot. To-date, 90 farmers (50 refugees, 40 host) are receiving training on wheat production.

Jijiga: In its drought response efforts in Jijiga, UNHCR, in collaboration with the regional government, distributed emergency CRIs to 6,212 individuals with specific needs in Gabicas and Farbuo IDP sites in Shabelle Zone. UNHCR also distributed CRIs (plastic sheets, blankets, solar lanterns, pieces of laundry soap, kitchen set, heavy duty plastic bucket, mosquito nets, semi-collapsible jerrycan and pieces of winter clothing) to 114 families recently relocated from Dire Dawa's Millennium Park and settled in Qoloji IDP camp.

In Aw-barre, 133 households completed two phases of transitional shelter construction, and received the third cash instalment. Each household collected necessary materials to complete the roofing, plastering, and fixing of doors and windows. Masonry work was also completed on 10 durable shelters in Jeedhane relocation site; work on a total of 47 shelters out of the 50 shelters planned is complete. UNHCR also continues to support the ongoing Somali regional-led initiative to find solutions for the protracted IDP situation in Qoloji through joint multi-agency orientation sessions and asset and family composition verification desk for the IDP families who opted to be relocated from Qoloji to the Dhurwale relocation site in Kebribeyah Woreda of the Fafan Zone of the Somali region. In line with its durable solutions initiative, UNHCR plans to support the relocated IDPs with six water tanks with a capacity of 10,000 litres each, with the aim of enhancing the overall water storage capacity and bringing water closer to relocated communities in Dhurwale.

OROMIA REGION

Over five million people across 10 zones in Oromia Region are in acute need of food assistance. UNHCR's main response includes protection monitoring, establishing, and supporting community leadership/structures, targeted multipurpose cash support for vulnerable groups, and the distribution of dignity kits for women and girls of reproductive age. UNHCR through its field office in Bule Hora finalized the drought response programme in collaboration with Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY). During the reporting period, 160 people have been supported to start a small business in the East Guji Zone.

In Boredede, West Hararghe, UNHCR completed plastering work for five transitional shelters at the Burka Anani relocation site. Roofing work was completed for 25 durable shelters at the Genedelemi relocation site and split woodwork completed for all 50 shelters. In Mesio Woreda, plastering work was completed for seven out of 59 durable shelters at the Waltane returnee site. In Tulo Woreda, partitioning of the communal shelters was completed for 12 households; this makes 42 out of 66 shelters completed as planned in Hirna IDP site.

SOUTHERN NATIONS, NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLES (SNNP) REGION

In Konso Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) region, where coping mechanisms of the affected communities have been deteriorating due to multiple consecutive shocks, notably drought and conflict, about 41,000 have been included in the Productive Safety Net Programs (PSNPs) beneficiaries list. The regional government through the support of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) delivered emergency seeds to drought affected woredas. Response is being scaled-up by humanitarian partners, including the school feeding programme in the affected areas, with the regional government providing a school feeding programme in 222 schools (covering 22% of the needs). But an increase in school dropouts has been reported. Partners are supporting school enrolment through education material distribution, female's dignity kits and cash support.

UNHCR, through partnership with a local NGO Pastoralists Development Association (PAPDA), provided protection services in GBV, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), legal aid and referrals, reaching 181 persons. IDPs in Konso have also been reached with WASH emergency measures such as trucking of more than 860 cubic meters of water.



Sahara, her husband and three sons, fled the drought in Somalia to Kenya's Dadaab refugee camps. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

KENYA

Dadaab: Information from the Government of Kenya (GoK) indicates that, in principle, refugee registration – suspended since 2016 – will resume in early 2023. In the meantime, DRS and UNHCR have been profiling new arrivals (recording minimal biodata) since May 2022. This process is used to avail food and other basic services for the new arrivals. Since May 2022, a total of 99,845 new arrivals had been profiled.

Provision of food assistance through WFP and development of a Joint Emergency Drought Response Plan for new arrivals is ongoing with UNHCR and partners, Department of Refugee Services (DRS), as well as county and sub-county officials.

UNHCR and partners have conducted vulnerability screening to assess various specific needs of new arrivals to enable timely assistance to populations with critical specific needs during the drought response. Currently, 4,516 persons with specific needs (PSNs) have been assessed for support. They require assistive devices and other material support, which is being provided by UNHCR's partner Humanity and Inclusion (HI).

Health partners continued to intensify active case identification through community screening and outreach services for those new arrivals settling in the outskirts of the camps. A total of 1,564 new arrival children under the age of 5 were screened, out of whom 51 were found to have Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 97 with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM). Regular engagement with UNICEF and the health partners to streamline the supply of therapeutic feeding is ongoing.

Extension of water pipelines to the outskirts of the camps for the new arrivals in the three camps was completed. This extension includes five plastic water tanks (10,000 litres each), a 5,000m pipeline with 104 taps and 90 communal latrines in the three camps. The five plastic tanks are receiving water trucked in once or twice a day. MSF has constructed 50 communal latrines in Dagahaley Camp and CARE has constructed 6 latrines and installed two plastic water tanks (5,000 litres each) in the Ifo and Dagahaley camps.

Between December 2022 and January 2023, UNHCR through the Relief, Reconstruction and Development Organization (RRDO) and the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) delivered 42 water truck trips in order to reach new arrivals on the outskirts of the three (3) camps, as well as 87 trips to host community sites.

Low shelter coverage in the Dadaab camps has been further exacerbated by limited funding and the Government's ban on the construction of permanent shelters for refugees since 2016. Procurement of 1,000 family tents for the profiled population with specific needs has been completed and now pending distribution. A total of 2,000 tarpaulin sheets are earmarked for distribution to the new arrivals. So far, 166 pieces have been distributed in Ifo camp.

UNHCR and partners also continued to deliver basic services to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of Kenyan host communities living around Dadaab and the larger Garissa County. The support provided by these partners includes the provision of food, cash transfers to households with specific needs, provision of firewood and construction of water infrastructure.

Kakuma: UNHCR continued to provide potable water to about 248,929 refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei including new arrivals at the reception centers. To improve access to water and sanitation facilities at the two centers, an additional 15 temporary latrines and 10 bathing shelters were constructed, and six blocks of permanent latrines are in the completion stage. In addition, installation of 2 tap stands is ongoing at Kalobeyei reception center.

To support the relocation of refugees from reception centers to Kalobeyei settlement, construction of an additional 170 communal shared latrines has been constructed. To improve water availability in Kalobeyei settlement and Kakuma camp, the installation of three elevated steel tanks of 100m³ capacity is ongoing. Furthermore, new pipeline connection work is ongoing connecting boreholes to boost water pressure reaching affected sections of Kalobeyei settlement.

The construction of a temporary health facility at Kalobeyei reception center is now complete. This is being used in health and nutrition screening of all new arrivals passing through the reception facility. It is also used in

identifying emergency cases to be referred to health facilities and as a base for treatment of children with severe and moderate malnutrition. The facility is connected to water and electricity.

UNHCR continued to provide water to about 20,000 Kenyans living in seven (7) villages within Kalobeyi through trucking 100,000 litres of water per week. In addition, Kabokorit primary school and the Naurenregae village are being supported temporarily with water trucking. UNHCR started equipping and solarization of one borehole at Kamyuyaep village to supply drinking water for the host community. For a long-term solution, UNHCR and other humanitarian partners have planned to extend pipelines and construct water storage tanks to villages currently served by water trucking.

A cumulative 3,459 transitional shelters have been constructed for the new arrivals as well as 50 improved transitional shelters for Persons with Special Needs. A cumulative 3,754 families (12,898 individuals) have since been relocated to these shelters.

Funding

In June 2022, UNHCR released a regional [Drought Response Emergency Appeal for the Horn of Africa](#), **requesting US\$42.6 million** to address critical humanitarian needs for some 1.5 million refugees, internally displaced people and local host communities affected by the drought in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The appeal covered the period May-December 2022 to align with the inter-agency drought response plans coordinated by OCHA at country level and derived from the relevant Humanitarian Response Plans. The overall funding levels of the three country operations indicated by the end of December 2022 that approximately **50% of the funds** required for UNHCR's drought response were available based on unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions received in 2022 (55% Kenya, 53% Ethiopia, 31% Somalia).

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