

## DROUGHT SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE

February 2023



*Halima Hussein, a 28-year-old mother of three children fled the drought in Somalia to Dadaab, Kenya. She was worried she was going to lose her children to hunger if she continued staying in Somalia. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo*

### Situation Overview

The Horn of Africa continues to face a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need of assistance due to a combination of drought, conflict, and inability to provide for basic needs. The region has been hit by a series of droughts in recent years, leading to crop failure and a lack of water and food. To respond to the immediate needs of the displaced populations in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, UNHCR launched [The Horn of Africa Drought Situation Appeal January - December 2023](#) seeking USD 137 million. The appeal targets 3.3 million internally displaced, refugees, asylum seekers and their host communities in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

According to [UNHCR's latest dashboard of displacement](#) affected populations, by the end of February 2023, some 1.83 million had been internally displaced in Somalia and Ethiopia, while over 220,000 new refugee and asylum-seekers have crossed into drought affected areas since January 2022.

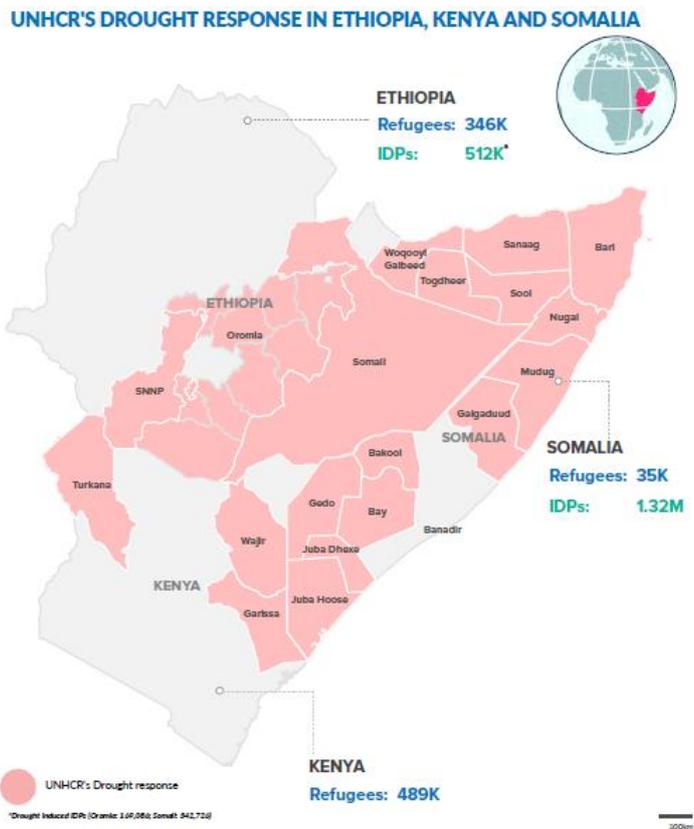
In **Ethiopia** the drought situation has continued to worsen following five consecutive failed rainy seasons and the looming "lean season" (period between harvests), with the southern and eastern parts of the country mainly affected. In addition to security, inflation and high food prices, the drought has a cumulative devastating humanitarian impact across the country. It has destroyed livelihoods and displaced thousands of people who left their homes.

The most recent emergency in the Somali region of Ethiopia has been the arrival in February 2023 of nearly 100,000 people – many of whom are women, children and vulnerable people – into the Doolo zone, following an escalation of fighting and a deterioration in the security situation in Laascaanood, Sool region of Somaliland.

The areas where the new arrivals have settled are extremely remote (two days driving from UNHCR’s nearest office) and already severely affected by the ongoing drought, with many members of the host community having lost their livelihoods and suffering the worsening effects of climate change. UNHCR has declared an internal Level 2 Emergency for the response to the recent influx into Ethiopia from Somalia and will separately be issuing a Supplementary Appeal to respond to the protection and basic needs of the newly displaced population. Efforts are also underway in Ethiopia to prepare an interagency appeal on the needs of the new arrivals in the Somali region of Ethiopia.

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 to December 2022 short rains, coupled with four previous consecutive failed rainfall seasons. Turkana and Garissa Counties, where refugees are hosted, have been affected by a persistent drought situation since 2022 following two years of far below-average rainy seasons. The lack of rainfall has caused a severe water shortage leading to food insecurity. Turkana county, that includes Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement in Turkana West remain at the alarm phase, according to the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA). Garissa County is at X phase (or is also severely affected by drought, while the Dadaab camps continue to receive new arrivals from Somalia.

**Somalia** continues to face the longest and the most severe drought in its recent history, due to the failure of five consecutive rainy seasons, with a sixth failed rainy season predicted. Reduced access to water, and the ever-shrinking pasture has affected pastoralist and agrarian communities throughout the region, forcing them to leave their places of origin in search of water, food, pastures, or humanitarian assistance. More than 1.3 million Somalis have been displaced internally due to drought since 2022. According to the UNHCR-led [Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), 234,000 displacements within Somalia were recorded in February. Out of the total displacements during the reporting month, the majority, 62% were attributed to conflict/insecurity, 34% due to the drought, and 4% due to other reasons. The top five humanitarian needs of the displaced families were food (53%), followed by shelter (18%), and livelihood (12%).



## UNHCR response

### ETHIOPIA

#### SOMALI REGION

#### Refugees

During the month of February, cash distribution via the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) system was conducted in Jigjiga camps for 2,271 persons with specific needs (874 in Sheder, 788 in Aw-Barre and 609 in Kebribeyah).

Wheat and rice have been produced for the first time in the Somali region as a result of the climate-smart agriculture pilot supported by IKEA Foundation. Refugees are introducing wheat and rice production as a new opportunity to increase food security, economic productivity, and climate resilience.

With the support of Allianza Shire, two schools in Kobe refugee settlement are now fully solarized, enhancing the schools' air ventilation and electricity, helping to improve the learning and teaching environment. Access to sustainable, clean, and safe energy solutions are key for displaced and host communities in the Somali region, where the effects of climate change are impacting lives severely.

Six hectares of area enclosure for afforestation and land rehabilitation have been developed on the outskirts of Hilaweyn refugee camp (Melkadida) to strengthen the ongoing environment protection activities in the camp. The inauguration of the six hectares of area enclosure was attended by UNHCR's Head of Sub-Office in Melkadida together with RRS & local Administration stakeholders and communities. For the drought-affected regions afforestation needs to be considered as crucial in rehabilitating of the land, stabilizing water supply, reducing desertification and in mitigating regional climate changes.

### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

A multisectoral Cholera Preparedness and Coordination Meeting was activated in Dollo Ado by the Woreda administration with participation from various UN agencies and NGOs, following reports of several confirmed cases. A surveillance team was deployed to Dollo Ado woreda and cholera kits provided. In addition, Cholera Rapid Diagnostic Tests were distributed to all health centres and mass community mobilization activities on prevention and control were put in place. UNHCR provided financial support to conduct training for 50 health professionals, staff support, management of the cholera treatment centre and vehicle rental for coordination and monitoring by the Liban zonal health focal person. Furthermore, a community-based surveillance system has been activated.

Between 25-27 February, UNHCR organized a two-day mission of four state ministers led by the Commissioner of the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), to Elkere and Melkadida. They visited the ongoing humanitarian emergency relief response in Elkere and drought response activities that UNHCR and WFP support, targeting both refugees and their host communities in Melkadida. They also met with RRS authorities, Woreda authorities and humanitarian partners to exchange ideas on how to scale up humanitarian emergency response support whilst bolstering the community's ability to become self-reliant and non-dependent on aid in the long-term.

UNHCR launched an IDP profiling tool in Afdher and Dawa zones. The tool is geared towards identifying the main humanitarian and protection needs of the displaced population, as well as prospects for solutions through a baseline survey of the IDP sites. The profiling tool will be used to prioritize sites for UNHCR's support and will be rolled out in Liban zone in the coming weeks.

Humanitarian partners and regional Disaster Risk Management Bureau (DRMB), Regional Water Bureau (RWB), Regional Education Bureau (REB), Regional Health Bureau (RHB), zonal and woreda authorities and key stakeholders conducted a multi-sectoral assessment mission to Afdher, Liban, and Dawa zones from 3-15 February. The objective was to assess the magnitude and impact of the prolonged drought and insecurity. The assessment focused on protection, nutrition, health, food, WASH, emergency shelter and CRIs. The recommendations were to provide immediate blanket emergency nutrition response, food distribution, health partners support, immediate emergency shelter, non-food items, strengthening case-management system for child protection and GBV concerns as well as referral to other services (food, shelter, health, education, nutrition etc.) and provision of emergency livestock feed and livestock vaccination.

## **OROMIA and SNNP REGIONS**

### **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**

UNHCR is actively monitoring and following the development in Borena and other surrounding drought affected zones in the southern part of Ethiopia in order to target assistance. According to the Borena administration, a total of 867,000 people are affected by the drought and a vast majority of them are currently living in 21 IDPs sites. Similarly, about four woredas in West Guji zone bordering Borena area have been identified as hotspots due to the drought. OCHA has established an emergency operation centre in Borena zone to mobilize resources and adequate response for the affected population.

Due to the prolonged drought, IDPs are in dire need of humanitarian assistance particularly, women, children and the elderly who are suffering due to shortage of basic needs including food, NFIs, water and WASH, shelter, health service and education. A total of 604,000 individuals have been receiving food support through the National Disaster and Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) in collaboration with humanitarian organizations operating in the zone while 263,000 are yet to receive humanitarian support/food. In addition, about 884,000 individuals are in an urgent need of water.

The risk of gender-based violence (GBV) has increased as women and girls are forced to travel a distance to fetch water and meet basic needs while children are also being left alone in the IDP sites as family members are away looking for food or livelihood. Among five one stop center for GBV survivors in the zone, only one is providing limited services due to shortage of resources.



*In February 2023, UNHCR distributed core relief items to 2,521 households in four locations hosting drought-affected displaced people in Elkeri woreda of Afder zone, Ethiopia. © UNHCR/Mary-Sanyu Osire*

## **KENYA**

**Dadaab:** UNHCR and partners 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 included the provision of food, cash transfers to households with specific needs, provision of firewood, and construction of WASH infrastructure.

During the month of February, Dadaab continued to receive new arrivals, mainly from Somalia due to drought, insecurity and climate change, as well as lack of basic services in some parts of Somalia. On 27 February, registration of previously profiled new arrivals started in Ifo camp with nationality screening against the National Registration Bureau (NRB) register for individuals 18 years of age and above. Since May 2022, some 120,993

new arrivals had been profiled across the three camps (as of 28 February) to establish needs and respond with food and other necessities. UNHCR and partners work with refugee leadership structures to ensure effective community-based surveillance to identify new arrivals in the camps.

UNHCR and partners conducted a vulnerability screening to assess various specific needs of the undocumented population to enable timely assistance to populations with critical specific needs during the drought response. There were 4,928 persons with specific needs assessed for support (1,502 unaccompanied and/or separated children, 1,378 persons with disabilities, 1,031 older persons at risk, 1,017 people with serious medical conditions as well as 90 persons with specific legal and physical protection needs). In response, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Handicap International (HI) are in the process of providing assistive devices and other material assistance.

Screening for cases of gender-based violence (GBV) took place for new arrivals through community leaders and partners, who identified cases and referred them to the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) for support. Self-referrals were also received, as well as cases identified by the DRC outreach team and medical partners, International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Kenyan Red Cross Society (KRCS).

As the numbers of new arrivals continues to increase, creating awareness of available health and nutrition services is being prioritized by UNHCR and partners. Outreach activities took place in Ifo and Hagadera for those settled in the outskirts and far from static facilities, while in Dagahaley two outposts were set up to accelerate uptake of lifesaving and routine high impact services, like immunization, antenatal care, nutrition and supplementation.

Surveillance continued to be enhanced for timely detection and response of health concerns, including for polio, measles, dengue fever and chikungunya. Close collaboration with the Ministry of Health was maintained, including through joint support supervision and refresher on the job training to improve detection, reporting and effective outbreak response. Weekly stakeholder coordination meetings were maintained to monitor response and to review action plans.

The water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) extensions in the outskirts of the three camps included five plastic water tanks (10,000 litres), 5,000 m pipelines, 26 tap stands with four tap stands each (104 taps), as well as 90 communal latrines in the three camps. Water trucking was undertaken with one to two trips taking place per day in the three camps.

UNHCR, through Relief, Reconstruction and Development Organization (RRDO) and KRCS, delivered 44 trucks of water to new arrivals on the outskirts of the three camps. There were 100 trips to host community sites, including Bula Banaan, Daidai and Darusalam in Dadaab township (53,000 people), Haji Aden (800 people), Gubakibir (500 people), and two police posts of the Ege dam and Hagarbul villages (40 police officers).

Garissa County experienced low coverage of drinking water, with only 23.8% of the host population being able to access treated water. Structured sanitation facilities were accessible to 46.8% of the population. The challenging situation is further compounded by the ongoing drought. In response to the needs, in particular in terms of water in the host communities surrounding the Dadaab refugee camps, UNHCR procured ten diesel generators to power boreholes to supply water to 16,467 individuals (2,745 households) residing in the host community villages surrounding the three refugee camps. Some of these pastoral families have been provided with water trucking support by UNHCR since 2022.

No transitional shelters were constructed for the new arrivals affected by the drought during the month of February. Low shelter coverage in the Dadaab camps was further exacerbated by limited funding and the restrictions on the construction of permanent shelters for refugees since 2016. Procurement of 1,000 family tents for the profiled population with specific needs was completed and is pending distribution.

**Kakuma:** As at end of February 2023 the reception centres (RCs) in Kakuma and Kalobeyei were still congested. Kakuma RC was hosting a total of 2,492 individuals and Kalobeyei RC 6,692 individuals. The essential services remain over-stretched.

Since January 2023, the operation has received a total of 308 unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs). About 185 UASCs (60% of 2023 caseload) have successfully been reunified with their families. Cumulatively, 5,304 children are currently in various forms of care arrangements within the camps. UNHCR continued to implement the best interest procedures in line with UNHCR guidelines.

Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) material was distributed in communities and key locations. Radio talk shows have been utilized to discuss GBV and SEA. Engaging host communities was initially challenging at the beginning and required involvement and support from local authorities, especially for the identification of areas of interventions. In February, 472 individuals (290 women and 182 men) including 23 persons with disabilities were reached through prevention work within the host community.

The construction of a temporary health facility at Kalobeyei reception center was completed. 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. Due to an increase in the number of new arrivals at the reception center, an additional waiting space will be needed in order to reduce congestion and improve patient flow.

During the reporting period, UNHCR supported Turkana County Government Ministry of Health with in-kind donation of essential medicines necessary for the treatment of core morbidities as well as medical complications in malnourished children. Additionally, a proportion of the host community living in Turkana West continued to access health and nutrition services provided in the health facilities within Kakuma refugee camp and Kalobeyei settlement.

UNHCR continued to provide potable water to about 250,000 refugees in Kakuma and Kalobeyei including new arrivals at the reception centers. Due to the ongoing drought condition, the yield of boreholes continued to decrease. A 50,000 litre of elevated water storage tank is planned to be installed at Kalobeyei reception center to improve water access. New arrivals have access to WASH facilities through construction of 18 stances of latrines, 30 bathing cubicles, tap stand and water storage. To improve water availability in Kalobeyei settlement (village 1) and Kakuma camp, installation of three (3) elevated steel tanks of 100m<sup>3</sup> capacity is ongoing.

UNHCR continued to provide water to about 25,000 members of the host population living in seven (7) villages within Kalobeyei ward through trucking 100,000 litres of water. For long-term solution, UNHCR and other humanitarian partners plan to extend more pipelines and construct water storage tanks to villages currently served by water trucking.

## **SOMALIA**

Despite the increased humanitarian response in Somalia, the country is still facing life-threatening food and water shortages due to the destruction of harvests, livestock, and income. Prices of essential commodities remain too high for many people to afford, and the combination of climate change and conflict displacement has left millions in need of food assistance.

### **SECTORAL RESPONSE**

In Beletweyne, in Central Somalia, UNHCR, in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), started the pilot of biometric enrolment of IDPs, including those affected by the drought. The goal of the exercise is to improve accountability by better collecting and managing IDP data, while also ensuring that humanitarian assistance is prioritized to reach the most vulnerable people in need, reduce duplication of assistance, and capture IDPs with specific needs, such as female-headed households, unaccompanied and separated children, and people with disabilities. While the pilot's target population is 2,500 households, UNHCR plans to expand the exercise to include additional IDPs in areas such as Baidoa and Banadir. In preparation for the exercise, UNHCR had trained 20 enumerators and procured the necessary laptops and equipment.

In Baidoa, UNHCR's Protection Desk monitors conducted community awareness raising on available services and referral pathways to access such services, reaching 410 individuals in five locations. The monitors received and referred 156 cases involving issues such as a lack of food, livelihoods, cash assistance, health care, and water. Based on referrals from the Protection Desks in four IDP sites, UNHCR, through its partner, plans to distribute emergency shelter kits (ESKs) to 295 households in Galkayo.

In Luglow, Kismayo, and Dollow, UNHCR has identified 1,400 vulnerable IDP households who will receive one-time multipurpose cash assistance to help them meet their basic needs, with each household receiving USD 100.

As part of UNHCR's GBV prevention and response for drought affected displaced population in Bossaso and Garowe, 400 IDP and 400 refugee and asylum seeker households were identified to receive dignity kits.

The Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster partners conducted 235 site-level stakeholder coordination meetings in Dinsoor, Hudur, Afgoye, and Qansaxdhere, all in South-West State, and discussed service delivery and advocacy for drought-displaced new arrivals. In addition, partners held site-level meetings with camp management committees (CMCs) and community members in Garowe, Qardo, and Bossaso in Puntland to allocate space to construct shelters and facilitate access to existing services for the newly displaced population.



*Families shelter at the Ladan site for internally displaced people in Dollow, Somalia. The catastrophic drought ravaging the country is putting communities on the brink of famine, with many thousands having been forced to flee their homes in search of food, shelter and safe drinking water. @UNHCR/Nabil Narch*

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