

DROUGHT SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE

July 2023



Water porter Abdimuktar Daud, 22, sells water to people who are internally displaced (IDPs) because of the drought in Abibacar IDP camp in Melkadida, Ethiopia. Hundreds of thousands affected by the worst drought in decades and by conflict have been displaced in search of food, shelter and water for their families and livestock. © UNHCR/Tiksa Negeri

Situation Overview

The Horn of Africa region continues to face a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need of assistance due to a combination of factors including drought, flooding, conflict, economic crisis and inability to access basic needs. In recent years, the region has been hit by a series of droughts, leading to crop failure, lack of water and food. Since earlier this year, the region has also been hit by heavy rains leading to flooding which has caused widespread destruction and displacement exacerbating humanitarian needs. The floods have also led to further health risks, including concerns regarding water borne diseases. The rains have by no means dissipated the severity of the situation and concerns regarding the effects of the drought in the region.

By the end of July, according to [UNHCR's drought dashboard](#) over 2.3 million people had been internally displaced in Ethiopia and Somalia due to the drought and over 251,000 new refugees and asylum-seekers had crossed from and into drought-affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

In **Ethiopia**, the Somali Region witnessed displacement, predominantly driven by drought and floods, with the situation in the Siti zone being particularly dire with the additional factor of recurrent clashes. As of July 2023, about 102,000 people, were living in (Internally Displaced Persons) IDP camps as well as with host communities in West Siti and needed emergency humanitarian assistance. Their critical needs include shelter, food, WASH, health, and protection, while the current rainy season, pause on food assistance, and limited response led to a further degradation of the humanitarian situation.

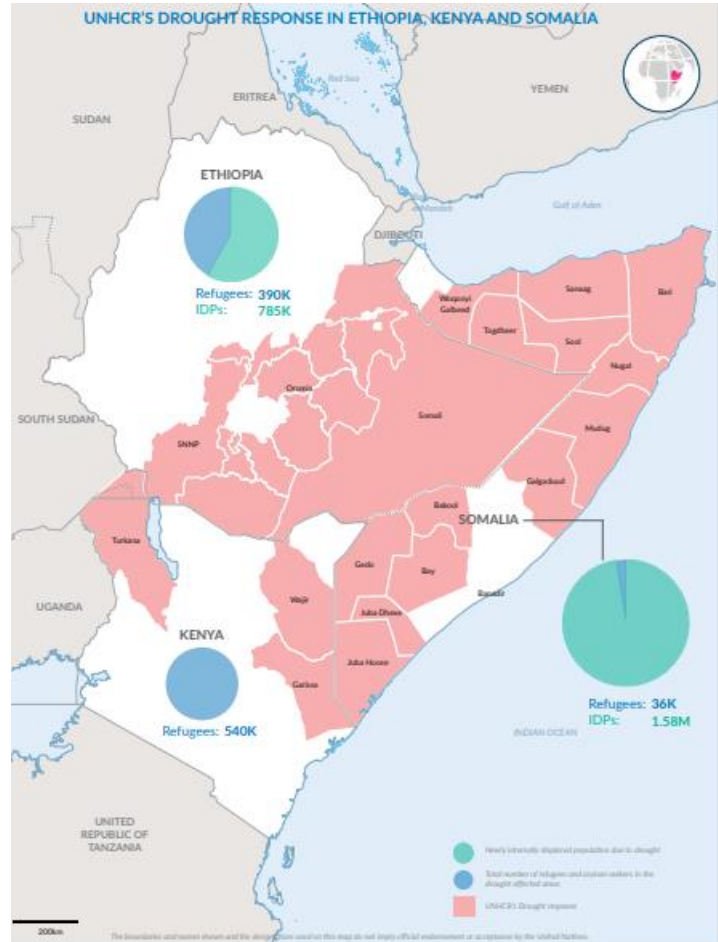
Despite improved security, access, and partner presence in 2023, the lack of resources is impacting the scale-up of humanitarian responses in Western Oromia, specifically in the four Wellega zones. Flash floods in East Borena Zone woredas recently affected 8,000 families, caused the death of almost 30,000 livestock and led to the loss of cultivated and grazing land. Insecurity in East Borena has also impeded road access to communities requiring humanitarian assistance.

In **Kenya**, the analysis of the July 2023 monthly rainfall performance indicates that several parts of the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) counties received low amounts of rainfall including the pastoral northeast counties, including Mandera, Wajir, Isiolo, Tana River and Garissa.

Over 6.4 million people, including 5.4 million severely food insecure people, require assistance in 2023. Additionally, the long rains in most arid counties led to flash floods, which had negative impacts on the local livelihoods and critical logistical facilities.

In **Somalia**, UNHCR continued to operate in an extremely challenging environment. Armed conflict, natural disasters, and climate shocks such as droughts and flash floods have uprooted thousands of Somalis from their homes. Better than expected rainfall and responses from the local population, authorities, and the humanitarian community have averted the worst outcomes of the drought, yet the situation is still worrisome. Rates of internal displacement owing to insecurity and climate change remain high. 8.25 million people require humanitarian assistance; 6.6 million are facing acute food insecurity; and 1.8 million children are anticipated to be [acutely malnourished in 2023](#).

According to the [UNHCR-led Protection and Return Monitoring Network \(PRMN\)](#), 70,000 displacements within Somalia were recorded in July. Out of the total displacements during the reporting month, 37,000 (53%) were attributed to conflict or insecurity, 30,000 (43%) to drought, and 2,500 (4%) to floods and other reasons. Food, protection, livelihood support, and shelter were the top needs of the newly displaced families. The top three regions that received the greatest number of new displacements in July were Middle Shabelle, followed by Gedo and Lower Juba. More up-to-date information about displacement and the protection needs of the IDPs can be found at the [PRMN online interactive dashboard](#).



UNHCR response

ETHIOPIA

SOMALI REGION

Refugees

In Melkadida, UNHCR and partners are gradually winding down the cholera response activities. The Somali State Regional Health Bureau is conducting a final review of the situation, tracing any missing or unreported cases as well as disinfecting treatment sites and centres. Overall, 721 people were reported to have contracted the disease, with the outbreak lasting for five months. Across the five refugee camps, the situation remained stable with no new cases reported in July.

UNHCR has initiated plans to conduct a second round of cash distribution for food to 425 households in Bokolmanyo, Melkadadida, Kobe, Hilaweyn and Buramino camps in the Somali region. UNHCR and partners

agreed to prioritize the elderly and families who have individuals with disabilities. Post-distribution monitoring was carried out for the first round of distribution that happened at the beginning of 2023.

The Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) was conducted from 27 June to 7 July in all five refugee camps in Melkadida. The results showed that the average Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) for all camps reached a critical 16.7% which is above the UNHCR target of 10% for refugee camps and WHO's threshold of 15%. Factors contributing to the high rate of acute malnutrition include only 34% of the children below the age of five are benefiting from the nutrition programme, 35% of young children are not receiving complementary feeding at the right age, and over 80% of children undergoing treatment for malnutrition being below the age of four.

The assessment also indicates that 42% of families have a low food consumption level, and 94% of families are practicing one or more negative consumption strategies to respond to the food shortage. The general food ration before the pause of food assistance in June only covered two-thirds of the days in the month, forcing families to rely on other sources such as borrowing, gifting, begging, buying food on credit, skipping meals, sending children to other families, and engaging in negative coping mechanisms.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

With the support of the Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO), a total of 2,079 vulnerable IDP families affected by the drought in Nogob and Erer Zones in the Somali region were provided with a one-time multi-purpose cash assistance as part of early recovery efforts. Each family received Ethiopian Birr (ETB) 7,700 (equivalent to 143 USD) as per the transfer value approved by the Somali Region Cash Working Group.

UNHCR concluded a one-off multi-purpose cash distribution at the Darso IDP site in Afder zone, Somali region. Out of 1,329 people targeted, 1,287 collected their assistance with each family receiving ETB 7,700 (equivalent to 143 USD). Post-distribution monitoring is delayed due to intercommunal conflict that limited access to the site. UNHCR identified two IDP sites in the Somali region, Liban zone for the provision of multi-purpose cash through protection profiling. A verification mission is planned to these sites before they are enrolled.

UNHCR distributed core relief items to 1,000 households in Somali region, Dawa zone. Each family received two blankets, two jerricans, two plastic sheets, two sleeping mats, and one solar lantern. In addition, the process of enrolling IDP sites for provision of multi-purpose cash has started. The selection of these sites was based on the protection profiling conducted and the findings from a recent assessment mission to the area.

UNHCR partners are delivering assistance as security allows, including with water, shelter materials, and multi-purpose cash. A complementary emergency response has been triggered to help meet additional WASH and health needs of 44,000 IDPs in the zone. ([OCHA Situation Report - July 2023](#)).

OROMIA REGION

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

Through UNHCR's partnership with Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Services Commission (EECMY/DASSC) for drought response in the Borena and Konso areas, IDP families in the Oromia Region will be receiving 7,500 ETB (equivalent to 139 USD) for income generating activities.

KENYA

DADAAB

Dadaab continues to receive new arrivals mainly from Somalia due to drought, insecurity, climate change, as well as lack of basic services in some parts of Somalia. By 31 July, a total of 32,467 refugees from among the new arrivals were officially registered. UNHCR and partners work with refugee leadership structures to ensure effective community-based surveillance of all new arrivals in the camps.

Protection

The Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK) border monitors recorded 2,938 individuals having crossed the border either to Kenya or Somalia through the Liboi, Abdisugow, Damajale, Degelema, Diif, Amuma, Dajabula, El-Wak, Mandera and Kulan border crossing points. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in the form of billboards on the necessary legal and humanitarian assistance were received and installed in strategic locations.

The registration of new arrivals continued in the Ifo refugee camp. A total of 5,173 individuals (1,029 households) were registered, raising the cumulative number of newly registered population to 32,467 individuals (7,377 households). Of the newly registered population, 95% are from Somalia and 3% from Ethiopia, and 2% are mainly from South Sudan. Food assistance was provided through WFP.

UNHCR, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the Department of Refugee Services (DRS) registration teams were trained on GBV safe disclosure and referrals to support information sharing about available GBV services. The survivors referred to DRC and IRC (International Rescue Committee), GBV partners, also received relevant services, including medical and psychosocial support. GBV referral pathways have been updated and shared with relevant partners. The frontline workers (including health) and the law enforcement officers in Ifo 2 were also trained on the GBV safe disclosure and referrals.

UNHCR and partners continued to conduct 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. The Vulnerability Assessment Desk, now integrated into the new arrival registration process, continued to identify individuals with specific needs including unaccompanied and separated children, supporting them with emergency social support to meet their immediate needs while simultaneously undertaking close follow-up to monitor their protection response needs.

Education

A new school was opened in the Ifo2 refugee camp with 2,206 newly arrived refugee children, increasing the cumulative number of newly arrived children (between 14-17 years) in schools across the four (4) camps since 2022 to 4,770 (2,137F; 2,633M). These children will continue being part of the school feeding programme to enhance their nutrition and promote class attendance.

Health and Nutrition

To enhance access to health and nutrition services, UNHCR and its partners continued to create awareness on available services among new arrivals. For populations settling in the outskirts, outposts and outreach services continue to be provided to improve coverage and reduce morbidity and mortality. Medical outreach services provide malnutrition screening, immunization, treatment of common ailments, antenatal care, deworming, and referrals for those requiring admission or specialized care. Surveillance activities were intensified, as the new arrivals continue to come into the camps, especially for polio, measles, chikungunya, and dengue fever. Coordination engagement of all stakeholders remains in place for effective responses in terms of prevention and control of disease outbreaks. Monthly blood drives continue to be conducted to boost stocks of safe blood and blood products in partnership with the Ministry of Health for screening.

An additional facility to improve access to health services was operationalized in Ifo2 to serve those who were relocated from Ifo. A total of 2,325 consultations were conducted in July.

A further decrease in acute malnutrition admissions was recorded corresponding to a 17% reduction in acute watery diarrhoea, from 4,568 to 3,765 cases. Severe acute malnutrition admissions were 518 compared to 812 in June while the moderate acute malnutrition admissions recorded were 1,028 compared to 1,430. The programme performance was maintained within the SPHERE standards. A total of 73 pregnant and lactating women were admitted into the supplementary feeding programme.

To increase active case finding at the community level in Hagadera camp, a total of 1,302 mothers and caregivers were trained to conduct family mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurements. In Ifo refugee camp, a total of 1,693 children under 5 years were screened, of whom, 181 were referred for management of moderate acute malnutrition, while 72 were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition and referred to the programme for treatment.

Shelter

By 31 July 11,265 (2,368 households) were relocated to the re-gazetted Ifo 2 camp. This exercise is led by Department of Refugee service, assisted by UNHCR and Partners.

WASH

Water for refugees in the Dadaab refugee camps was pumped from 25 borehole water supply schemes, stored in 42 elevated steel tanks, and distributed through a 243 kilometres pipeline network to 842 end-user points (also referred to as tap stands). The daily per capita water in July was 18.7 litres. Latrine coverage was 55 percent. The Kenya Red Cross Society made 30 trips of water trucking.

Host Community

Shelter

The prolonged drought had pushed many pastoralist nomads into poverty. Many have settled in nearby villages to find livelihood opportunities or alternatively receive relief food. UNHCR, under drought intervention, facilitated the relocation of host community residing in the now re-gazetted Ifo2 to block D and issued shelter kits in June 2023. UNHCR further opened the road network of 26.4 km to facilitate movement.

WASH

A borehole in Dadaab town that serves about 3,600 residents of Dadaab was found to be beyond repair due to an excessively corroded pipeline and pump. PWJ (WASH partner) had completed an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and the County Government of Garissa has obtained the borehole permit from the Ministry of Water of the National Government (Water Resources Authority). The drilling of the new borehole is complete, pending equipping (installation of water pump, generator and the solarization).

There is a need to mobilize urgent and concerted UNHCR and partner efforts for short, medium, and long-term interventions in the WASH sector, especially water in the host communities surrounding the Dadaab refugee camps. There are 16,467 individuals/2,745 households residing in the host community villages surrounding the three refugee camps. These pastoral families are presently affected by the drought, some of whom are presently provided with water trucking support through UNHCR since 2022. There were 22 trips to host community sites such as Bula Banaan, Daidai, Dadaab Hospital, Darussalam, Gubakibir, GSU, and Kiwanja primary school within Dadaab town with a population of 53,000 people.

SOMALIA

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

In the Togdheer region of Somaliland, UNHCR, through its partner, provided one-time cash for non-food items (NFI) support to 320 of the most vulnerable IDP households (2,236 individuals) to meet their basic needs.

The UNHCR-supported protection desks at 17 IDP sites in Bossaso, Badan, Garowe, Gardo, and North Galkayo in Puntland continued to serve as communication hubs, information centers, and referral points for the affected communities. More than 200 individuals visited the help desks to seek assistance or information, as well as raise protection concerns or complaints. Food, shelter, and medical assistance were identified as some of the top needs of the communities. The protection desk teams also conducted focus group discussions and household visits to identify new arrivals to share information about available services as well as protection concerns and needs.

In Beletweyne, the mobile protection desk visited eight IDP sites and identified 30 vulnerable households that needed services such as shelter, NFIs, water, and health. In the Sool and Togdheer regions in Somaliland, through the UNHCR-supported protection desks in Widhwidh, Yagoori, and 18 May IDP sites, 14 individuals were referred to different service providers for support, and 5 cases received one-time emergency cash assistance for protection.

Through its partner, UNHCR conducted rapid protection and shelter assessments in Hargeisa for IDPs who had moved to Nasahablood B and Daami IDP settlements. 534 households (3,194 individuals) were found to be most in need of an NFI response. The families were relocated from prior settlements to avert potential harm from floods and other hazards.

In Somaliland, UNHCR participated in the monthly Protection Cluster meeting, where key protection issues including Child Protection (CP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and housing, land, and property (HLP) were discussed. Besides the drought, the meeting also covered the inter-clan fighting in Horufadhi and Dhaalmayagag villages in Buhoodle district, Togdheer region, that broke out on 18 July, following a land dispute and in which at least one person was reportedly killed, several others injured, and over 1,900 individuals were displaced. Furthermore, within the Protection Cluster, sub-regional coordination meetings were held in Togdheer and Sool regions, where an observation was made about increasing CP and GBV cases amid unrelenting internal displacement and funding gaps. Emphasis was placed on urgent needs/gaps, including livelihoods, shelter, and WASH.

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