**Climate Change and its Human Rights Impacts in Somalia & the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Submitted to the** **High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Submitted by: Elizka relief foundation**

Introduction

Climate change is a key reason behind the deterioration of the human rights situation in Africa. Estimates reveal sharp decline in a gross national product of about 3%[[1]](#footnote-1), which exacerbates the suffering of 118 million people due to floods, drought, and heat[[2]](#footnote-2), especially in the Somali lands, which has recorded a gradual and continuous increase in temperatures between 30: 40 degrees Celsius for the period between 1991 and 2013. The effects of this rise still exist so far, with expectations to rise about 3.2: 4.3 degrees Celsius by 2080[[3]](#footnote-3). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, between 2: 3 degrees Celsius by 2050. In this context, elizka foundation presents an intervention on climate changes and its effects on human rights in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, across all political, civil, economic, social, and cultural levels, along with a set of recommendations.

First: climate change and its human rights impacts on Somalia

The Somali government is still trying to control the deteriorating humanitarian situation to combat and mitigate climate change. It made its first national contribution in November 2015, in line with its international commitments on climate change and human rights and with its development vision, in particular the Ninth Development Plan 2020: 2024, the National Climate Change Policy for Somalia for 2020, the Energy Master Plan for 2019, and the National Adaptation Action Program for the year 2013, the draft National Environmental Management Law of 2020[[4]](#footnote-4), the National Disaster Management Policy 2018, and the Strategic Water Development Plan 2019: 2023. Somalia aims in July 2021 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% with $6.96 billion, so that it could maintain low levels of its greenhouse emissions, estimated at 53.7 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, or about 0.03% of the total global emissions. [[5]](#footnote-5)

Climate change is still an obstacle to implementing human rights in Somalia at all political, civil, social, and cultural levels due to its geographical location in the Horn of Africa. Somalia has 80% of arid and semi-arid lands, 1.6% of the agricultural land area, and 69% permanent pastures. It has a gradual and continuous increase in temperatures for 1991: 2013 between 30: 40 degrees Celsius, with its expectations rising by about 3.2: 4.3 degrees Celsius by 2080, making Somalia uninhabitable[[6]](#footnote-6).

Climate changes in Somalia impact agricultural activities and livestock and their development contributions estimated at 70 percent of the GDP, as well as their economic and life contributions to 60% of Somalis, especially in rural areas[[7]](#footnote-7). It cost about $3 billion in losses, by about 50% of the GDP in 2018. The decrease in GDP to 1.5% in 2020 compared to 2.9% in 2019. The increase in high poverty rates by about 69%, and the estimated unemployment rates of 67% for the age group 14: 29 years, according to the statistics of the United Nations Development Program in the Arab countries[[8]](#footnote-8). That is due to its combination with some Somali political, security, social, health, and cultural challenges. About 80% of Somalis suffered from drought and its moderate and severe levels in April 2021, and nearly 3 million were displaced during 2016: 2021[[9]](#footnote-9). Between January and March 2021, it has1 million and 112,000 displaced people due to drought[[10]](#footnote-10). During May 2021 and August 2021, there were 11,000 families displaced from central Shabelle due to floods in Jowhar and Mahadi[[11]](#footnote-11). Somalis meet humanitarian and food needs and monitor 2.8 million who cannot meet the daily food needs due to drought and its protracted effects. It includes 840.00 children under the age of 5, and 50% of Somalis can only access basic water supplies, and 70% of the Somali family is suffering and deprived of safe and complete access and sustainable drinking water, according to survey statistics of more than 630 families in 18 Somali regions in 2021[[12]](#footnote-12). Since October 10, 2021, the needs of 8,200 families in Afmadow and surrounding villages in Jubbaland State have escalated[[13]](#footnote-13), and more than 113,000 an individual in the southwestern state needs[[14]](#footnote-14).

In the context of political and civil rights, the impact of climate change is to undermine development gains and peace pathways and increase the dynamics of tribal, political, and social conflicts over water, people, and water resources by increasing the rates of displacement and illegal migration and affecting living standards. The "al-Shabab organization" benefited from the climate changes in 2000: 2004 on parts of southern Somalia, and still is until now. The organization took advantage of this to recruit fighters and consolidate its hegemony in Somalia, which was repeated in 2017[[15]](#footnote-15).

Second: Climate change and its human rights impacts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, greenhouse gas emissions and their changes are distributed between agriculture, energy, and deforestation. In 1997, it ratified the United Nations Convention on Climate Change. In 2006, it established its national adaptation program. In 2005, it ratified the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement in 2015. Its national contributions and commitments to reduce greenhouse emissions by 17% during 2021: 2030 are conditional on external financing of $21.6 billion. It includes a coordination mechanism for National Determined Contributions, Climate Change establishment, the Monitoring strengthening, Reporting, Verification, and Investment Opportunities system[[16]](#footnote-16).

However, human rights violations caused by climate change are still increasing, it ranks 12th out of 188 countries in the list of most vulnerable to climate change and 5th among the countries least prepared for climate change. By 2050, the impacts of climate change will dramatically exacerbate, causing an increase in droughts by 100% during the rainy seasons and in temperatures by 2: 3 degrees Celsius.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Climate changes add additional burden and challenges for human rights and the activation of relevant international, regional, and national human rights obligations and development endeavors. Climate change threatens the development and realization of the right to adequate standards of living by jeopardizing agricultural activities and their development contributions. Agriculture makes up 30% of GDP, 70% of employment, and meets the needs of 90% of population, especially in rural areas**[[18]](#footnote-18)**. Climate change has also increased rates of food insecurity, estimated at 26.2 million people, 3.3 million children of whom are suffering from acute malnutrition[[19]](#footnote-19). Besides, it has increased the humanitarian needs for more than 15.64 million people and more than 5.2 million displaced people, as a result of natural disasters and armed conflicts, according to the statistics of 2020[[20]](#footnote-20). The impacts of climate change was clearly evident in the rains that occurred during October, November, December 2019, which caused flooding in 16 out of 26 provinces and affected more than 923,000[[21]](#footnote-21). In 2021, in eastern DRC, rains affected up to 13,600 families, destroyed 4,240 homes, destroyed 100 schools and deprived 396,000 students of the school in Tanganyika province of education[[22]](#footnote-22). In addition, volcanic eruptions in the mountains of "Nyiragongo"- which is considered the most dangerous volcano in Africa - have occurred, depriving 500,000 people of access to drinking water, as the main Goma reservoir and pipelines were damaged, displacing 400,000 people, and destroying about 3,500 homes. There were 31 people killed on May 22, 2021[[23]](#footnote-23).

Recommendations

Having analyzed and monitored the disastrous impacts of climate change on human rights in both Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Elizka presents a set of recommendations as follows:

1. The African countries, Somalia and the Republic of the Congo should combat climate changes by modernizing the institutional, legislative, strategic infrastructure. And they should develop shared continental visions to combat climate change and mitigate its impacts, reduce greenhouse emissions, prevent deforestation and criminalize deforestation, increase related financial allocations.
2. Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo must increase investment in renewable energies from the sun, wind, and nuclear energy and reduce dependence on non-renewable energy from coal, petroleum, and natural gas.
3. The African countries, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, should apply environmentally friendly agricultural mechanisms that are sensitive to climate changes and increase agricultural and tree areas.
4. Elizka recommends establishing early warning and monitoring systems for climatic and environmental changes, setting national and regional plans for cooperation and addressing climatic impacts and their potential risks existing in those countries, and trying to resettle the displaced and displaced persons in a safe and clean area.
5. Countries suffering from climate change must strengthen cooperation with civil society and the private sector, they should activate the principle of social responsibility in confronting, limiting climate changes, launching educational campaigns, raising awareness of the dangers of climate change, the possibilities of reducing and dealing with them.

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