

DRAFT

Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia - positive developments and remaining challenges since July 2022 to March 2023.

1. Humanitarian partners have since February 2023 recorded slight improvements in the food security situation in Somalia. This is attributed to the scaling up of humanitarian assistance, efforts by local communities, supported by a relatively more favourable 2022 *Deyr* rainfall season (Oct-Dec'22). A recent multi-partner food security analysis indicates that while famine has been averted for the time being, the humanitarian situation remains critical and alarming. The impact of the prolonged and extreme conditions exacerbated by conflict/insecurity, high food and water prices, and disease outbreaks are pushing an ever-greater number of people into reliance on humanitarian assistance.ⁱ
2. In 2023, 8.3 million people - nearly half of the population in Somalia require immediate humanitarian or protection assistance, including 6.6 million people experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity between April and June 2023, if response is not sustained and the current *Gu* rains (April to June) underperform as projected. This includes 1.9 million people likely to be in Emergency (IPC phase 4) and nearly 40,400 people likely to be in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). Nearly 1.8 million children under age five will face acute malnourished through December 2023, including 477,000 likely to be severely wasted.ⁱⁱ
3. The drought has displaced at least 1.4 million people since January 2022 (PRMN) with 245,000 displaced this year alone. ⁱⁱⁱAn estimated 3.8 million livestock have reportedly died since mid-2021.^{iv} Partners estimate that 43,000 excess deaths, half of whom are children under five, may have occurred due to the drought in 2022. This is higher than the first year of the 2017/2018 drought when 31,400 deaths were recorded.^v Recovery from such a crisis may take years with sustained climate-sensitive development complementing humanitarian assistance.
4. The 2023 *Gu* rainy season (April-June) has recorded moderate to light rains improving access to water with prices reducing and pasture regeneration. However, flash, and riverine flooding has affected over 175,000 people including 140,000 displaced across the country since March. The riverine flooding along the Shabelle and Juba rivers is also due to rains in the Ethiopian Highlands. If the rains intensify, 1.6 million more people may be impacted including 600,000 displaced – based on historical analysis. Cluster partners are implementing an HRP based national Flood Preparedness and Response Plan.^{vi}
5. Despite delayed funding in 2022, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) received 86 per cent funding of its US\$2.19 billion requirements and reached 7.3 million people^{vii}. As of April, the 2023 HRP is funded at 23 per cent of its \$2.6 billion requirements. More and urgent funding is needed for the 7.6 million people targeted to sustain the response and secure gains.^{viii} About 4.8 million people have been reached, with humanitarian assistance, so far in 2023.^{ix} The Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) activation of the System-Wide Scale-Up protocols in August 2022 – February 2023 and the extension for a further

six months from February – September 2023, continues to play an integral role in maximizing on gains with a focus on reaching the most vulnerable people with assistance. However, investments in durable solutions must go hand in hand with humanitarian response to sustain the gains.

6. The Independent Expert also notes with concern the impact of renewed conflict and insecurity that continues to impede humanitarian operations and aggravate vulnerabilities and displacements. About 429,000 people have^x been displaced by conflict and insecurity across Somalia this year including between 154,000-203,000 displaced by the fighting in Laas Caanood since December 2022.^{xi} The operational environment remains fluid, highly sensitive with limited access to Laas Caanood town and other affected areas. Humanitarian partners and authorities are coordinating closely and have stepped up assistance in accessible areas, but many more people remain unreached due to lack of access.
7. Notwithstanding the opening of access in new areas following Government offensives against non-state armed groups, insecurity, conflict, presence of IEDs, checkpoints, many of which are fee-bearing continued to impede humanitarian operations. Delays and denials of movement were reported at authorized checkpoints along all major access roads in southern and central Somalia. About 580,000 people reportedly live within territory controlled by non-state armed actors, largely out of reach. Partners are working with local authorities and communities to reach the most vulnerable in these areas. (*Source: OCHA Somalia*)
8. Incidents impacting the safety and security of humanitarian workers increased in the last half of 2022 452, constituting 69 per cent of the total reported for the whole year. Of these, 79 per cent are attributable to hostilities, which largely coincide with the onset of the military offensives in June 2022. This continues to impede humanitarian movement and operations, causing travel denials, delays, and mission cancellations. From July 2022 to March 2023, at least 51 incidents of violence against humanitarians were reported, including coercion, extortion, intimidation, harassment, verbal mistreatment, and physical assault. Some 13 incidents were carried out by local authorities, mainly the Somali National Army (SNA) and 8 by non-state armed groups, mainly Al Shabaab. (*Source: OCHA Somalia*)
9. To ensure the protection of civilians considering the planned military offensives, humanitarian partners have stepped up advocacy with stakeholders involved. Civil-military coordination structure are strengthened to ensures open communication lines between humanitarian actors and military forces. The humanitarian community is ready to provide Somali and incoming international forces with briefings on humanitarian coordination structures and operational modalities and humanitarian principles. Humanitarian partners continue to appeal and advocate with all sides to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, in ensuring the protection of civilians and to facilitate humanitarian access to people in need. Several protection concerns are likely to persist including indiscriminate attacks against civilians, destruction of civilian infrastructure, recruitment, movement restrictions and widespread family separation.

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- ⁱ <http://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-the-March-2023-Follow-up-Assessment-Results-25-Apr-2023.pdf>
- ⁱⁱ <http://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-the-March-2023-Follow-up-Assessment-Results-25-Apr-2023.pdf>
- ⁱⁱⁱ <https://unhcr.github.io/dataviz-somalia-prmn/index.html#reason=&month=&need=&preion=&pdistrictmap=&cregion=&cdistrictmap=&year=2023>
- ^{iv} <http://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-the-March-2023-Follow-up-Assessment-Results-25-Apr-2023.pdf>
- ^v <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/insight-action-examining-mortality->
- ^{vi} <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/ru/operations/somalia/document/somalia-ocha-flash-update-3>
- ^{vii} <https://fts.unocha.org/>
- ^{viii} <https://fts.unocha.org/>
- ^{ix} <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/about-principals/system-wide-scale-protocols-activated-somalia>
- ^x <https://unhcr.github.io/dataviz-somalia-prmn/index.html#reason=&month=&need=&preion=&pdistrictmap=&cregion=&cdistrictmap=&year=2023>
- ^{xi} <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-flash-update-no-4-situation-laas-caanood-sool-region-3-april-2023>