

APRIL 2022

CRISIS IN CONTEXT

SOMALIA DROUGHT

THE THIRD DROUGHT IN A DECADE

Somalia is experiencing the third drought episode in a decade, following three consecutive failed rainy seasons. The drought is compounding existing food insecurity among both pastoral and farming populations, and needs are spiking across the region – **13 million people are currently estimated to be facing high levels of food insecurity and water shortages.**

Historically rare climate variability, climate change, vulnerability, and exposure are creating an exceptional and extremely concerning level of risk for food security and livelihoods, which could drive rising levels of acute malnutrition and mortality through mid-to-late 2022, in a region whose population has grown by around 30% since 2010 to 184 million people. The drought has also exacerbated needs in areas that simultaneously face chronic insecurity, impeding humanitarian access and resulting in little to no provision of aid or basic services.

Data collected by REACH between December 2021 and January 2022 sheds further light on drought-affected areas specifically in the south and central districts of Somalia. **Findings depict a grave situation. People residing in the assessed settlements were reportedly experiencing severe needs and had limited options for coping if conditions continued to deteriorate - posing a heightened risk of excess mortality.**

I am a pastoralist. We have run out of livestock. It is difficult to live in the area. We have been displaced.

- Female focus group participant from Kismayo

AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IN THE CENTER AND SOUTH HAVE DISPLACED IN SEARCH OF FOOD AND WATER

The ongoing drought played a major part in triggering displacement and was cited as the primary reason why most people most moved out of 87% of assessed communities. Where new IDP arrivals had been reported (22% of locations), **new displacement was most commonly motivated by a search for food and water.**

Most people were reportedly skipping two or more meals a day in over half of the assessed locations (58%), and it was reported that people were relying on wild foods that are not normally part of the diet in 14% of these locations, to cope with a lack of food.

The environment from which I came from is very difficult. There is no food or water, and we are affected by the drought.

- Female focus group participant from Kismayo

Water to meet daily needs was insufficient for residents in most locations assessed (85%), and **rivers or ponds were the main source of drinking water for most people in nearly half (45%) of the assessed settlements.**

Drought also directly impacted livelihoods, as own production of food (i.e. livestock and farming) was reportedly the most common income source in roughly two-thirds of assessed settlements.

CHRONIC INSECURITY PREVENTS ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Ongoing insecurity due to the presence of armed groups, and the resulting lack of access by humanitarian actors, was found to further compound the needs of communities in the assessed drought-affected areas. REACH found that **in 97% of assessed locations, no NGO support had reportedly been provided in the three months preceding data collection.** Focus group participants noted that due to the lack of humanitarian assistance, residents of these areas were faced with two main options: either displace from the settlement, or when possible, rely on support from other community members, friends, or family.

Chronic insecurity also limits the availability of basic public services such as the provision of healthcare and education. It was reported that **in 72% of assessed settlements, people had no access to any healthcare facility, and in nearly all assessed settlements (94%), no state-run schools were available.**

Protection incidents were widespread, with 64% of assessed locations reporting an incident in the three months prior to data collection. Unofficial tax collection was most commonly reported, occurring in one-third of locations and taking an additional toll on households' resources. Particularly concerning, **protection concerns affecting women and girls were reportedly occurring in almost a quarter (23%) of assessed locations.** **Across these locations, marriage of girls under the age of 18, physical violence, and killing were the**

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most commonly reported types of incidents that had affected women. At the same time, protection services for women were reportedly unavailable in 78% of assessed settlements.

RELIABLE DATA IS NEEDED TO SUPPORT A COORDINATED RESPONSE

REACH has been actively supporting the humanitarian response in Somalia since 2012, by coordinating and implementing large-scale assessments which assess conditions in more than 1,800 IDP settlements on a regular, reliable and predictable basis to inform humanitarian actors on changing IDP populations, locations, and needs.

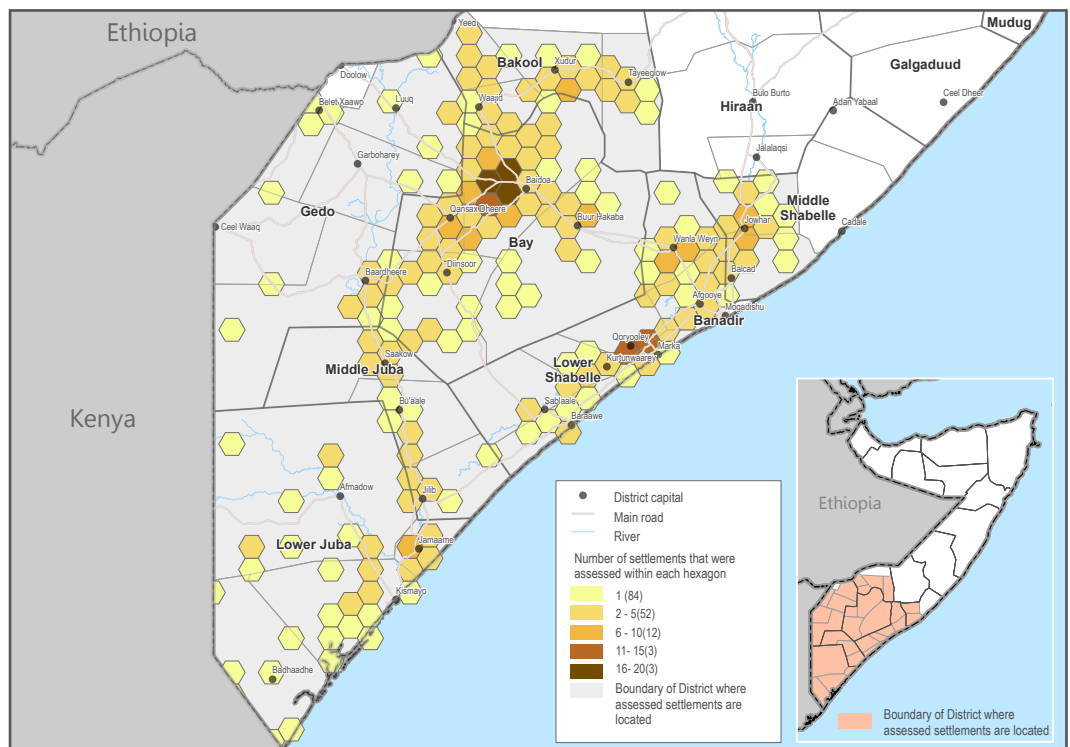
REACH, in coordination with UNOCHA and the Information Management and Assessment Working Groups implements yearly the Joint Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, which support the HNO/HRP processes. In

addition, REACH regularly conducts the Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) in high access constraint areas of the country, informs durable solutions programming through longitudinal aspirations surveys, and provides Post-Distribution Monitoring and M&E services to the Somali Cash Consortium.

The findings highlighted in this brief are based on data collected from the last round of HSM, which took place between December 2021 and January 2022. REACH teams conducted 1,040 face-to-face interviews with key informants (KIs) living in IDP sites around Baidoa, Kismayo, and Mogadishu. These KIs reported on 532 hard-to-reach settlements that they had either been displaced from or had visited in the three months prior to data collection, or on hard-to-reach settlements where their family or friends were still residing.

Additionally, 12 focus group discussions, disaggregated by gender, were conducted in Baidoa, Kismayo and Mogadishu during the same period.

Map at right: Coverage of settlements included in REACH data collection from December 2021 to January 2022. Hexagons have been drawn to avoid pinpointing the locations of individual settlements; the map legend indicates the number of settlements assessed within each hexagon.



About REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

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