

Overview of the IDP Situation in Somalia

Somalia is currently facing a peak in its uninterrupted humanitarian crisis stretching over 18 years. Drought, armed conflict, generalized insecurity and extensive internal displacement are the main drivers of the crisis. Some 3.6 million Somalis (including the IDP population), nearly half of the total population are in need of humanitarian assistance.

According to UNHCR, the total number of IDPs living in Somalia is estimated at 1.55 million. The major causes for displacement are: conflict, insecurity, economic opportunity, forced evictions, lack of social support and opportunity to return to areas of origin. Additionally, more than 500,000 Somali refugees are currently registered in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, Eritrea, Uganda and Tanzania.

A large majority of IDPs in Somalia are from Mogadishu. Since early 2007, nearly one million people have been displaced from the city. More than 500,000 of these have settled along the 30-kilometre stretch of road between Mogadishu and Afgooye, which is the largest concentration of IDPs in the world.

Region	Estimated IDPs	Region	Estimated IDPs
North		South	
Awdal	132	Bakool	5,567
W. Galbeed	35,232	Bay	39,716
Togdheer	25,363	Gedo	65,539
Sanaag	908	Lower Juba	25,243
ool	4,594	Middle Juba	6,838
Bari	28,014	L. Shabelle	496,459
Nugaal	5,629	M. Shabelle	48,821
Central		Banadir	364,988
Galgaduud	146,682		
Mudug	69,554		
Hiraan	50,618		
TOTAL		1,550,000	

In early 2009, Somalia experienced relative calm and an estimated 75,000 people who were displaced from Mogadishu during the violence of the previous two years returned home. However, since May 2009, in South Central Somalia, intense fighting broke out in Mogadishu between TFG forces and a coalition of opposition Islamic forces. The majority of the recent returnees to Mogadishu were forced to flee again, in addition to new waves of displacement. Between May and July, approximately 241,000 people were displaced throughout Somalia, out of which roughly 188,000 people were displaced due to insecurity in Mogadishu.

IDP population estimates are based on data collected through the Population Movement Tracking (PMT) managed by UNHCR with the support of the Protection cluster. However, as the PMT system is not specifically

designed to capture long-term cumulative data, it is difficult to verify the accuracy of these figures. Thus, the 1.55 million figure must be treated as a rough estimate only.

Special Vulnerabilities of IDPs

IDPs have special needs by virtue of their displacement. Generally, *en route* and even at their final destination, IDPs face violations such as: rape, arbitrary arrests, forced recruitment, exploitation, and other physical violence. Many IDPs are separated from their traditional support mechanisms, including clan protection, which exposes them to vulnerabilities otherwise not encountered. IDPs who traditionally belong to minority clans, once forced outside their traditional clan boundaries, often have little recourse to systems of justice when violations against them take place. IDPs rely on host communities for assistance and support. The current humanitarian crisis has stretched the host community's own coping mechanisms to the limit, thereby severely restricting their ability to assist. Consequently, IDPs currently face even greater challenges.

Humanitarian Coordination mechanisms and response

Despite tremendous difficulties, UN agencies and NGOs have managed to provide life-saving assistance to most IDPs in Somalia with special attention given to IDP settlements located around the Capital. IDPs living with host communities in rural areas or urban centres are usually targeted as part of the general caseload of vulnerable populations.

The Protection cluster, chaired by UNHCR, co-chaired by OCHA coordinates protection response to IDPs. The IDP working group, chaired by OCHA and co-chaired by UNHCR, is a coordination mechanism that focuses specifically on regional or thematic IDP issues and humanitarian response.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

“Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.”

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement 1998