

9 December 2011

## SOMALIA

# New displacement and worsening humanitarian and protection crisis for IDPs

Two decades of conflict and Somalia's most severe drought in 60 years have led to the United Nations (UN) declaring famine in parts of southern Somalia. In September, four million people – more than half the country's population – were in urgent need of food aid and other assistance, and it was feared that some 750,000 people could starve if the funding and security situation did not improve. By November, the short rainy season had begun but the food security of IDPs was expected to remain extremely poor for the remainder of the year.

The famine was threatening the lives of many of the 1.5 million people displaced within Somalia by the conflict. Malnutrition rates among internally displaced populations in Mogadishu and Afgoye were up to three times the critical emergency threshold.

Despite the withdrawal of the insurgent Al-Shabaab group from Mogadishu in July, fighting between Al-Shabaab and forces of the Transitional Federal Government supported by the African Union Mission in Somalia, and between Al-Shabaab and the Ahlul Sunna Waljamaa'c group, continued to cause displacement, limit the access of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people (IDPs) and others in needs, and prevent the return of IDPs to their places of origin.

In October 2011, the entry of Kenyan armed forces into southern Somalia reportedly led to further displacement, as people fled in fear of confrontation between the Kenyan army and Al-Shabaab forces. A month later, Al-Shabaab announced a ban on the operations of 16 aid agencies in areas under its control.

Somalia is among the African countries that have signed the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance to IDPs, but its application will remain a major challenge for many years to come given the prevailing insecurity, weak government institutions and limited resources.

# Somali Refugees in the Region

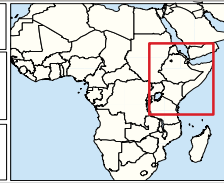
As of 21 November 2011



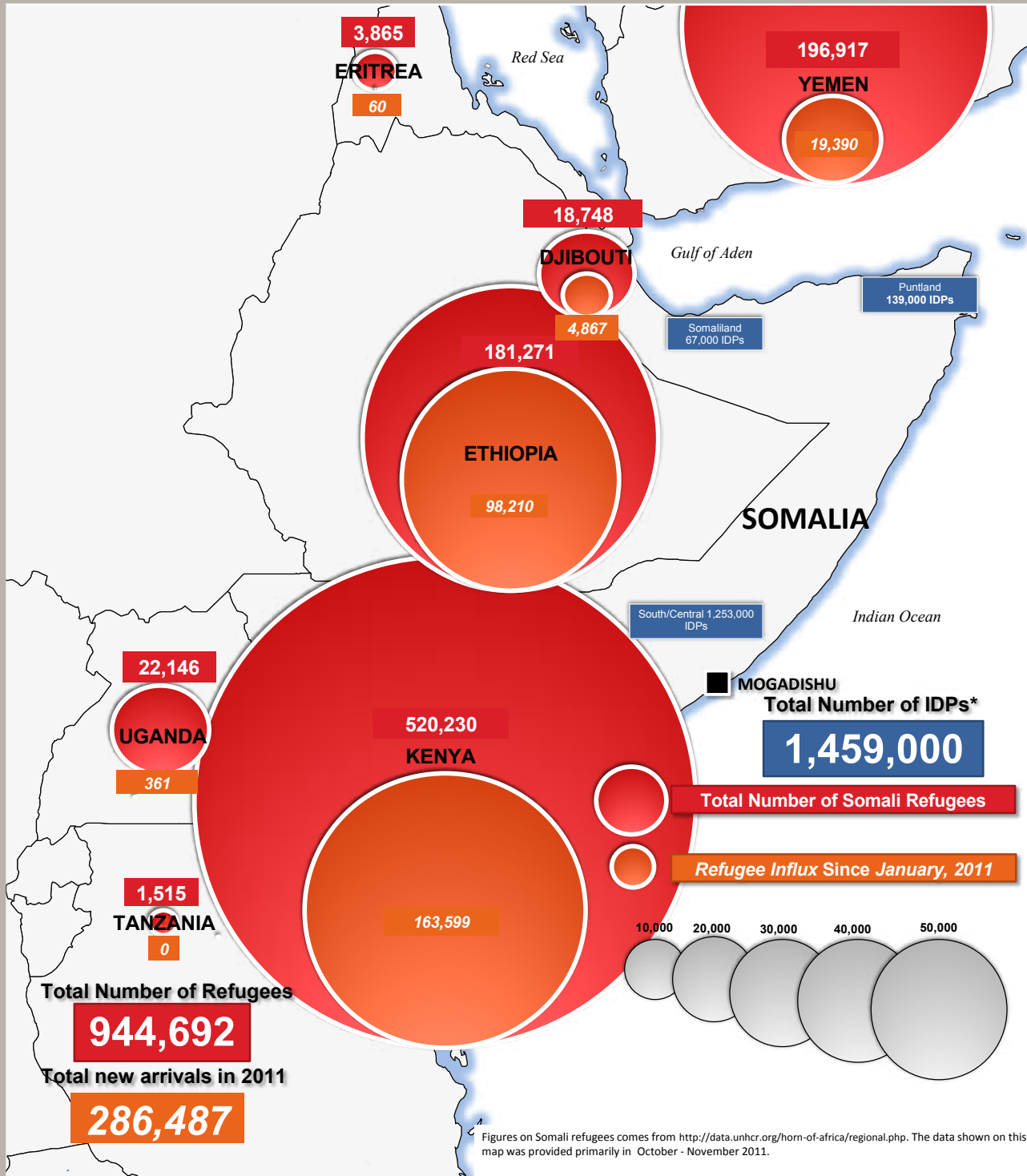
**UNHCR Somalia**  
Nairobi, Kenya

Sources:  
UNHCR Offices, Various IDP assessments including the Somalia IASC PMT project Global Insight digital mapping © 1998 Europa Technologies Ltd.

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Somalia\_IDPSS&Refugees\_Aug11\_A3PC.xls



Figures on Somali refugees comes from <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>. The data shown on this map was provided primarily in October - November 2011.

## Background to displacement

Since the collapse of the state in the early 1990s, many hundreds of thousands of people in Somalia have had to flee their homes. However, displacement is not a new phenomenon for Somalis.

Between 1977 and 1978, for example, conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia over disputed territory displaced up to a million people on both sides of the border. Larger numbers of people were displaced within Somalia from the 1990s onwards; after rebels of the United Somali Congress overthrew the dictatorship of Siad Barre in 1991, internal armed conflict engulfed the country as clan-based warlords fought for territorial control in most areas.

In 1991, the north-western Somaliland region of Somalia declared its independence. Somaliland has not been internationally recognised, but it has remained more stable than the rest of Somalia. In 1998, the north-eastern region of Puntland declared "temporary" independence, with the intention that it would participate in any Somali reconciliation to form a new central government (Conciliation Resources, 2010).

Following years of civil war and attempts by factions to form governing alliances, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established in 2004 and has since been the internationally recognised authority in Somalia. However it has never achieved control over the country. Religious courts became increasingly influential in Mogadishu as they provided access to justice and protection; the courts later united under one umbrella, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), and together waged war on the warlords and drove them out of Mogadishu in early 2006. In December 2006 Ethiopia, with the tacit support of the United States, sent troops into Somalia with the aim of defeating the ICU, which it accused of threatening Ethiopia's territorial integrity (Council on Foreign Relations, March 2010; Mohamed, Mohamed, 1 June 2009; Chatham House, 2007).

In 2007 the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was created by the AU's Peace and Security Council, with an initial six-month mandate approved by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1772 of that year.

Conflict escalated as Ethiopia's forces engaged in fighting against various Somali insurgent groups. In January 2009, Ethiopian forces withdrew following UN-facilitated peace talks between different Somali groups and the TFG in Djibouti. The AMISOM force remained, and the United Nations Security Council has since maintained its 2007 mandate (Council on Foreign Relations, March 2010; Enough Project, 3 September 2008).

Following Ethiopia's withdrawal, armed groups including Al-Shabaab and Hizbul-Islam continued to fight the forces of the TFG and AMISOM in Mogadishu. Another armed group called Ahlul-Sunna Waljamaa'c started competing for territory with Al-Shabaab. Ahlul-Sunna Waljamaa'c has been allied to the TFG and reportedly supported by the Ethiopian government, while both Al-Shabaab and Hizbul-Islam have reportedly been supported by the government of Eritrea, Ethiopia's great rival (ICG, 21 February 2011; CTC Sentinel, Vol. 2 Issue 3, March 2009).

### *Evolution of conflict in 2011*

In July 2011, Al-Shabaab withdrew thousands of fighters from and around Mogadishu, and the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia reported a widening of humanitarian space (UN Radio, 8 August 2011).

However, in October 2011, conflict was continuing unabated in south and central Somalia, causing large-scale civilian casualties and massive displacement. Apart from the fighting between government forces and their allies and insurgent groups, fighting between different insurgent groups and localised violence over water and pasture resources were continuing to cause displacement. Renewed fighting in Mogadishu between

government forces and insurgents during October led to more displacement from the capital (AFP, 23 October 2011; IRIN, 11 October 2011).

Kenyan armed forces entered southern Somalia in October, following a spate of abductions from Kenya by groups based in Somalia, and the intervention initially led to displacement and loss of life (Reuters, 1 November 2011; BBC News, 31 October 2011).

Humanitarian access has remained a major challenge and both the government and insurgents have continued to obstruct the access of vulnerable groups including internally displaced people (IDPs) to assistance, and to divert aid for their own ends (Reuters, 6 September 2011 and 17 September 2011). In July, Al-Shabaab reportedly granted a limited number of aid agencies access to the areas under their control (IRIN, 26 July 2011). However in late November it announced a ban on the operations of 16 humanitarian organisations in those areas (BBC, 28 November 2011).

#### *2011 famine*

The country was in late 2011 experiencing the worst drought of the past 60 years, and close to four million people were in urgent need of food aid and other assistance. The drought had destroyed crops, much reduced livestock levels, and exhausted people's resources. It also led to drastic increases in food prices, to levels well beyond the reach of vulnerable populations (FSNAU, 13 September 2011).

The accumulated impacts of the drought, the conflict and other episodes of localised violence led the UN to declare a state of famine in two regions of southern Somalia in July and to report that it had spread in September, putting an estimated 750,000 people in the country at risk of starvation by the end of the year (IRIN, 20 July 2011; OCHA, 15 September 2011).

While some media outlets reported that humanitarian agencies failed to act on early signs of the

looming drought to prevent it causing a famine, the situation was worsened by the lack of safe access of their staff to vulnerable populations in affected areas (Aljazeera, 22 July 2011; Guardian, 21 July 2011).

Follow-up surveys and analysis indicated that the famine would persist into December, including in areas hosting IDPs (FSNAU, 13 September 2011; UN News, 3 August 2011; FSNAU, 18 November, 2011). By November the short rainy season had begun but this did not bring immediate relief; instead it made remaining livestock more vulnerable and prevented people from moving to seek assistance (IRIN, 15 November 2011).

## **IDP figures and patterns of displacement**

Around a quarter of Somalia's population of 7.5 million have been uprooted by the violence and drought, with some taking refuge outside the country (UNHCR, July 2011).

Between December 2006 and January 2009, the number of IDPs reached 1.5 million (HRW, 2008; Bradbury, 2011). While many of them fled the fighting around Mogadishu between armed insurgent groups and the TFG and its Ethiopian and AMISOM allies, the continuing fighting which followed the Ethiopian withdrawal prevented the return of most IDPs.

The number of people internally displaced by the conflict between 2007 and November 2011 remained between 1.4 and 1.5 million. UNHCR and its partners have collected information through the Population Movement Tracking (PMT) system on the movement of populations in Somalia. Most of the populations identified as displaced are believed to have fled their homes because of conflict or violence (OCHA, 8 August 2011; IDMC interviews with UN and INGOs in Nairobi, May and October 2011).

The majority of IDPs are from Mogadishu and its environs, and many have taken refuge in informal camps in the "Afgoye Corridor", which reportedly hosts an estimated 500,000 IDPs, making it the largest IDP site in the world (The Guardian, 4 October 2010). Large numbers of IDPs have also taken shelter in the towns of Bossaso, Garowe and Galkayo in Puntland (Refugee Studies Centre, August 2011).

New displacement is ongoing in late 2011. The Kenyan army issued warnings to the residents of about ten towns in southern Somalia to prepare for its military pursuit of Al-Shabaab, which led members of the local civilian population to flee (VOA, 11 November 2011; Reuters, 3 November 2011).

## Situation of IDPs

### *Threats to physical security and integrity*

IDPs in Somalia face risks to their life, safety, security and dignity due to the living conditions they face and the ongoing violence and conflict. IDP camps have reportedly been attacked, internally displaced children forcibly recruited, and fighting has continued near camps.

In October 2011, up to five IDPs were killed and some 45 injured when a Kenyan army plane bombed an IDP camp in the southern Somalia town of Jilib. Despite denial by the Kenyan army, both Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported treating civilians injured in the attack (ICRC, 1 November 2011; Aljazeera 31 October 2011; MSF 31 October 2011; Reuters, 31 October 2011).

In March, Al-Shabaab fighters reportedly invaded the Elasha Biyaha IDP camp near Mogadishu and detained about 20 people including women, accusing them of committing crimes against the Islamic religion (Shabelle Media, 31 March 2011).

All sides to the conflict are reported of recruiting children into their ranks, including from IDP

camps. However, during a meeting with the UN Secretary General's for Children and Armed Conflict in November, the TFG has committed to end use of child soldiers (UN News, 28 November 2011; UN SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict, 13 April 2011).

Gender-based violence in Somalia is prevalent in IDP settlements and camps. Women have to walk long distances to collect water, exposing them to the risk of rape and other forms of violence. In the absence of effective protection mechanisms, perpetrators have been able to enter camps and commit sexual assaults against girls and women. Many cases of rape have not been reported because of the associated shame, and there are few support services for victims (IRIN, 11 November 2011; Oxfam, 10 September 2010; CRIN, 13 August 2007).

### *Access to basic necessities*

The cumulative effect of people's failure to access the basic necessities of life, including food, clean water, sanitation and health care was clear by 2010, when a global child mortality survey found that Somalia had the world's highest mortality rate for children (UNICEF, 16 September 2011).

IDPs' vulnerability to ill health was increased by their overcrowded living conditions, with water-borne infections expected to spread with the onset of rains, while according to UNHCR, the temporary settlements which most IDPs were living in did not provide sufficient access to basic supplies and services. According to a survey conducted by FSNAU in November 2011, the food security situation of IDPs was expected to remain extremely poor for the remainder of the year (FSNAU, 18 November 2011; MSF, 11 November 2011; UNHCR, 27 August 2011).

The health situation of IDPs deteriorated in 2011 as a result of the continuing conflict and famine. The country faced outbreaks of cholera, acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), malaria, measles and

pneumonia, most of them in the IDP hosting areas in the south (FSNAU, 13 September 2011).

#### *Food*

IDPs remain the group most affected by the food crisis in Somalia, as food remains inaccessible because of their lack of purchasing power, and because assistance cannot reach them or is diverted by parties to the conflict (Reuters, 17 September 2011; FSNAU, 13 September 2011; IRIN, 6 September 2011). The drought has led to drastic increases in prices, especially of livestock and livestock products, to levels well beyond the reach of vulnerable populations and especially IDPs (FSNAU, 13 September 2011).

Two of the areas in which famine was declared were Afgoye and Mogadishu, which had the largest internally displaced populations of Somalia. There were already prevailing high levels of severe acute malnutrition and under-five mortality among the most vulnerable populations, and the scarcity of food led global acute malnutrition (GAM) rates to rise further among IDPs, especially in these two areas. Among internally displaced children in Mogadishu, the global prevalence of acute malnutrition increased substantially to 39 per cent in July and 46 per cent in August, while among those in Afgoye it rose to 41 per cent in July and 46 per cent in August. Situations in which GAM rates exceed 15 per cent are considered critical emergencies (OCHA, 14 September 2011 and 27 October 2011; FSAU, 13 September 2011; IRIN, 30 August 2011; FSNAU, 13 September 2011).

#### *Other protection issues*

Education surveys in Somalia show that overall access to basic education has remained extremely low for a number of years. In 2009 gross enrolment rates ranged from 40 per cent in the north-west to just 22 per cent in south and central Somalia. According to a primary education survey conducted by UNICEF in 2006 and 2007, IDPs living in the Afgoye corridor and in settlements in Galgadud, Mudug and other areas had

among the lowest enrolment rates (UNICEF, 23 September 2009). The situation remains very poor in 2011; only an estimated 30 per cent of school-age children in southern Somalia are enrolled and the conflict is contributing to an even further decrease (UNICEF, 9 August 2011).

Only a limited number of internally displaced women and girls had access to sanitary materials, and often in insufficient quantity and on an irregular basis. The lack of domestic and hygiene supplies prevents many women and girls in IDP settlements and host communities from participating in community functions (UNHCR, 2011).

The situation of IDPs displaced from south and central Somalia to the autonomous states of Puntland and Somaliland is also of concern, as many are considered illegal migrants by the authorities there; they are either seen as a security threat in Puntland or considered "refugees" by Somaliland and therefore face stigma. In September 2011, the authorities in Puntland were planning to introduce a scheme to issue ID cards to IDPs from southern Somalia. Puntland officials reported that the scheme would help to distinguish between members of "militias and other criminal elements" and "genuine IDPs". Puntland's Minister for Home Affairs has denied accusations of discrimination against people from southern Somalia, but IDPs have reportedly faced discrimination in Puntland in the past (IRIN, 14 September 2011, 23 December 2009 and 21 December 2009).

IDPs are also the group at greatest disadvantage when it comes to access to housing, land and property (HLP). The displaced population of Somalia face a series of HLP challenges linked to the massive displacement that has taken place in the country during the past two decades. IDPs in settlements on privately-owned land have frequently been subjected to abuse from landowners while those in informal settlements like the Afgoye corridor lack access to basic services. The limited livelihood opportunities available to IDPs

expose them to additional protection risks (OCHA, 1 November 2011; Displacement Solutions, August 2008).

#### *Prospects for durable solutions*

Due to the highly volatile conditions in the country with ongoing conflict and weak government institutions, it is clear that there is at present no feasible housing solution available for displaced people in southern Somalia, and no realistic expectation of a process to reconstitute property or provide redress for HLP violations in the near future (Displacement Solutions, August 2008).

The ongoing conflict and violence in different parts of the country, as well as the continuing drought, continue to hinder the return of IDPs. However, in parts of Puntland and Somaliland where there is relative stability, local authorities in cooperation with international agencies have facilitated the local integration of IDPs where possible.

## **National response**

Repeated efforts to create a viable national government have failed. National institutions that might provide protection and assistance have become weaker over the years, and responsibility for protecting and assisting vulnerable populations has fallen to those communities hosting them, civil society organisations and the international donor and humanitarian community where their access is possible (Refugee Studies Centre, 8 August 2011; ICG, 21 February 2011; Council for Foreign Relations, March 2010).

In May 2011, the TFG signed and ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention) but is yet to deposit its ratification with the AU. Implementing the Convention will remain a major challenge for the government given the absence of institutions to provide security and services, and the scarcity of

resources (IDMC interviews with UN and INGOs in Nairobi, May and October 2011).

Assistance to IDPs in south and central Somalia is mostly provided by local businesses and civil society organisations in Mogadishu and Afgoye (IRIN, 9 February 2011). However, in Somaliland and Puntland, there is wider access to IDPs and the responses of local actors have also been mostly positive. The authorities in both territories have collaborated with national organisations and international agencies, and have made attempts to invest in livelihood initiatives and shelter for IDPs (OCHA, 25 October 2011).

In Puntland, authorities have provided land for IDPs in towns including Garowe and Bossaso for shelters to be put up. They have also provided training programmes, for example teaching skills in tailoring in Galkayo for internally displaced women to make sanitary pads, and in computer use, mechanics and electrical installation (IRIN, 1 November 2011; IRIN, 27 May 2010).

## **International response**

International engagement in Somalia has three aspects: encouraging a peace process through the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS); peace-keeping through the UN and AU's mandate for AMISOM; and humanitarian efforts.

The UN Secretary-General established UNPOS in 1995, to help advance the cause of peace and reconciliation through contacts with Somali leaders, civic organisations and the states and organisations concerned. UNPOS facilitated the 2009 Djibouti peace process and has assisted the TFG in institution building. However, UNPOS was criticised by some Somali analysts for not including groups such as Al-Shabaab in the peace process, especially those elements within Al-Shabaab that were in favour of peace (IDMC interviews with Somalia experts in Nairobi, 2009-2011).

AMISOM is mandated to support transitional governmental structures, implement a national security plan, train the Somali security forces, and help create a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Security Council has extended AMISOM's authorisation until October 2012.

Somalia has long presented a challenging operating environment for aid agencies, and in 2010 it was reportedly one of the most dangerous places in the world for humanitarian workers (OCHA, 2010). Nonetheless, according to OCHA, the humanitarian community made significant life-saving interventions during the first half of 2011; one million people received food assistance and some 145,000 acutely malnourished children and pregnant and breast-feeding mothers were assisted through nutrition interventions. Over 250,000 people gained access to at least five litres of water per day (though not always the SPHERE-recommended 15 litres per day) and benefited from emergency agriculture and livelihoods assistance. Emergency health care activities reached nearly 40 per cent of the two million people in need and approximately 42,000 pupils and teachers received emergency education assistance (OCHA, 8 August 2011).

Somalia is among the countries where the cluster approach has been activated and implemented. Currently, there are seven operational clusters, covering: agriculture and livelihoods; food; education; shelter; health and nutrition; water and sanitation; and protection. The cluster approach was formally adopted in July 2006 but clusters face planning challenges given the unpredictability of the situation; and insufficient and inconsistent field staff presence in southern Puntland and south and central Somalia. Their operations are managed from Nairobi, and this seems likely to continue given the current security situation in Somalia. Nonetheless it will continue to be necessary to seek ways of engaging with groups obstructing access to IDPs.

Funding was a challenge for many of the clusters prior to the declaration of the famine; as of August 2011, the protection cluster had received only 12 per cent of requested funding, the education cluster only 18 per cent, and the agriculture and livelihoods cluster only 23 per cent. The best-funded clusters covered food assistance (74 per cent) and logistics (71 per cent) (OCHA, 31 August 2011). By December, education funding had reached 62 per cent of the requested total and food assistance 94 per cent, but protection was still only 17 per cent funded and agriculture and livelihoods only 54 per cent (OCHA Financial Tracking site, accessed 9 December).

#### *Humanitarian access*

Given the conflict situation and violence between different groups, access in Somalia has always been a big challenge for humanitarians and continues to be so in much of the country.

In July 2011, after Al-Shabaab conceded slightly wider access to humanitarians, international NGOs and organisations including Kuwait Aid and ICRC were involved in providing assistance in areas of Lower Shabelle region under Al-Shabaab control (IRIN, 26 July 2011).

However, in late November, the operations of sixteen humanitarian organisations, among them six UN agencies including UNHCR, UNICEF and the World Health Organization, and international NGOs including the Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council and Concern Worldwide, were suspended following the new ban announced by Al-Shabaab (BBC, 28 November 2011).

In response to the ban, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs warned that any disruption of relief efforts threatened to undermine the progress made in saving the lives of people affected by the food crisis (UN News, 28 November 2011).

**Note:** This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on Somalia. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998, upon the request of the United Nations, to set up a global database on internal displacement. A decade later, IDMC remains the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement caused by conflict and violence worldwide.

IDMC aims to support better international and national responses to situations of internal displacement and respect for the rights of internally displaced people (IDPs), who are often among the world's most vulnerable people. It also aims to promote durable solutions for IDPs, through return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country.

IDMC's main activities include:

- Monitoring and reporting on internal displacement caused by conflict, generalised violence and violations of human rights;
- Researching, analysing and advocating for the rights of IDPs;
- Training and strengthening capacities on the protection of IDPs;
- Contributing to the development of standards and guidance on protecting and assisting IDPs.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

## Contact:

### Marzia Montemurro

Head of Africa and Americas department

Tel: +41 22 799 07 05

Mobile: +41 79 904 90 99

Email: [marzia.montemurro@nrc.ch](mailto:marzia.montemurro@nrc.ch)

### Nuur Mohamud Sheekh

Country Analyst

Email: [nuur.sheekh@nrc.ch](mailto:nuur.sheekh@nrc.ch)

### IDMC

Norwegian Refugee Council

Chemin de Balexert 7-9

1219 Geneva, Switzerland

[www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

Tel: +41 (0)22 799 0700

Fax: +41 (0)22 799 0701