



Somalia



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	About 1,500,000
Percentage of total population	16%
Start of current displacement situation	1988
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	1,500,000 (2009)
New displacement	At least 300,000
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, deliberate policy or practice of arbitrary displacement, generalised violence, human rights violations
Human development index	–

Violent armed conflict has continued unabated in Somalia for almost two decades, and particularly since late 2006. It has caused an ongoing humanitarian crisis, with one in six Somalis internally displaced in 2010. Fighting was intense, particularly in and around the capital Mogadishu, during the intervention of Ethiopian forces from December 2006 and after Ethiopia withdrew its forces in early 2009. After a brief lull, fighting has continued since erupting again in May 2009. By the end of 2010, over 1,000 people had been killed during the year due to shelling of civilian areas; there was no prospect of an end to the violence and all efforts at peace-making had been unsuccessful.

The almost daily fighting between forces of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its partners and insurgent groups led to continuing massive displacement. According to the population movement tracking system of the international humanitarian agencies in Somalia, almost 170,000 people were newly internally displaced in the first half of 2010 by fighting between, on the one hand, government troops and their allies of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM, made up mostly of Ugandan soldiers), and on the other, insurgent groups. A further 105,000 people were displaced from July to October. In June alone, some 30,000 people were forced from their homes in the central regions of Hiiraan and Galgadud. Another 60,000 people fled their homes in Gedo region near the borders with Kenya and Ethiopia, as a result of fierce fighting between two armed groups. Apart from conflict, the poor rains in much of the country also led to massive displacement of people and their livestock in 2010. This further reduced the food security of people already displaced by the fighting, given that most of them depended on host communities for food.

Most IDPs had taken refuge in makeshift camps across the country and the ongoing clashes made it difficult for them to return to their homes. The informal camp around Afgooye, outside Mogadishu, hosted close to 500,000 IDPs and was probably the largest settlement of IDPs in the world. IDPs in these camps faced severe health and nutrition problems due to the lack of access to adequate shelter, food, clean water or sanitation. Food security and nutritional surveys carried out towards the end of 2010 by the UN's Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit showed that the situation in IDP camps across the country was deteriorating.

Fighting sometimes took place very close to IDP camps, affecting the delivery of assistance as well as the security of camp residents. In May 2010, an insurgent group took over a clinic for IDPs in Afgooye camp, thereby depriving them of the already limited health care service. Internally displaced children continued to be recruited by some parties to the conflict, putting their lives at risk.

The fighting, and the ideological stance of insurgent groups who controlled most of south and central Somalia, continued to prevent the access of humanitarian organisations to vulnerable populations such as IDPs in 2010. IDPs in Mogadishu, Afgooye and Kismayu reportedly lacked food and other life-saving interventions as a result of these restrictions, increasing malnutrition and impacting on the health of mothers.

In 2010, insurgents in south and central Somalia imposed bans on eight humanitarian organisations, and these and other agencies increasingly resorted to delivering services through national staff and local implementing partners. Many activities were by 2010 planned and managed in Nairobi.

The actions of government troops and especially those of AMISOM also reportedly led to displacement in 2010. AMISOM was criticised for deliberately shelling civilian areas in retaliation for insurgent attacks. The TFG also reportedly interfered in the activities of aid organisations: in December 2010, it asked a number of international organisations to leave Mogadishu for failing to engage with it, but the directive was later reversed by the prime minister.

The UN and its partners adopted the cluster system in January 2006 to ensure greater predictability and accountability in the humanitarian response in Somalia. Nine clusters were active as of December 2010. However, their effectiveness continued to be limited by the insecurity in the country.

The Somali government was among the first to sign the Kampala Convention. However, it did not have any positive impact in preventing displacement or in providing protection for internally displaced Somalis in 2010.