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Somalia: window of opportunity for addressing one of the world's worst internal displacement crises



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Map of Somalia and the Horn of Africa



Source: UNHCR, December 2005

Executive summary

The suffering of hundreds of thousands of people displaced in Somalia during almost 15 years of conflict has long been ignored by the international community. Over the past couple of years, however, and in particular during 2005, a certain dynamic has unfolded within Somalia and among the involved UN organisations, which could eventually lead to a more effective response to the enormous protection, assistance and reconstruction needs of the country's internally displaced people (IDPs) and other vulnerable populations.

This renewed energy is partially due to the hope sparked by the transfer of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) from its exile in Nairobi to Somalia in June 2005. However, while the new government has already been embroiled in internal power struggles, the tasks it is facing are seemingly endless: localised inter- and intra-clan conflicts continue to cause displacements, the health and educational infrastructure of the country is practically destroyed, and while the food situation in the north has seemed to stabilise somewhat, malnutrition rates in the south remain alarming, with a new drought threatening to create another humanitarian crisis at the beginning of 2006.

Since the beginning of the conflict, people have increasingly moved to the main towns, in search of work, food, water and security. Today, urban migration is seen as an inevitable consequence of the conflict and of the impoverishment of large sections of the pastoralist population. In south and central Somalia, new, often temporary, displacement during 2005 affected roughly 50,000 families. In addition, the drought has already begun to generate new displacement, mostly into Kismayo.

Currently, the UN estimates 370,000 to 400,000 persons to be internally displaced with specific protection needs. Although a large majority of Somalis live in poverty, IDPs often experience additional hardships, in particular those who belong to ethnic minorities or minority clans and thus do not enjoy the protection of a dominant clan or local authorities. As a result, many have even less access to water and food, economic opportunities, health care and education than the local population. Displaced women and children are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and violence.

Access to land and water has been one of the main causes of conflict. Land grabbing and expropriations have left many displaced deprived of their lands and unable to return. Creating a functioning property dispute resolution system is a crucial prerequisite for long-term stability and for enabling the return of many IDPs to their lands in south and central Somalia.

Lack of access to land during displacement is an important cause of insecurity among the displaced living in overcrowded settlements and often paying rent for their small plots. Access to water, food, economic activities, health facilities and schools is usually minimal as well. In Bossaso and Garowe (Puntland), efforts to resettle IDPs and returnees in more permanent settlements are progressing, growing out of the realisation that the prospects of return will remain minimal for most of the displaced. In Somaliland,

the local authorities are reluctant to allocate land to IDPs, mainly for fear of creating a pull factor.

In several towns of south and central Somalia, IDPs live in public buildings which the TFG or local authorities intend to take over. Many IDPs thus face eviction without being offered alternative living space.

Humanitarian access to Somaliland has generally increased over the past years due to a more stable security situation. The result is some improvement of living conditions, particularly in Hargeisa, where most humanitarian activities concentrate. In Puntland, access is possible, but the international presence is still weak. Access to the vast majority of IDPs in south and central Somalia remains largely insufficient, inconsistent and subject to the at times rapidly changing security situation. After a serious security incident in October 2005, the international community had to relocate from Kismayo at a time when the worsening drought and impending evictions of IDPs from public buildings would have required an international presence for aid delivery and monitoring purposes. Access to Mogadishu has been severely restricted for years, while the subsistence needs of the IDPs living in the city are particularly acute.

Despite the enormous challenges ahead, there is renewed hope among the war-tired Somalis and the international community that the TFG will be able to instill some degree of stability in south and central Somalia, and maintain that of Puntland and Somaliland. The UN Country Team has taken concrete steps to consolidating the efforts of different organisations and to focus them on the particular protection needs of the most vulnerable populations, including the displaced. Because of the volatile security situation, the international donor community has been extremely reluctant to finance projects in Somalia.

It is evident that the Somali people themselves will ultimately have to find the political will to join their efforts constructively in order to bring stability to the country. But although they have shown remarkable resilience, they have little chance of getting out of the cycle of poverty and war with the low level of assistance currently allocated to their country. The international community must show sincerity in its stated aim of helping Somalia create its own future by providing the necessary financial and political support to the fragile peace- and state-building process, which is a prerequisite for finding durable solutions for the country's displaced populations.

Key recommendations

To the national authorities

The authorities of Somalia (including the de facto authorities of Somaliland) should:

- abide by their national and international obligations towards ensuring adequate protection and assistance to all citizens, including internally displaced people;
- recognise the particular protection needs of internally displaced people;
- focus on protection for displaced women and minority groups who are particularly exposed to serious human rights abuses;
- continue, and expand, the demobilisation and reintegration of militia forces, particularly in south and central Somalia;
- establish a functioning judicial system to protect the rights and freedoms of the Somali citizens, including the different minority groups, ethnicities, gender and age groups;
- create urban development plans in order to identify land for IDPs during displacement and in order to regularise situations of permanent irregular urban settlements.

The Transitional Federal Government should:

- make concerted efforts to resolve the differences between the Jowhar and Mogadishu factions, in order to improve the security situation and thus humanitarian access to Somalia;
- in collaboration with the UN and other international organisations, develop a national strategy for the return and reintegration of IDPs, based on needs assessments determining the preferred durable solution of the displaced;
- address the complex issue of property restitution to returning IDPs.

The Somaliland authority should:

- revoke the eviction notice it issued in 2003 and clearly communicate the revocation;
- support more actively efforts to allocate land to IDPs.

To the UN and the international humanitarian community

The UN and the international humanitarian community should:

- create the capacity and infrastructure to put into operation the Joint UN Strategy for IDPs for all IDP-related programmes in Somalia;
- encourage the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish an office in Nairobi in order to monitor human rights issues in Somalia;
- increase operational capacity in south and central Somalia, in order to improve the level of access and assistance to the most vulnerable, including IDPs;
- conduct a country-wide profiling of the IDP population in order to identify and subsequently provide IDPs with adequate assistance, and to obtain an understanding of the possibilities for promoting solutions to displacement;
- assist the TFG in developing a protection system by
 - developing a functioning and protection-trained police force;
 - developing best practices in protection activities for IDPs, in particular legal protection from discrimination;
 - providing protection training to local authorities in a consistent manner;
- actively support the TFG in developing areas of stability conducive to the return or local integration of the internally displaced, by:
 - stepping up support to communities in stable and secure areas of the county;
 - directly assisting grassroot organisations and local authorities showing commitment to good governance;
 - identifying civil society actors including elders who can support the process;
- provide financial assistance, capacity-building and training to local human rights, humanitarian and development organisations.

To donor countries

Donors should:

- show their appreciation of the positive efforts towards stabilisation and reconciliation by the TFG and the UN by increasing their financial support to the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and by generously funding Somalia during the June 2006 donor conference;
- significantly raise development assistance to facilitate the integration of the over 800,000 returned refugees in Somaliland and the 200,000 returned refugees in Puntland in order to ease social tensions.

Background and political developments

The collapse of the Somali state has its roots in a military coup in 1969, led by General Mohamed Siad Barre. He installed a dictatorial regime, whose divide-and-rule policy succeeded in polarising grievances into clan-based wars and eventually splintered its own support-base. In 1991, the state collapsed and Barre was overthrown. The loose anti-government coalition quickly fell apart and proved incapable of changing pre-established war patterns. Thereafter, the country descended into a full-fledged civil war and has remained without an effective central government for 14 years. Various warlords fought over the control of key resources, embedded in the capital Mogadishu, port-towns, and the fertile lands between the Juba and Shabelle rivers. In 1992, a ceasefire between the main warring parties was agreed. As fighting continued into 1993, the UN deployed its largest ever peacekeeping operation (UNOSOM II). It operated without the consent of the parties within the country (ODI, October 2005) and ended in fiasco; the UN's serious misjudgment culminated in the killing of hundreds of Somali civilians and dozens of foreign peacekeepers in Mogadishu. The UN eventually pulled out in 1995.

In 2000, a Transitional National Government (TNG) was created at peace talks in the Djibouti town of Arta. The TNG never gained broad-based recognition and faced continued opposition from all sides. It was unable to assert control over Mogadishu and attempts to impose its authority outside the capital were unsuccessful. Between 2001 and 2004, clans and factions grouped under the umbrella of the Somalia Restoration and Reconciliation Council and Mogadishu-based warlords fought against TNG forces and its allied militias, resulting in heightened armed conflict in southern and central Somalia.

In late 2002, after more than a dozen failed peace initiatives, a National Reconciliation Conference was launched under the mediation of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and a temporary ceasefire was agreed. After two years of negotiations in Mbagathi, Kenya, the conference agreed on the composition of a new parliament (Transitional Federal Assembly, TFA), which in October 2004 elected Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the former leader of the self-declared autonomous region of Puntland, as Transitional Federal President of Somalia for a period of five years. In December 2004, the TFA approved Ali Mohamed Gedi as Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). An equal share of parliamentary seats was allocated to the main clans of southern/central Somalia (Darood, Hawiye, Digil-Mirifle and Dir) and the 31 remaining seats to minorities. Somaliland was not represented. The planned 12 per cent ratio for women was not met.

In June 2005, the new government and parliament moved to Somalia. While President Yusuf, Prime Minister Gedi and a number of cabinet members relocated to Jowhar, some 90 km to the north of Mogadishu, the rest of the government, along with the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) moved to the capital itself. Tensions between Yusuf and his main rival, the TFP speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, led to some build-up of military power, particularly the gathering of troops loyal to the president in Jowhar during September 2005 (ODI, October 2005, p.23). Nevertheless, the TFG has taken positive

steps towards accepting its responsibility and accountability towards the Somali population. Talks between the Jowhar and Mogadishu factions, initiated in June 2005, were beginning to show encouraging results in early 2006.

The TFG faces enormous tasks. It will have to sustain reconciliation and reconstruction throughout the country, consolidate the ceasefire, demobilise and reintegrate about 55,000 militiamen, re-build a functioning judicial system, control weapons, form a police and military force and establish mechanisms to share internal revenues, among others (IRIN, 26 October 2004; IRIN, 8 September 2004).

The transitional government is increasingly involved in local reconciliation processes, which are hoped to eventually contribute to enhancing the humanitarian community's access to needy populations. The international community acknowledges that it needs to be more proactive in providing assistance to existing pockets of security, and to supporting efforts of Somali civil society, including elders and businessmen interested in establishing a more peaceful and secure environment (OCHA, 30 November 2005).

Puntland

Puntland, in the north-east of Somalia, declared itself an autonomous region in 1998, under the leadership of Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the current president of Somalia. Puntland experienced a political crisis in 2001 when Yusuf refused to hand over power to his successor. The ensuing armed conflict was settled in May 2003 by a power-sharing agreement through which cabinet posts were assigned to the opposition and rival militias were integrated into the army. Yusuf, who seemed to derive most of his power from military strength, appeared to have devoted most of his energies to his presidential ambitions. Therefore, and for reasons of limited resources and capacity, the Puntland administration has never been really functional (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003). After Yusuf's election as president of Somalia, General Mohamud Muse Hersi "Adde" was elected president of Puntland in January 2005 (ODI, October 2005).

While Puntland is considered more secure than south and central Somalia, the current political and security situation remains tense in many parts of the region. There is fear of a military build-up and recruitment of troops to Jowhar, which would put an end to negotiations between the two government factions. In addition to potential political instability, Puntland is constantly faced with natural disasters like droughts, cold rains and floods. The urban migration of impoverished pastoralists, the arrival of many IDPs from south and central Somalia, and the recent trend of Ethiopian migrants arriving in Bossaso have stretched the coping mechanisms of Puntland's towns to the limits (OCHA, July 2005).

Somaliland

The self-declared, internationally unrecognised Republic of Somaliland in the north-west has been the most successful in establishing peace and moving towards reconstruction. Somaliland proclaimed its independence from Somalia in 1991, following a brutal campaign of repression of the region's rebel movement by the Barre regime, during which

up to 1.5 million people were displaced and hundred of thousands fled abroad (USCR, 2001). The regime's counter-insurgency operation had plunged the region into a civil war in 1988, and the systematic targeting of the region's Isaaq clan members, seen as supporters of the insurgency, led to charges of genocide (IGAD/UNHCR/UNDP, December 2000, p.7). Fighting within Somaliland, between forces of President Mohammed Ibrahim Egal and rebel militias continued until 1995. In 1997, a new constitution was adopted and Egal confirmed as president. In 2001, the Somalilanders reaffirmed their vote for independence by referendum and held peaceful presidential elections in 2003, laying the basis for a multi-party system. Somaliland had refused to take part in the Mbagathi negotiations, reiterating its claim to independence.

Since 1991, Somaliland has re-built cities and established a government with hardly any external support (UN, 18 November 2004, p.7). Peaceful and largely fair parliamentary election in September 2005 bolstered the entity's claim to international recognition of its independence, which the world community has so far refused to grant, partly because it fears creating a precedent.

Over the past 15 years, Somaliland has reintegrated over 800,000 returning refugees. As in Puntland, these high numbers of returns strain the absorption capacity of towns like Hargeisa and Burao. The majority of the returnees live alongside IDPs in over-crowded settlements.

The two regions bordering Somaliland and Puntland, Sool and Sanaag, belong officially to Somaliland but are claimed by Puntland, on the basis of clan affiliation. The inhabitants of the two regions are sharply divided in their loyalties. During September and October 2004, an unconfirmed number of people died in clashes between Puntland and Somaliland over the contested status of two border regions (IRIN, 1 November 2004). During 2005, political tensions persisted, which is why the Somaliland authorities decided against the participation of the most volatile areas of Sool and Sanaag in the September 2005 parliamentary elections. The release of the remaining detainees from the Sool and Sanaag conflict in late 2005 is a positive sign indicating that both the Somaliland and Puntland authorities appear to be committed to creating stability in the region (OCHA, 6 December 2005).

Regional and international context

Somalia's neighbours have played ambivalent roles, at times mediating peace negotiations and at times involved in virtual proxy wars in Somalia (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.15). The UN Security Council has repeatedly condemned the continued flows of weapons to Somali factions from all neighbouring countries, which violate the 1992 arms embargo, fuel conflict and risk jeopardising lengthy negotiation efforts. Nevertheless, in November 2005, IGAD called for the lifting of a 2002 UN arms embargo, arguing that as a sovereign state, Somalia had the right to recruit, train and equip law enforcement agents (IRIN, 30 November 2005).

Over the past few years, the international community has started to show renewed interest in reconstructing Somalia. Contributing factors are a large Somali diaspora in Western countries, a desire to return refugees and rejected asylum-seekers, and fears that the lawless environment in Somalia could be a breeding-ground for terrorists. The current state building process is therefore much in the interest of the international community. At the same time, the financial means made available for the process are a far cry from the actual sums needed to recreate a Somali state.

In order to function properly, the transitional government needs assistance in terms of capacity building and training. There is an almost tangible sense of disappointment among members of the TFG with regard to the reluctance of international donors to support its activities. International organisations and donors cite security issues as the main reason for their limited engagement. In their view, the TFG will have to demonstrate its good intentions and show progress in broadening its legitimacy, which will in turn enable organisations to substantiate their pledges for financial support to the reconstruction. However, without bold international support at this crucial stage, the TFG may not be able to consolidate its authority and build up functioning state structures and the country may well plunge back into anarchy (Interviews with agencies in Nairobi and Jowhar, October 2005; telephone interview with UNICEF representative, December 2005).

Numbers and recent displacements

At the end of 2005, the UN estimated that of all the internally displaced in Somalia, 370,000 to 400,000 are the most vulnerable, out of a population of 6.8 million (OCHA, 30 November 2005). Those IDPs form the target group for UN agencies. Tracking displaced populations in Somalia is particularly difficult as virtually all Somalis have been displaced by violence at least once in their life. In addition, many IDPs are dispersed, or living in unplanned settlements alongside destitute rural and urban populations rather than in camps. The displacement occurs in a society, in which two thirds of the population led a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence, traditionally moving with their herds to and from grazing and agricultural lands, water sources and trading centres. Wars and natural disasters have complicated and hampered these seasonal migrations.

An estimated 40,000 IDPs live in Somaliland, most of them in Hargeisa and Burao (OCHA, 22 November 2005). Puntland hosts an estimated 60,000 IDPs (OCHA, Puntland, 22 November 2005). The large majority of them live in urban agglomerations: over 21,000 IDPs live in Bossaso, some 12,600 in Garowe and around 10,000 in Galkayo. The rest live in smaller towns or in spontaneous settlements along major roads.

Mogadishu has attracted the largest population of displaced people, despite the volatile security situation and extremely poor living conditions in the city. Two recent surveys estimate the IDP population at 233,000 and 300,000 respectively (FUPAG, 30 May 2005; UNICEF, October 2005), while another estimate puts the number of IDPs in Mogadishu at 250,000 (OCHA, South/Central, 22 November 2005). The displaced live in some 200

settlements of varying sizes. Access to basic infrastructure or income-generating opportunities is minimal. Some 90,000 IDPs are reported to live along the Shabelle river, Gedo and Lower Juba, 15,000 of them in Kismayo (OCHA, South/Central, 22 November 2005). There are strong indications that the recent drought has increased the number of IDPs in Kismayo, but there is no international presence in Kismayo to confirm this trend.

For 2006, UN OCHA plans a countrywide assessment of the IDP population in Somalia. In doing so, the UN coordination body hopes to be in a position to subsequently identify the origins and needs of the most vulnerable, to target humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas of south and central Somalia where humanitarian access continues to be very limited, and to improve strategies for durable solutions.

New displacement in 2005

Since 1995, there have been few large-scale displacements in Somalia. However, tens of thousands of people are temporarily displaced by localised conflicts every year. According to ICRC, some 40,000 families were newly displaced between January and August 2005 alone, most of them due to conflict situations. The majority of the displaced remained in their home region and were able to return after a few weeks or months (Interview with ICRC representative, Nairobi, October 2005, and email, November 2005). Despite the peace process launched in 2002, intermittent conflicts have made the ceasefire meaningless, preventing people from cultivating their lands and forcing thousands of Somalis to flee again, mostly in the regions of Mogadishu, Gedo, Juba, Shabelle and Galgaduud.

In **El Wak** (Gedo), continued violence between the Marehan and Gare clans increased the number of displaced from 10,000 in 2004 to 15,000 at the end of 2005, while many fled across the border into Kenya. After a ceasefire agreement in 2005, an unconfirmed number of IDPs have returned (OCHA, August 2005). Gedo bordering Kenya and Ethiopia is affected by regional political instability hampering the delivery of assistance and food, and little improvement is expected for the first half of 2006. Increased tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea may have negative repercussions for the Somali border region (OCHA regional support office, November 2005). Clan fighting in Idale, Baidoa district, caused the displacement of around 1220 households in August 2005 (OCHA, August 2005). While the situation in **Mogadishu** seems to have stabilised somewhat, violent inter- and intra-clan conflicts involving, among others, the Abgaal and Hawiye clans, continue to displace substantial numbers of people who often return later, resettle elsewhere in Mogadishu, or move to safer areas in the north. (AFP, 9 July 2005; OCHA, 31 May 2004; 9 July 2004).

The Indian Ocean **tsunami** struck the Somali coast on 26 December 2004 and caused the displacement of some 44,000 people. Among those affected were IDPs and seasonal migrants in search of work in the fishing industry. In towns like Bossaso and Garowe an increase in new arrivals was registered following the tsunami. As a result, donor interest has increased and a number of NGO have stepped up their activities since the tsunami, making attempts to also include vulnerable non-tsunami affected populations in their operations (OCHA, May 2005).

Causes and patterns of displacement

Since the 1970s, Somalia has drifted from one emergency to another: civil and inter-state wars, fragmentation, repression and famine. The conflict, which has claimed up to half a million lives since 1991, has centred on control over power and resources, notably land, water, the livestock trade and aid. Warlords have deliberately displaced people, looted and destroyed food stocks, mined watering places, grazing lands and major trading roads, and destroyed medical and administrative infrastructures, in order to prevent people from other clans from sustaining a livelihood. At the height of fighting in 1992, up to two million people were internally displaced and another million had fled to neighbouring countries (UNICEF, 10 December 2003).

The most ravaged regions are the southern and central areas and the main ports of Mogadishu and Kismayo. Armed factions have fought to gain control over their supposed “native territories”, often forcing local minority groups and clans – many of them farmers – to either become subservient, or to leave. The farming minorities traditionally inhabiting the fertile riverine lands in the south have been worst affected by these practices. While they constitute only about one fifth of the Somali population, they account today for most of the displaced (UN, 18 November 2004, p.9).

Since the 1990s people have increasingly moved to the main towns such as Mogadishu, Kismayo, Bossaso or Hargeisa, in search of work, food, water and medical assistance. Today, urban migration is seen as an inextricable consequence of the conflict, and its consequences become apparent in the form of a dramatic rise in property prices, increased conflict over scarce resources like water, and high unemployment. Focused aid to pastoralist communities and the creation of livelihoods in areas of origin are intended to curb that trend and to create incentives for rural migration. At the same time, resettlement projects in Somaliland and Puntland have been designed to provide IDPs in urban areas with more permanent living conditions (OCHA, July 2005). Transparency in resolving property issues will be a central precondition to facilitating returns to all areas of origin, both urban and rural (IRIN, 2 August 2005; Interviews with UN representatives, Hargeisa, October 2005).

People tend to flee within their region of origin and seek protection where their clan is dominant. However, the protracted nature of conflict which has changed the ethnic map of certain areas, has forced many people to flee far away from their kin. Many reached the relatively secure areas of Somaliland and Puntland in northern Somalia, where they mingled with other indigent groups and waves of returning refugees. Occasional settlement surveys indicate much fluctuation among the population (OCHA, 20 June 2005). The vast majority of IDPs in Mogadishu fled drought and inter-clan fighting in rural areas of Lower and Middle Juba, Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle, Hiran and Middle Shabelle (UNICEF, October 2005).

Protection needs

South and central Somalia

The internally displaced are among the most vulnerable people in Somalia. Many were deliberately displaced by warlords and militias aiming at gaining or maintaining control over resources and power and unwilling to recognise any rule of law. International protection standards as set forth in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have proven difficult to implement during the years of state collapse. IDPs are not protected by local or de facto authorities, nor do they have access to due process of law in the absence of a properly functioning legal system (UNCHR, 30 November 2003).

Now that a Transitional Federal Government is in place, it is expected to take on responsibility for the Somali population and the protection of displaced citizens. This will be a long process, but at the time of writing, many observers and UN staff expressed cautious optimism as the TFG seemed committed to moving the state building process forward and to engaging in negotiations with local authorities where the situation permitted such contacts (OCHA, July 2005, IDP strategy; telephone interview with OCHA representative, Nairobi, December 2005).

Puntland

Surveys among IDPs in Bossaso and Garowe indicate that IDPs from south and central Somalia generally face no targeted discrimination from the authorities and often manage to integrate with the local population. They do, however, live in extremely poor conditions and have less access to facilities and economic opportunities than the local population, which in itself creates situations of vulnerability. This holds especially true in settlements removed from the towns. Resettlement programmes are intended to regularise the IDPs' situation and improve access to basic facilities (UNDP, May 2005; UNDP, June 2005; DRC, October 2005).

Somaliland

In line with their self-declared sovereignty, the Somaliland authorities had issued in 2003 a decree by which it would deport all "illegal immigrants" not of Somaliland origin (UNSC, 12 February 2004, para.35). People displaced from south and central Somalia are considered foreigners by the Somaliland authorities. Many of them preferred to leave Somaliland for Puntland in 2003 and 2004 (OCHA, 23 April 2004). While the Somaliland authorities never actually implemented the decree, they also never revoked it. Many IDPs continue living in fear of deportation and exposed to stigmatisation because they are often associated with the crimes of the Barre dictatorship (Interviews with NRC representative, Hargeisa, October 2005; Ibrahim, 15 August 2002, p.5).

In 2005, UN agencies started to engage in discussions with the Somaliland and Puntland authorities on creating situations of good practice which could then be integrated into legislation. In Somaliland, the main issues discussed include land allocation for returnees and the revocation of the 2003 deportation decree.

Impact of clan structures

Clan structures in south and central Somalia are generally more complex and diverse than in the north. A degree of stability exists where majority clans or coalitions of clans rule over a certain area. This has been the case in Kismayo, where the Marexaan and Habr Gedir clans have formed a duopoly of power within the Juba Valley Alliance.

Most IDPs in Somalia belong to ethnic minorities such as the Bantu, Bajuni and Galgaala communities or minor clans with a low social status. As protection is granted through clan affiliation, displaced people from minority groups, not belonging to the clan system or seeking refuge far away from their clan-home area, are particularly exposed to serious human rights abuses including physical violence, rape, forced labour, evictions, land dispossession and theft.

Mogadishu, home to most of Somalia's IDPs, is divided by a "green line" separating the north and the south of the city, dominated by the Abgal and Habr Gedir clans respectively, with each part being fragmented into smaller fiefdoms controlled by seven to ten rivalling warlords fighting each other. As a result, IDPs and local residents are often caught in the cross-fire of violent conflicts and are forced to flee again, putting their lives at risk when trying to cross from one part of town to another. Galkayo in Puntland is also divided by a "green line" with IDPs living in that insecure dividing zone (Interview with MSF representative, Nairobi, October 2005)

IDP settlements in Mogadishu and other southern towns are often controlled by "black cats" or "gatekeepers", who sometimes offer some degree of security to settlement residents but in exchange extort money and food aid rations from IDPs. Some reportedly extorted as much as 75 per cent of aid destined for IDPs (ODI, 31 December 2003, p.13-4). If the inhabitants cannot pay, they are forced to work for the gatekeepers for free. Rape and forced labour at gunpoint are common occurrences in these IDP settlements (OCHA IDP Unit, 16 April 2004). There is cautious optimism that neighbourhood security guards and Islamic courts which take on the armed gangs in Mogadishu, in combination with the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government, will be able to somewhat reduce the high degree of instability (UNICEF, October 2005).

Displaced people from south and central Somalia in Hargeisa (Somaliland) were discriminated against by returnees originating from Somaliland who sometimes restricted their access to resources and services as they did not consider these "outsiders" as being entitled to assistance, according to observers (Interviews with agencies, Hargeisa, August 2004).

Women and children

Women and children constitute three quarters of the displaced population in Somalia and are particularly vulnerable (UNCU, 30 July 2002). Rape has been used frequently as a weapon of war by militias in retaliation or to humiliate a subjugated ethnic group (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003; UNCU/OCHA, 1 August 2002).

A 2003 UNICEF study concludes that IDP women and girls are not adequately protected (UNICEF, 10 December 2003, p.29). They are at particular risk of rape when they walk long distances away from the settlements in search of water or firewood. At night, the lack of latrines forces them to walk to the margins of the settlements where they are at risk of attack. As a result of war, many households are headed by women.



Displaced children in Bossaso settlement (Nadig/2005)

Their small huts made of cloths with often no proper door offer no protection against assaults by men stealing belongings and raping women at gunpoint with impunity (Interviews with agencies, Bossaso, August 2004). Displaced women from minority groups or outside their clan home area pose no threat of retaliation let alone punishment. Women have often little recourse to systems of justice – whether through clan customary law (*xeer*)

or Islamic law (*sharia*). They are also afraid to report sexual abuses because they are often not welcome in the areas where they have taken refuge and because of the social stigma associated with rape. Often, the matter is settled the traditional way through the intervention of an elder and subsequent compensation payment to the woman's family. Where a perpetrator is actually arrested, he is generally released later without charges. Therefore, violence against IDP women, while a regular occurrence, produces little concrete evidence and mostly goes unrecognised (UNIFEM, 22 November 2005). Local authorities in Hargeisa have repeatedly denied the existence of structural protection problems for IDPs and particularly IDP women, suggesting in one conversation that women may report having been raped to attract attention (Interview with local authorities, Hargeisa, October 2005).

Poor living conditions increase vulnerability

IDPs tend to have less access to employment, education and other facilities, and most of them are constrained to living in great poverty. Improving IDP protection also means addressing the clan-based discrimination in terms of living conditions and livelihoods.

Fires in IDP settlements are a recurrent reminder of the suffering and vulnerability of the displaced throughout Somalia. Every year, thousands of IDPs lose all their meagre belongings when fires break out in the overcrowded settlements, often in connection to women building cooking fires in close proximity or inside the huts made of cardboard, rags and sticks. Many cannot afford to rebuild their huts. As IDP settlements tend to become more crowded over the years, the risk of fires intensifies (Interviews with NRC, UNICEF, DRC, Hargeisa and Bossaso, October 2005; OCHA, 30 November 2005). The displaced continue to build their huts with cheap and highly inflammable materials. Fear of eviction,

hopes of being resettled and the wish to return to their home areas once the security situation allows, have deterred many of them from investing in their housing (Interviews with agencies, Hargeisa and Bossaso, August 2004; Clark, June 2002, p.28).

Humanitarian situation

IDPs' access to the most basic services is close to non-existent in most parts of Somalia, one of the world's poorest countries. Intermittent fighting and drought mean that conditions in IDP settlements are more crowded than ever, with associated high levels of disease. Dehydration from diarrhoea is one of the main causes of death, reflecting the fact that close to 80 per cent of the Somali population have no access to safe water and nearly half have no access to sanitation (UN, 18 November 2004, p.22). Moreover, IDPs often have to pay to use latrines in addition to paying rent, in the insalubrious settlements where they live. As a result most settlements are littered with garbage and faeces, increasing the incidence of disease.

Health services and infrastructures have been ravaged by war and only a small minority of the Somali population have access to health care. Most hospitals lack equipment and drugs and there is a great lack of qualified doctors (MSF, 9 December 2002). Nearly a quarter of Somali children die before they reach the age of five and mortality rates among displaced children are up to 60 per cent higher than among the local population (UNICEF, 10 December 2003; UN, 18 November 2003, p.12). The maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world due to the fact that most deliveries take place at home and the widespread practice of female genital mutilation increases health risks during birth. The health status of IDPs is considered to be even worse as most of them lack access or cannot pay for medical care. For example, in 2003, Bossaso only had one mother and child health centre for a population of over 120,000 people including about 28,000 IDPs (UN, 18 November 2003, p.153).

Given its scarcity, water is an extremely coveted resource. Many wells have been destroyed or polluted during the conflict in order to deprive the enemy from access to water. For example, out of 175 wells in Bay and Bakool, over 100 were damaged beyond repair (UNICEF, 6 September 2000). When available, water is often sold at prices unaffordable to IDPs, who have no choice but to drink from contaminated streams. The unavailability of close-by water sources, combined with situations of insecurity impact on the nutritional and health status of displaced populations. For example, in Belet Hawo, Gedo, families lived on less than 10 litres per person per day, about half of the recommended minimum requirement set by WHO, because of the risks faced by women and girls to be raped by militias (ACT, 17 September 2004).

Due to the lack of safe drinking water and sanitation in IDP settlements, there are endemic outbreaks of cholera every dry season in the main towns like Mogadishu. In addition to cholera, outbreaks of polio and measles have also been registered in south and central Somalia during 2005, and vaccination campaigns for all three diseases have been carried

out (OCHA, November 2005). In the rainy season, floods are common in Mogadishu and the riverine valleys, displacing tens of thousands of people each year, many of them permanently.

South Somalia drought could lead to major humanitarian emergency

While by the end of 2005 sufficient rains for two consecutive seasons have somewhat stabilised the water and food situation in the north, enabling those pastoralists who had not yet moved to urban centres to begin re-stocking their herds and re-engaging in livestock trade, the south is considered at high risk of experiencing serious food shortages due to years of below-normal rainfall and intermittent fighting. In addition to significant crop losses, the number of livestock has decreased significantly (FSAU, November 2005). Some drought-related displacement towards urban centres was already reported at the end of 2005.

The nutritional status of internally displaced is of particular concern in the south, but also in Bossaso and Burao. IDP malnutrition rates at about 20 per cent in 2005 far exceeded the emergency threshold, particularly affecting Bossaso, the Juba riverine areas and Galgadud (FSAU, October 2005).

Malnutrition among displaced children in Mogadishu, where high insecurity impedes the conducting of regular assessments, peaked at 39 per cent in 2002, falling to 15 per cent in 2004 (FSAU, 31 May 2004; 31 August 2002). The southern riverine areas, once Somalia's breadbasket, are the most affected by conflict-induced food insecurity, with Gedo registering the worst malnutrition rates at 34 per cent in 2004 mainly due to insecurity (ACT, 17 September 2004). Nutritional surveys conducted in Gedo in October 2005 revealed consistently high levels of malnutrition, while humanitarian access remained poor (FSAU, 29 November 2005).

Puntland

High malnutrition rates among IDPs not only reflect low purchasing power but also the poor quality of the intake of nutrients and early weaning practices. In Bossaso and Somaliland for example, two-thirds of displaced children were weaned before the age of six months, resulting in high incidence of diseases. This was often due to the fact that poor women, often the main bread-winners, engage in petty trade and casual work, at the expense of child care practices (FSAU, 31 May 2004).

Somaliland

Nutrition surveys carried out in Hargeisa in September 2005 showed a significant improvement of the nutritional status among IDPs in comparison to 2003, with the Global Acute Malnutrition Rate having dropped from 15.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent; 75 per cent of IDPs and returnees now have access to water and sanitation, compared to 45 per cent in 2003. This improvement is attributed to political stability, improved access to the vulnerable populations and a certain degree of income opportunity for IDPs and returnees (FSAU, October 2005; OCHA, October, 2005; OCHA Hargeisa IDP Working Group meeting, October 2005).

At the same time, malnutrition rates remained high Burao which in contrast to Hargeisa offers fewer economic opportunities to IDPs, and the social and clan ties, where they exist, seemed extremely strained (OCHA, November 2005).

Improved nutrition rates in Hargeisa do not necessarily go in parallel with better health status. During a visit to Daami settlement, it was suggested that while children generally receive enough food, mothers often do not, as they give preference to feeding their children (Visit to Daami settlement, October 2005).

Access to education

Primary school enrolment in Somalia is the lowest in the world. Only one in five children attend primary school and girls constitute roughly one third of the pupils (IRIN, 15 December 2005). Yet education remains one of the most chronically under-funded sectors in the Somalia UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP). The requirements for 2005 were only 27 per cent met at the end of the year (OCHA, 30 November 2005).



Displaced children in State House settlement, Hargeisa (Nadig/2005)

In 2005, UNICEF started a countrywide back-to-school campaign which includes the training of teachers and parents' sensibilisation of the importance of education (UNICEF, 2005). The task is enormous: in 2004, fewer than 40 per cent of teachers had gone through training and many had not completed their own primary education (UN, 18 November 2004, p.10). Whole generations of Somalis have little to no formal education and few marketable skills and, as a result, are more likely to be drawn into militia activities, which in turn poses serious threats to the security and socio-economic development of the country. As a result of the war, the entire

public school system has collapsed, virtually all school facilities have been either completely or partially destroyed and when classroom space is scarce, local children are given priority over displaced children.

Most schools now are private and many parents cannot afford school fees or prefer their children, especially the girls, to help them generate income by working or begging. Another issue is the reluctance of aid organisations to build permanent education facilities in temporary IDP settlements, particularly in Bossaso. Local authorities in Somaliland and Puntland are equally reluctant to build any kind of infrastructure in the settlements in order to avoid these settlements to become permanent. A recently developed solution is the setting up of mobile infrastructure, like school tents.

Self-reliance

During the past 13 years of protracted war, Somalis have survived in one of the most extreme environments, lacking a functioning government or basic services, and with hardly any foreign assistance. Recurrent droughts and war have stretched their coping mechanisms to the limit. The fine socio-economic balance between pastoral and agricultural communities based on the exchange of milk and meat products against cereals and the right to seasonally graze on fallow lands has been disrupted. Somalia is the third poorest country in the world, with nearly half of the population living in extreme poverty, on less than \$1 per day (UNDP, 2004; UNHCR, 30 January 2004). Many displaced, particularly in the more food-insecure south, live in even poorer conditions as they have lost their properties and productive assets, are in a difficult social and political environment and lack relief food and assistance from aid agencies.

In Somalia, the division of labour is established along identity. Each clan or ethnic group has specific skills adapted to their survival needs and environment. For example, the Galgala are traditionally wood craftsmen, other minority groups like the Tumul are blacksmiths, the Midgan work with hides. The Bantu are traditionally small-scale farmers whose agricultural skills are not transferable to the urban environment where they flee; the same applies to displaced agro-pastoralists and nomads. These groups usually work in labour-intensive, low-skill and low-income jobs. The men find irregular employment as porters, builders, latrine diggers or casual labourers and the women work as domestic servants, garbage collectors, cleaners or petty traders (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.26).

The labour market is also regulated by clan and sub-clan networks. IDPs lack the capital and the social connections to have access to trade and market activities which tend to be dominated by sub-clans of the Isaaq in Somaliland and by Majerteen and other Harti sub-clans in Puntland. In both regions, IDPs competing with local labour or begging on the streets have been subject to harassments, and as “guests” they do not enjoy full legal rights and protection (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.24).

Not all IDPs from the south living in Somaliland have access to gainful employment. But they have a reputation of working hard and of bringing valuable skills. In Hargeisa, they are therefore appreciated for carrying out menial work in the official or the lucrative informal economy. Nevertheless, begging is now also seen in Hargeisa, supporting southern IDPs, and people referred to as “seasonal beggars”: Somalilanders who temporarily move to towns each year to bridge the dry season (Interviews, NRC, Hargeisa, October 2005). In other, less economically active parts of Somaliland, the vast majority of displaced households depended exclusively on begging, which is often barely sufficient to provide one meal per day (UNCU, 30 July 2002, pp.15, 27). Most IDPs are unable to access any assistance or business opportunities, unlike returnees, who are able to get small income-generating loans from international organisations, and draw support from their clan and the council of elders. It is unlikely that displaced southerners in Somaliland will be socially and economically integrated, according to analysts, due to the fact that they are associated with the crimes of the Barre regime committed against the people of

Somaliland, and are easily identifiable by their different speech and look to northerners (Ibrahim F., 15 August 2002).

IDPs in Puntland also tend to be viewed as undesirables by the local community. But they appear not to be actively discriminated against and have more job opportunities, especially in Bossaso where the building sector is booming and port activity is thriving. Many displaced families in Bossaso earn between two and four dollars a day, over twice what most displaced earn in Hargeisa. Casual work and small-scale trade are the main sources of income for 80 per cent of displaced households in Bossaso (UNDP, May 2005, p.21, 22). The average income of IDPs in Garowe is one dollar a day per family (UNDP, June 2005).

In Juba (southern Somalia), nearly half of the displaced households surveyed had to borrow money or food. As women in IDP settlements outnumber men, they are the primary breadwinners, often at the expense of childcare. But since the income earned is very limited, displaced households depend heavily on the income of children who often beg or shine shoes instead of attending school (UNICEF, 10 December 2003).

Food shortages and poor health and water access in southern and central Somalia undermined host communities' ability to cope with the influx of displaced people. The price of imported food remained high as transport costs between Mogadishu and the Juba Valley were inflated by militia checkpoints extorting illegal taxes (FEWS, 8 May 2003).

As food shortages become more acute, targeted food distribution can become problematic. For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) was unable to distribute food aid to IDPs in Dinsor district (Bay region), because the local communities complained that given the poor *Deyr* performance (October to December rainy season), selective food aid could contribute to tensions between IDPs and the host communities and cause further displacements (OCHA, November 2005).

Unlike returnees and local residents, IDPs generally do not benefit from remittances or from kin support, therefore they are more vulnerable to economic shocks. The prolonged and continued livestock import ban imposed by the Gulf States since 2000, as well as the closure of the Al-Barakaat Bank (main channel for remittances), following accusations of abetting terrorism in 2002, seriously reduced income levels and purchasing power. The ban seriously affects nomadic pastoralists, who comprise nearly half of the population, and particularly north-western and north-eastern Somalia, where the livestock trade is the main source of livelihood for 70 per cent of the population (UN, 18 November 2003, p.10; IGAD/UNDP/UNHCR, June 2002, p.17). At the same time, opportunities for casual labour at ports like Bossaso are beginning to become saturated. Consequently, competition over scarce jobs had increased sharply between urban residents and the displaced from the south who have been increasingly excluded and discriminated against. This discrimination affects IDPs' standard of living as it determines the degree of access to income, which in turn affects their access to food, health and education.

Somali identities and culture

Based on their patrilineal kinship, the Somali people are divided into five major clans, which split into numerous sub-clans and minority groups. The major clans are the Darood, Dir, Hawiye and Isaaq known as the Samale group, and the Digil-Mirifle categorised as the Sab group. Clans have formed alliances which provide their members with physical security and a social welfare safety net. Exogamous marriages into another clan are ways to establish alliances which can be drawn on in times of hardship. Conflicts are minimised and managed by customary law (*xeer*), and the tradition of blood payment (*diya*) serves to deter crime and prevent retaliation (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.2).

However, elders' conflict mediation mechanisms and the traditional systems of reciprocal help have been seriously eroded by conflict in many parts of the country, and the clan system has proved to be a divisive and destructive force when manipulated for economic and political gain. Now, freelance militiamen rule at gunpoint and communities have grown mistrustful. On the other hand, in the absence of a state structure the clan system has been virtually the only source of law and order. The interest of businessmen in creating conditions conducive to market activities in a secure environment has become an increasingly important stabilising force, cutting across clan differences (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003).



Southern IDPs in Daami settlement, Hargeisa, together with head of the local NGO Ghashan (Nadig/2005)

Minorities make up about 20 per cent of the population. They are outside the clan system, and have been marginalised and subject to attacks and violations by the dominant clans (UN, 18 November 2004, p.9). They are divided into two main groups. The first includes the Midgan, Tumul, Yibir, Gaheyle, Galgale and Boni. Each of these caste-like groups specialises in a specific profession like hunting, crafts, leather and metal work, which are considered “polluting” by

the Somali clans. A second group includes the Bantu, Benadiri and Eyle who are not considered “ethnic Somalis”. Some are believed to come from early non-Somali agricultural communities and others to be descendants of people who were taken to Somalia in the 19th century by Arab slave traders from areas which are now Tanzania, Mozambique and Malawi. They are small-scale farmers and come from the riverine areas of southern Somalia. Bantus have never been recognised as “real” Somalis and thus have been discriminated against and placed in servitude, treated as second-class citizens (UNCU, 30 July 2002, pp 5-6).

IDPs from these groups have limited access to the judicial system. The three systems of law in Somalia (secular, *sharia* and customary (*xeer*) law), coexist in a chaotic and gender-discriminatory way. The legal framework throughout the country remains poor and minorities or displaced people, either outside the clan system or outside their area of origin are not protected by customary law. Besides, *sharia* courts do not adhere to international standards and militias generally enjoy impunity for the human rights abuses they commit (AI, January 2003).

The University of Hargeisa Faculty of Law, supported by UNDP and UNHCR, has set up a Legal Clinic providing legal advice to vulnerable people, including IDPs. In view of the great need for legal assistance, participants in the October 2005 IDP Working Group meeting suggested that the Legal Clinic increase its capacity, inform vulnerable populations of the services available and open an office in the centre of town (IDP Working Group, Hargeisa, November 2005).

Property issues

Control over power and resources, notably land, is the main driving force behind conflict in Somalia. The war has redrawn the ethnic map of some areas, as strong clan militias have taken possession of valuable and fertile lands in the south. The legitimate inhabitants were often evicted or fled massacres and sometimes were conscripted as forced labour onto the lands they once owned (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.32). Many displaced caused new displacement situations themselves when settling in a new area, thus creating very complex and multi-layered property issues.

Access to land during displacement

Along with land dispossession in areas of origin, lack of access to land in areas of refuge is one of the most serious problems affecting IDPs. Since land in Somalia tends to belong to specific clans, displaced people from minority groups and outside their clan home area usually do not have access to land other than rented plots. The dominant clans are generally reluctant to sell land to “outsiders” or members of other clans (Lindgaard, 23 March 2001). Even where possible, buying land would increase the risk of IDPs being dragged into conflicts which they normally want to avoid given their particular vulnerability. Local authorities usually have no or very little public land available to allocate to IDPs. As a result, the vast majority of IDPs rent plots on privately-owned land while the rest squat temporarily on government sites or abandoned buildings. Most IDPs are unprotected and can be evicted by landowners or authorities at any time. The insecurity of land tenure and ownership was cited as the primary concern of IDPs during a survey conducted in 2002 (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.19).

South and central Somalia

In a number of towns in south and central Somalia, the issue of evictions from public buildings has taken on acute importance during the last months of 2005. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Jowhar threatened to evict an estimated 1,000 IDP families

from public buildings, which it intended to occupy. At the time of writing, it was unclear if an adequate area could be found for the families (Interview with UNICEF representative, Jowhar, October 2005; telephone interviews with UNICEF and OCHA representatives, Nairobi, December 2005). In Garowe, IDPs were also being threatened with eviction from public buildings and private properties, and possibilities for relocating them to the old airport area were being examined. In Kismayo, at the end of 2005, more than 600 IDP families were threatened with eviction without alternative living space. At the time, no international agencies were present in Kismayo to promote the provision of alternative accommodation (OCHA, November 2005). UN officials were intending to take up the issue of occupation of public buildings with the federal and local authorities concerned, in order to find acceptable solutions for both the authorities and the displaced. During a Joint Needs Assessment meeting, the Somali authorities expressed commitment to ensuring a fair reclaiming process of public buildings for community service (Telephone interview with OCHA representative, Nairobi, 16 December 2005; email from OCHA representative, January 2006).

Puntland

In Bossaso, the issue of land tenure of IDPs is largely related to urban planning. Because of return movements, displacement and general urban migration of impoverished pastoralists, Bossaso has seen its population increase nearly 30-fold over the past 15 years and has become a major port and trading city, attracting Somali and Ethiopian migrants, returnees and IDPs. The phenomenon of human smuggling has taken on worrying dimensions over the past couple of years and the number of new arrivals is on the increase. While the Bossaso authorities seem willing to understand the particular vulnerabilities of migrants and IDPs, the extent of uncontrolled migration to, and settlement in, Bossaso puts a strain on the willingness to assist IDPs in finding more permanent housing, not least for fear of attracting more people from the south (Interviews with agencies in Bossaso, September 2004 and October 2005).

In this context, the agreement between local authorities and the UN at the end of 2005 for allocating five plots within the city limits to IDP resettlement it is a very positive development. IDP settlements in Bossaso have so far been built on private land. Extortion of IDPs by landowners was common, and humanitarian organisations were reluctant to become operational in the settlements because landowners would regularly obstruct their activities. UN agencies have been actively supporting local authorities to find appropriate plots for new settlements. After a failed attempt in 2002, the new plots allocated in 2005 were intended for permanent settlement for a few hundred IDP families. A municipal by-law was to be drawn up to institutionalise the arrangements between land owners, municipality and inhabitants. The development of minimum standards for basic services in the current settlements was to be encouraged. From the UN side, the process is led by UN-Habitat, which plans to use Bossaso as a pilot project, hoping to engage other towns, particularly Hargeisa, in a similar process of resettlement land allocation. A task force of several agencies is to implement projects to improve public services (Telephone interviews with OCHA and UNICEF representatives, Nairobi, December 2005; email from UN Habitat, December 2005).

Somaliland

In Somaliland, the land problem is exacerbated by the need to absorb 800,000 returning refugees in the past decade, of whom 470,000 were assisted by UNHCR. The vast majority of the returnees moved to Hargeisa rather than to their areas of origin. In an attempt to regularise the rapid irregular urban growth, the Hargeisa local authorities have allocated a couple of permanent settlements and recently created two new ones, Ayaha I and II. The settlements have some schools and local markets, and the inhabitants own a plot of land. While returning refugees were registered for relocation on the presentation of a refugee card, IDPs are not eligible for relocation, as the authorities still consider them foreigners and do not want to create a pull factor by giving the impression that IDPs can settle permanently. Some IDPs rent plots from returned refugees who have moved on or had multiple refugee cards, while many others got stranded on the streets, having nowhere to settle. In Hargeisa, as in most towns, there is fierce competition for land and access to scarce basic facilities, particularly water, and many returnees end up destitute among IDP populations, once their UNHCR return package is used up (Interviews with NRC representative and other agencies, Hargeisa, August 2004 and October 2005).

International agencies have also been reluctant to invest in water points, latrines or other infrastructure development projects in IDP settlements situated on privately-owned land, as there have been numerous cases of landlords or militias appropriating and privatising such facilities in order to charge fees from IDPs for their use (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.19). Recently, the international community has become somewhat more confident in investing in infrastructure in the settlements, including market places. But access to basic facilities remains highly insufficient (Interviews with UNICEF and WFP representatives, Bossaso, October 2005).

Solving property issues to foster return movements

Property issues are one of the core obstacles to IDP return and must become a fundamental component of any meaningful reconstruction process. For most IDPs originating from Mogadishu, Juba, Shabelle or Gedo regions, return is neither safe nor sustainable. Most of their lands have been occupied by other clans, and many villages were burnt to the ground, like in Bu'ale, Middle Juba, during the clashes of 2003 and 2004. Over 80 per cent of southern Somalis in Hargeisa cited war and insecurity as the main obstacle to return (Clark, June 2002, p.31; NRC, State House Survey, 2005). The lack of viable return opportunities consolidates the illegal, nepotistic and violent transfer of property started under the Barre dictatorship, undermines prospects for durable solutions and ultimately is an obstacle to reconciliation if it is not correctly addressed in the current process of peace-building and reconstruction. The Minister of Land and Settlement declared that the TFG would engage in a land reform as soon as it had firmly established itself in Mogadishu. He suggested that the still existing land records from before the civil war should serve as a basis, together with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, to solve land disputes (IRIN, 2 August 2005).

Return and resettlement

Due to continued insecurity in south and central Somalia, very few IDPs have gone back to their areas of origin. Surveys in settlements indicate that an overwhelming majority prefers to remain in the settlements or to buy land and settle locally. Pastoralists and farmers who have lived in urban settings for over ten years often do not wish to return to their previous way of life. In this context, the UN Country Team's IDP strategy for finding durable solutions focuses on local integration in urban areas by avoiding to create isolated settlements, and on offering incentives for returning to rural areas. The ongoing efforts to find suitable resettlement sites in northern cities as Hargeisa and Bossaso are part of that strategy.

While there are very few return movements to the south, international organisations are making increased efforts to create resettlement incentives by assisting pastoralists to return to their traditional way of life, and by re-creating agricultural areas for farmers. It is believed that a relatively high number of IDPs would return to rural areas if livelihood prospects and security were provided. The UN Country Team hopes that the planned country-wide IDP profiling will allow locating those IDPs willing to return (Joint UN IDP Strategy, July 2005).

Humanitarian access

The interest of some warlords in regaining or consolidating power during the Mbagathi negotiations ensured that violence and armed conflict continued throughout much of south and central Somalia. In the absence of a functioning government, international organisations and NGOs are often the only service providers and interact directly with clan leaders and local authorities. Especially in the south, where the clan structure is more varied than in the north, organisations must negotiate access with a host of non-state actors, and it is at times difficult to enter into agreements which will hold over time. Frequent changes in the local power structure and in clan affiliations can hinder dialogue and make many situations volatile and difficult to understand. Civil society groups and individuals, in particular businessmen, are a source of stability and are a crucial factor for improving humanitarian access (OCHA, 30 November 2005; Interview with MSF representative, Nairobi, October 2005; ODI, 2004).

Despite the existence of pockets of stability, insecurity remains so acute in most parts of Somalia that it is difficult to provide adequate and timely assistance, let alone to effectively monitor the living conditions and protection needs of IDPs. Crime, banditry, extortion and kidnapping threats are rife, and national and international staff are the target of attacks due to clan rivalries or disputes over allocation of employment contracts, property rental or project site location (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.47-8).

As a result, the international presence in the southern and central parts of the country is weak and inconsistent. Since the withdrawal of UNOSOM in 1995, virtually all

humanitarian agencies are based in Nairobi. ICRC is one of the few agencies which since the 1990s have maintained access to most southern and central regions of Somalia, through negotiations with more or less legitimate authorities and warlords. Of the UN agencies, UNICEF has maintained the most permanent presence in south and central Somalia since the early 1990s. Humanitarian access has also been hindered from outside, when in 2004 Kenya denied Somali passport holders entry. This ban is not only impeding freedom of movement but also information exchange and participation of Somali staff working for humanitarian agencies, all of which are based in Nairobi (Interviews with NRC representative, Hargeisa, October 2005, and with UNICEF representative, Nairobi, December 2005).

South and central Somalia

The southern port town of **Kismayo** had been the site of heavy inter-klan clashes throughout the conflict and humanitarian access has been inconsistent. The forces of General Mohamed Said Hersi and the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA) repeatedly fought over the control of the Kismayo port, which has become southern Somalia's main market for food, as Mogadishu port remains closed due to insecurity. The clashes caused displacement as recently as September 2004 (IRIN, 20 September 2004). During the first half of 2005, and mostly due to pressure from war-tired civil society and influential businessmen, the JVA was able to establish a certain degree of security in town. In September 2005, the international community gradually resumed their activities in that area considered being in a critical humanitarian emergency. But the engagement was short-lived. On 3 October 2005, in reaction to the assassination of a UN security officer in Kismayo, the international community had to relocate all their staff. There is much speculation as to whether or not the assassination was a direct attack on the international community. Somali authorities, including the JVA and President Yusuf (Meeting with TFG president, Jowhar, October 2005), condemned the murder which is seen as a real setback in the effort to re-engage in south Somalia, and particularly in the context of the emerging drought at the end of 2005 (OCHA, October 2005).

Mogadishu offers a uniquely complex operational and security environment. Since the fall of the Barre regime in 1991, the green line divides the city into north and south. Each part is further divided into a chaotic mosaic of militias and warlord fiefdoms between which movement is very dangerous. As a result, the few humanitarian agencies operating in town, such as MSF Spain, ACF and ICRC, have separate programmes for the north and south and need the protection of armed escorts (ICRC, 9 March 2004). Despite safety precautions, organisations are continuously forced to scale down or suspend their activities. Consistent monitoring of aid programmes is virtually impossible. Given the great risk of expatriate workers being abducted, most programmes are implemented through national staff.

The delivery of humanitarian assistance to Mogadishu is further complicated by road blocks, armed attacks and the fact that the port and airport have been shut down for most of the past decade. In June 2005, civil society groups in Mogadishu joined forces and brought a number of warlords around the negotiating table. A decision was taken to dismantle the

road blocks, and it was followed up to a large extent. While the road blocks started to re-appear a few days later, the example shows that civil society is beginning to assert itself against the warlords' manipulations (Interviews with WSP representative, Nairobi, and FUPAG representative, Jowhar, October 2005).

The Juba Valley and Lower Shabelle are affected by the same phenomena of road blocks, illegal taxation, robberies and looting, which raise transport and food prices and lower the food security of deprived displaced people by limiting their freedom of movement in search of affordable food, water or grazing areas. In such a situation, it has been claimed that some sub-clans have benefited from humanitarian aid more than the intended target groups, by manipulating the delivery of assistance through the granting of security or "safe passage" only to areas that will benefit their clan militias (OCHA, 31 July 2004; UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.34, 35). At the end of 2005, access to **El Wak** in Gedo remained obstructed because of problems in the peace talks between the Gare and Marehan, and humanitarian activities there had been indefinitely postponed (OCHA, October 2005).

Tensions between government factions in **Jowhar and Mogadishu** had not subsided since the relocation in June 2005. Puntland militia arrived in Jowhar in September 2005 via Ethiopia in support of President Yusuf, and Mogadishu-based ministers continued to threaten to attack Jowhar. Nevertheless, there has also been some dialogue between the factions and a UN presence in Jowhar was re-established cautiously during October (OCHA, October 2005).

The taking hostage of food ships, particularly those chartered by WFP, by Somali pirates also affected humanitarian activities in 2005 (OCHA, November 2005).

Puntland

Humanitarian access is generally granted to all areas in Puntland (except for areas in Sool and Sanaag) but the overall international presence is still weak. While Garowe, as the designated capital of Puntland has received a boost from the increased presence of international and UN organisations, the same organisations are understaffed in Bossaso. It is only recently that international organisations have started to get engaged in delivering infrastructure to IDP settlements in Bossaso, in the form of mobile health facilities, schools, and the construction of market places. In Galkayo, most of the 10,000 IDPs live on the "green line" dividing the northern and southern part of town, where they are exposed to inter-clan violence.

Somaliland

Somaliland has sustained relative stability and peace for several years, despite attacks on aid workers in late 2003 and early 2004, which increased security precautions. This stability appears to have an immediate positive effect on the physical well-being of the most vulnerable groups, as recent nutrition surveys in Hargeisa IDP settlements suggest (FSAU, October 2005). Despite such positive developments, the fact that all international staff need to use armed escort outside Hargeisa indicates how fragile the security situation remains.

National response

Given the scale of destruction and the volatile security situation in Somalia, it is premature to expect the Transitional Federal Government to have an immediate impact on the humanitarian, socio-economic and political situation. The TFG has practically no remaining government infrastructure to build on and is itself entrenched in inter-clan rivalries which limit its capacity to establish authority throughout the country and achieve durable peace. It is therefore likely that most of south and central Somalia will remain in a state of chronic complex emergency: little government authority, high levels of criminality, sporadic armed conflict, lack of economic recovery, endemic humanitarian needs, minimal health care and education, and population displacement. Operational humanitarian activities will remain ad hoc, lack sustainability and depend on security. There is hope that the talks between the government factions, initiated in early January 2006, will have a positive effect on the overall security in Somalia (Reuters, 5 January 2006).



President Yusuf during a meeting with the NRC mission, Jowhar (Nadig/2005)

In the absence of a state structure, Somali civil society is well organised. Islamic charities provide assistance to IDPs in Mogadishu and throughout the country, mainly with school and health facilities. Civil society groups have been playing an important role in bringing fighting clans around the negotiating table, prominent examples being Mogadishu, Kismayo, the Bay region and Somaliland.

Nevertheless, particularly in south and central Somalia, the operational capacity of national humanitarian organisations is weak and no substitute to international organisations which often hand over responsibility to their national counterparts where insecurity forces them to relocate.

Puntland

In Puntland, insecurity and the high turnover of top administration posts hampered coordination efforts in the past. In the absence of a functioning government, community-based organisations and individuals have sporadically taken up the responsibility to provide security and assistance to vulnerable populations. In line with the protection-oriented approach adopted by the UN Country Team, an IDP Working Group was set up in 2005, meeting in Garowe on a monthly basis, involving the authorities, UN organisations and NGOs.

Somaliland

The Somaliland authorities have repeatedly stressed the need for international organisations to improve coordination and better involve them in the design and management of projects. The Hargeisa IDP Working Group, active since 2005, is supposed to meet this need and seems successful at bringing together authorities and local and international aid organisations. Discussions between UN organisations and the authorities are underway to formalise Somaliland's protection approach.

Local NGOs are developing an increasingly high profile and have become important implementing partners of international organisations in the provision of aid and assistance to vulnerable groups.

International response

The consistently declared intention of the interim government to work together with the international community in the reconstruction of Somalia has raised the hopes of the Somali people and the international community that some degree of stability can be achieved. The population is wary of more violence and craves the stability necessary to resume their lives and re-engage in economic activities.

More than before, the international community now explicitly states that local and regional reconciliation processes should be recognised and opportunities to expand humanitarian presence should be "vigorously pursued" (OCHA, 30 November 2005, p.8)

Such wording indicates an important shift in the international response over the past two years. After having resided in Nairobi for years, directing their interventions from afar, many international organisations and NGOs are trying to become more active in Somalia, concentrating their activities on Somaliland and Puntland, but pushing to expand into south and central Somalia. The UN Country Team is collaborating well and commissioned a senior IDP adviser to draft an IDP strategy, the "Joint UN Response to IDPs", which is widely used as basis and reference in various protection programmes.

The declared "end to complacency" is a positive step, which must be followed by concrete action, as many Somalis express disappointment after dozens of visits and assessments in the past have not brought any improvements (UNDP, May 2005, p.23; meetings with TFG officials, Jowhar, October 2005; visit to Daami settlement, Hargeisa, October 2005).

Coordination

The UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the international response to IDPs which is organised in an inter-agency collaborative approach, as no single agency is specifically mandated to protect and assist IDPs.

In 1993, donors set up the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB) to coordinate the activities of donors, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. In

south and central Somalia, OCHA fielded a number of national humanitarian affairs officers in 2003 in order to strengthen its coordination role, managed from Nairobi. The various ministries of the TFG recognise the need to address IDP protection issues and appear willing to negotiate between local conflicting parties in order to increase stability (Telephone interview with UNICEF representative, Nairobi, December 2005). Discussions between the TFG, other local authorities and the international community openly address IDP protection issues, such as evictions from public buildings.

The joint UN IDP strategy is a key document for coordinating the activities of the different agencies around the goal to improve protection and seek solutions through a variety of activities. The former Working Groups on IDPs and on Human Rights were merged into the Nairobi-based Protection and IDP Working Group, co-chaired by OCHA and UNHCR. The Working Group is the IDP focal point within the UN Country Team. The main goals of the IDP Strategy are to assist local authorities in enhancing IDP protection and living conditions, and in finding durable solutions for the displaced. Operations and consultations are based on the principles of equality before the law and non-discrimination, and of national authorities' responsibility for people falling under their jurisdiction (OCHA, July 2005). The UN has initiated consultations with national and local authorities which should lead to a set of best practices to be included eventually into legislation. Examples of issues discussed are resettlement within cities, and evictions from public buildings (Telephone interviews with UNICEF and OCHA representatives, Nairobi, December 2005).

The UN Country Team was working on setting up a Protection Monitoring Network which should enable it to monitor protection issues more systematically and signal new protection problems more quickly. The Network was expected to start functioning in 2006. IDP Working Groups have been established in Somaliland (Hargeisa) and Puntland (Garowe), both meeting on a monthly basis. While the Hargeisa Working Group seemed very active at the end of 2005, the Garowe Working Group appeared to still be in the phase of defining its role. A fourth working group is intended to be established in early 2006 for south and central Somalia.



IDP settlement in Bossaso (Nadig/2005)

In its Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for 2006, the international community has identified one million chronically vulnerable people, including 370,000-400,000 IDPs who suffer severe livelihood distress. The UN Country Team will target this most vulnerable group as a humanitarian priority, focusing on three strategic goals: increase access to basic humanitarian services for vulnerable populations; enhance the protection of and respect for

the human rights and dignity of affected populations; strengthen local capacity for social service delivery and disaster response (OCHA, 30 November 2005, p.1).

Complementing the humanitarian focus of the CAP, a Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) concentrating on development issues was launched in November 2005. Led by the TFG, whose representatives appear fully engaged, the JNA and supported by the World Bank and UNDP. The process is grouped into six clusters, one of them focusing on livelihoods and solutions for the displaced, another one on basic needs and protection. It will lead up to a major donor conference in Rome in June 2006.

The UN Internal Displacement Division, which selected Somalia as one of its priority countries in 2004, is assisting the UN Country Team (UNCT) in its efforts to improve the UN's response to the displacement crisis. The OCHA protection coordinator specifically targets coordination of responses to IDPs. A post of Senior IDP advisor is planned for 2006. After having organised a few protection workshops in 2004, the UNCT through the protection and IDP Working Group plans a more concerted and longer term protection training campaign for UN staff, NGOs and local authorities in 2006. The UNCT also plans a country-wide baseline profiling of IDPs in order to obtain more reliable figures about the location of the most vulnerable.

Next to IDP-specific activities, there is a need for organisations to focus on capacity- and awareness-building among Somali authorities and national staff regarding IDP-specific protection needs relating to clan-based discrimination. This includes working towards creating a sense of community or national belonging beyond clan affiliations.

Awareness of the importance of integrating protection into assistance programmes is increasing among agencies. Inter-agency collaboration in line with the separation of tasks laid down in the Joint UN IDP Strategy is becoming common practice. The IDP profiling and subsequent needs assessment planned for 2006 should help agencies to better understand the particular vulnerabilities of IDPs in their specific context and to focus their activities more effectively. This will include addressing the needs of host populations: if not carefully supported in a community-based approach, aimed at alleviating poverty, fostering economic development and providing access to basic services, the local integration or voluntary return of IDPs could create conflicts instead of being an element of peace-building.

The current positive energy and hopes for improving the humanitarian situation in Somalia will be to no avail without the appropriate funding of both emergency programmes and longer term activities. In 2003, many of the projects for integration, protection, human rights and economic reconstruction could not be implemented due to lack of funding and insecurity (UN, 18 November 2003, p.7). In 2005, as in 2004, only half of the Consolidated Appeal was covered. Of that amount, most funds went to food, agriculture and shelter, while economic recovery and infrastructure, and mine action were less than ten per cent covered. The security sector did not receive any funding (OCHA, 30 November

2005). Donor support for Somalia has fallen by 90 per cent over the last decade (UNHCR, 30 January 2004). A drastic increase in donor support is needed for the return and reintegration of IDPs, recovery and peace-building in Somalia. It is hoped that the TFG will be able to create some degree of confidence among donors.

The tasks remain enormous. With a humanitarian emergency looming in the south, and economically strained towns in the north due to rapid urbanisation, the risks of jeopardising the current attempts towards peace and stability are manifold. There appears to be a clear political will to proactively address the serious gaps in the international response to internal displacement in Somalia and bring this widely ignored humanitarian emergency back to the attention of the international community. It is evident that the Somali people themselves will ultimately have to join their efforts constructively in order to bring stability to the country. But although they have shown remarkable resilience, they have little chance of getting out of the cycle of poverty and war with the low level of assistance currently allocated to their country. The international community must show sincerity in its stated aim of helping Somalia create its own future by providing the necessary financial and political support to the fragile peace- and state-building process, which is a prerequisite for finding durable solutions for the country's displaced populations.

Note: For more detailed information on the internal displacement situation in Somalia, please visit the [Somalia country page](#) on the IDMC's online IDP database.

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Note: All documents used in this report are directly accessible on the [List of Sources](#) page
of the Somalia country page.

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council, is the leading international body monitoring conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the IDMC contributes to improving national and international capacities to protect and assist the millions of people around the globe who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Geneva-based Centre runs an online database providing comprehensive information and analysis on internal displacement in some 50 countries.

Based on its monitoring and data collection activities, the Centre advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In its work, the Centre cooperates with and provides support to local and national civil society initiatives.

For more information, visit the IDMC website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org.

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