World Health Organization
Somalia

EPI watch
Epidemiological Bulletin

For epidemic-prone diseases in Somalia for epidemiological Week 8-9 of 2023
(20 Feburary-05 March-2023)

Current situation

Somalia is experiencing worsening drought following six consecutive failed rainy season. According to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and Famine Early Warning Network (FEWS NEST), Somalia received suboptimal amount of dyer rains than expected since October 2022. Currently, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) estimates that the number of people affected by extreme drought has risen to 7.8 million in January 2023, with 1.4 million displaced from their homes in search of water, food, and pasture. Some 6.5 million people – 40.6 per cent of the population - are acutely food insecure. For the first time since 2017, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has confirmed pockets of catastrophic food insecurity (Phase 5) affecting 222, 710 people. An estimated 1.8 million children under 5 face acute malnutrition, including 478 000 who are severely malnourished. It is also estimated that about 8 million people lack access to safe water and proper sanitation. The current situation including the displacement has led to more people being vulnerable to epidemic prone diseases, particularly acute diarrheal disease, and measles.

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR DROUGHT-AFFECTED DISTRICTS

7.8 million people estimated to be affected by the current drought; 1.4 million have been internally displaced by drought and 50,000 have migrated to Ethiopia and Kenya.[1]

Some **6.5 million** people - **40.6 per cent** of the population - are experiencing acute food

insecurity. **45 per cent** of children are facing acute malnutrition.[2]

An estimated **8.3 million** people in the country require humanitarian assistance and protection.

Epidemiological weeks 08-09, 20/02/2023-05/03/2023

669
suspected cholera cases

5828
acute diarrhoeal disease cases

301
suspected measles cases

341
SARI cases

909
confirmed cases of malaria in January 2023

435
health facilities reporting through Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN)[3]

2163
community health workers deployed in high risk areas including in drought affected districts

Reported cases of acute diarrhoeal disease, suspected measles, SARI and clinically diagnosed malaria cases in drought-affected region of Somalia, (epidemiological weeks 1 2022-Week 01 2023, 03 Jan 2022 to 08 January 2023)
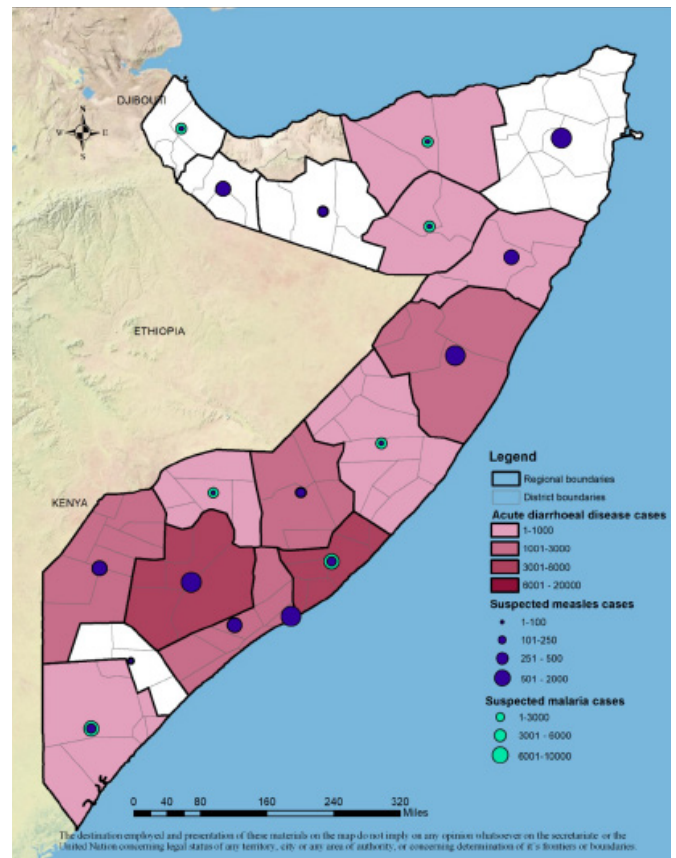
The Federal Ministry of Health and WHO monitor the trends of epidemic-prone diseases in drought affected districts using data from the electronic-based EWARN, fever and rash surveillance system and community health workers deployed in drought affected districts. With support from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and in collaboration with state ministries of health, WHO is implementing activities aimed at preventing disease outbreaks, including the timely detection and response to alerts of epidemic-prone diseases reported among vulnerable communities in drought affected districts.

1   Somalia: Drought response & famine prevention (15 January - 15 February 2023) - Somalia | ReliefWeb
2   Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report -February 2023
3   EWARN mobile application was deactivated in February 2023

CHOLERA IN DROUGHT-AFFECTED DISTRICTS

Recurrent cholera outbreaks have been reported in the drought-affected districts of Somalia since 2022, with no interruption in transmission in Banadir region. The number of cholera cases reported in drought affected districts have increased significantly compared to the same time over the past two years (Figure 1).. This increase is attributed to a higher proportion of people with limited access to safe water and uncontrolled cross border movement triggered by drought. Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, a total of 2173 cases of suspected cholera and five deaths (Case Fatality Rate 0.2%) were reported in 26 drought affected districts of which 1315 (61%) cases were children under 5, 1075 (49.5%) were women and 799 (36.8%) were severe cases. In 2023, The regions reporting most of the cases are Lower Juba (659), Banadir (481) and Lower Shebelle (358) (see Table 1). Over the past two weeks, the number of cases in Afmadow and Belethawa districts bordering Kenya have increased by two-fold.

Since January 2023, total of 531 stool samples were collected from suspected cased admitted in eight treatment facilities supported by WHO and analyzed in the national public health laboratory in Mogadishu, out of which 20(3.8%) samples tested positive for *Vibrio cholerae* 01 serotype Ogawa. Culture and sensitivity studies conducted showed that the *V. cholera* serotypes isolate is sensitive to chloramphenicol and tetracycline but resistant to ampicillin and nalidixic acid.

ACUTE DIARRHOEAL DISEASES

The number of new acute diarrheal disease cases reported in the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) and from the communities in drought affected districts increased by 74% during the first two months of 2023 compared to the past two years. Over the past two weeks, the number of acute diarrhoeal cases increased by 11% from 2761 cases in week 6 to 3067 in week 8 of 2023. The increase in new cases is linked to increased displaced population in drought affected districts in need of water, sanitation and hygiene. Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, 19 943 cases of acute diarrhoeal disease were reported of which 14 643 (73%) were children under five. The regions reporting most of the cases are Banadir (5 506), Bari (3 074), and Lower Shabelle (2 222) (Table 1). WHO conducts sentinel-based surveillance for rotavirus in Banadir region which is the most common case of acute diarrhoeal disease among children aged under 5 years worldwide. Of the 281 stool samples collected from three sentinel centers in Banadir region from children aged under 5 years in 2023, 130 (46.3%) were tested positive for rotavirus infections.

INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE

The trends of cases of severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) increased by two-fold in 2023 compared to the same time in the past two years. This increase may be attributed to increased displaced people who have poor shelter which resulted in people living in overcrowded conditions in camps (Figure 3). Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, 10,347 cases of SARI were reported from the drought affected districts of which 7058(68%) are children under five. The regions reporting most of the cases are Galgadud (3658), Banadir (1783), and South Mudug (1256), (Table 1).
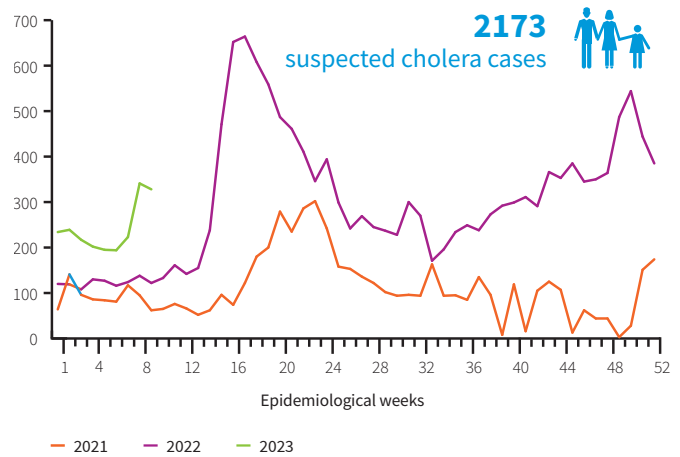
Week 8-9 of 2023 (20 Feburary-05 March-2023)

2173 suspected cholera cases

Figure 1. Trends of suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoeal cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2020–2023

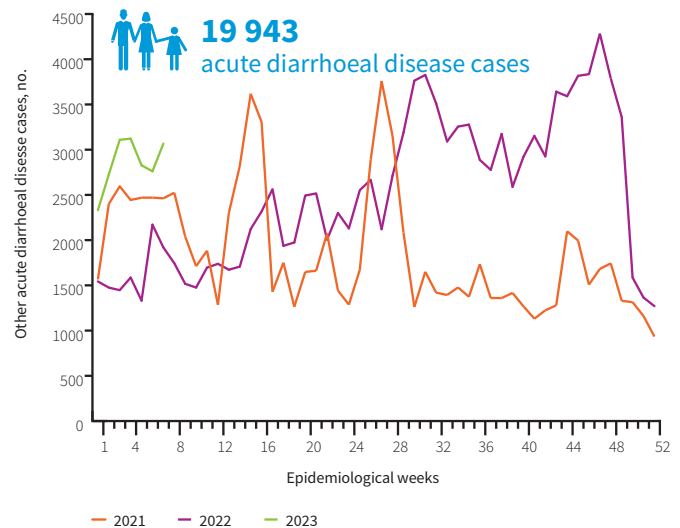### Week 8-9 of 2023 (20 Feburary-05 March-2023)

19 943 acute diarrhoeal disease cases

Figure 2. Trends of acute diarrhoeal disease cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2020–2023

Week 8-9 of 2023 (20 Feburary-05 March-2023)
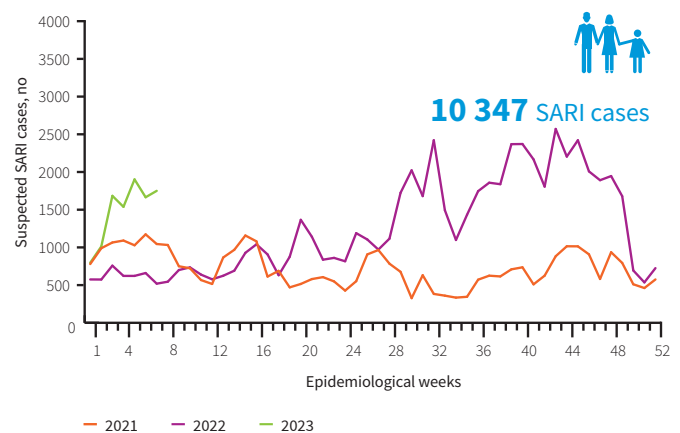
10 347 SARI cases

Figure 3. Trends of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) reported from drought affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2020-2023

WHO, in collaboration with United States Center for Disease Control (US-CDC) and the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework supports Ministry of Health to implement sentinel-based surveillance for seasonal influenza in three sites-two located in Banadir region and one in Puntland.

In 2023, a total of 761 suspected cases of seasonal influenza were enrolled at three sentinel sites and were reported in the platform of Eastern Mediterranean Flu (EMFLU) network. Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, 701 influenza cases were tested at the National Public Health Laboratory of which 28 (4.0%) were tested positive for influenza; 1 (3.6%) were positive for seasonal influenza A (H1N1); 2 (7.1%) were positive for influenza A (H1N1) pdm09, 9(1.3%)) were positive for influenza B Victoria Lineage.

MEASLES UPDATES

The number of suspected cases of measles reported in January 2023 decreased by two-fold compared to the same period in 2022. This reduction in cases is linked to an increase in the number of children vaccinated mainly in IDP camps through integrated outreach services supported by WHO. (Figure 4). A total of 1414 cases of measles were reported through the AFP/Polio surveillance system from week 1 to week 9 of 2023 of which 981(69.4%) are children under 5. The regions reporting most cases are Bay (537), Banadir (440) and Lower Shabelle (89). Of the 467 blood samples collected from cases of fever and rash,387 (83%) were tested positive for measles specific Immunoglobulin M(IgM).

MEASLES VACCINE UPDATES

A total of 45,183(80%) out of the targeted 56,482 children under one year received the first dose of measles-containing vaccine (MCV1) in drought-affected districts in February 2023 according to data from district health Information software 2 (DHIS2) (Figure 5). From 2019 to 2023, the measles vaccination coverage ranged between 84% and 80% per month compared to the national target of 95%

MALARIA UPDATES

The number of laboratory-confirmed cases of malaria reported through DHIS2 has gradually decreased since January 2021 which might be linked scaling up of implementation of additional malaria control interventions in drought affected districts (Fig 6). Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, a total of 28 717 cases of suspected malaria have been reported of which 909 (3.2%) have been confirmed positive by Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) and blood smear. Of the 909 confirmed cases, 255 (28%) are children under 5. Regions reporting most of the suspected malaria cases in 2023 are Bay (3182) Gedo (2839) and Middle Shebelle (2,633) (Table 1).

POLIO UPDATE

- A total of 52 cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) were reported in 2023, of whom 26 case were female and 26 were male. Of the 52 AFP cases reported,34 (65.4%) cases had stool samples collected and analysed in the laboratory while 18 (34.6%) AFP cases are pending laboratory diagnosis.
- In 2023 one circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) was isolated from Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) cases, compared to five cases isolated in 2022.

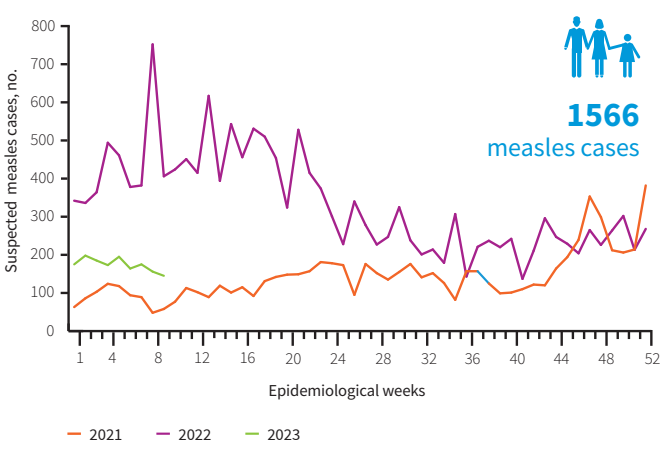**Week 8-9 of 2023 (20 Feburary-05 March-2023)**

1566 measles cases

Figure 4. Trends of measles cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2020–2022

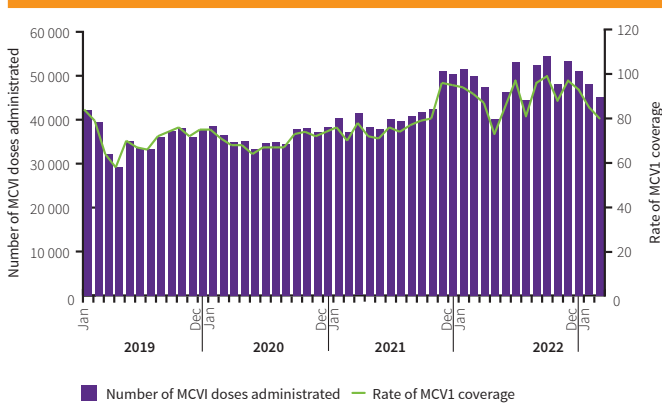**Week 8-9 of 2023 (20 Feburary-05 March-2023)**

Figure 5. Number of children under 1 year vaccinated against measles by month, 2019-2022

*The measles vaccination data for November and December 2022 is not yet available

Week 8-9 of 2023 (20 Feburary-05 March-2023)
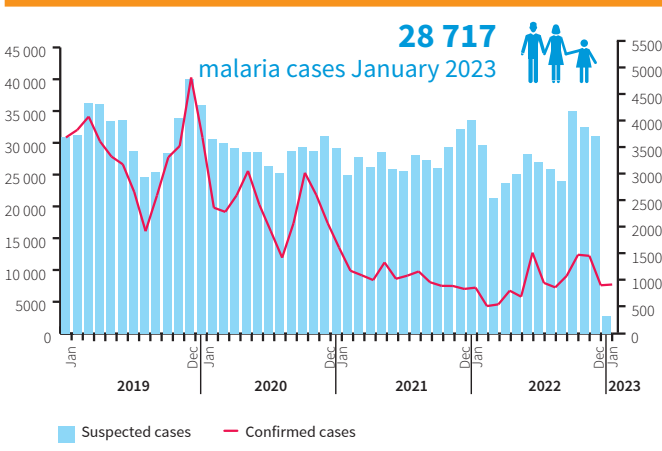
28 717 malaria cases January 2023

Figure 6. Trends of malaria cases reported in drought-affected regions, 2019-2022

- As of week 09, of 2023, 28 environmental surveillance (ES) samples have been collected, and they are currently pending processing. Additionally, been collected, and they are currently pending processing. Additionally, there are 7 samples (3 in KEMRI and 4 at CDC for sequencing) from 2022 that are also pending processing.

- A total 221 environmental samples were collected from 16 sites and sent to the laboratory in 2022. Out of these samples, four were positive for cVDPV2, one was positive for VDPV2, 47 were positive for No Polio Enterovirus (NPEV)), two Sabin like virus type 3(SL3), fifteen Sabin like virus type (SL2), one positive for both SL2, No enterovirus, one hundred fourteen samples were negative and thirty eight are pending for processing.

Table 1: Cumulative number of acute diarrhoeal disease, suspected cholera, suspected measles, SARI, and suspected malaria cases in drought-affected regions of Somalia (epidemiological weeks 1 -Week 09 2023, 20 February to 05 March 2023)

Regions	Acute diarrhoeal disease[5]	Suspected Measles cases[6]	Suspected Malaria case[7]	SARI cases[8]	Suspected cholera cases[9]	cVDPV2 from AFP Case
AWDAL	0	9	1425	0	0	0
BAKOOL	198	34	984	38	66	0
BANADIR	5506	440	2318	1783	481	0
BARI	3074	28	2444	78	0	0
BAY	1366	537	3182	686	149	0
GALBEED	0	13	716	0	0	0
GALGADUD	157	0	1362	3658	0	0
GEDO	433	5	2839	692	323	0
HIRAN	769	14	1362	492	1	0
KARKAR	1342	-	583	389	0	0
LOWER JUBA	0	65	1151	0	659	0
LOWER SHABELLE	2222	94	1068	303	358	1
MIDDLE JUBA	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDDLE SHABELLE	236	21	2633	22	136	0
MUDUG	1382	71	2268	273	0	0
NUGAL	1587	25	1289	427	0	0
SOUTH MUDUG	719	0	0	1256	0	0
SAHIL	0	3	504	0	0	0
SANAG	947	0	803	0	0	0
SOOL	5	1	390	245	0	0
TOGDHER	0	54	1373	0	0	0
TOTAL	**19 943**	**1414**	**28 717**	**10 347**	**2173**	**1**

Note: Continuous data quality review has been conducted which may lead to variation of figures for new cases and cumulative cases of epidemic prone disease in each region.

---

4 Source of data is EWARN as of February 2023(up to week 6-7) due to unable failed to download EWARN data.
5 Source of data is fever and rash surveillance system as of January 2023
6 Source of data is DHIS2 as of January 2023
7 Source of data is EWARN as of February 2023
8 Source of data is suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoea surveillance system managed by the FMOH as of February 2023
9 Source of data is EPI/Polio Weekly update sitrep report 2023.

@WHO Somalia   **WHO Somalia**   **somaliawho**