

September 2023

# Health Emergency Programme Update – Somalia



Vaccination campaign with nomadic population in Puntland. ©:WHO Somalia

## KEY HEALTH INDICATORS – SEPTEMBER 2023

<b>130</b>	43 (33.1%) active health cluster partners in 56 districts.
<b>7.8 million</b>	People in need of health care

## HEALTH NEEDS AND PROVISION

- 8.3 million people (over half the population of Somalia) are in need of humanitarian assistance<sup>1</sup>.
- Nearly 3.7 million people - 22% of the population - are experiencing acute food insecurity including 2.8 million facing emergency (IPC 3) and 919 000 in catastrophe (IPC 5) levels of food insecurity. 1.5 million children are facing acute malnutrition<sup>2</sup>.
- More than 1.2 million people in riverine districts are likely to be displaced by flash floods from the projected El Niño starting October to December 2023, which will lead to disease outbreaks, loss of lives, destruction of property and food crops in field .
- Fewer than 1 consultation per person per year reported during the month (as compared to the OCHA standard of 1 new visit/person/year).

1 <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-response-plan-february-2023>

2 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report -September 18, 2023

3 FSNU/FAO, Understanding El Niño: projecting impacts and implications on food security & livelihoods in Somalia, July 2023.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 222 Community Health Workers (CHWs) were deployed in nine districts across six states, including nine drought-affected districts where the World Health Organization (WHO) is implementing drought response activities.
- 75 362 people were reached with preventative messages for epidemic-prone diseases including water and vector-borne diseases and respiratory pathogens including COVID-19.
- 945 children under the age of 5 years with acute diarrhoea were identified and treated in the community with oral rehydration salts (ORS) and zinc.
- CHWs screened 13 195 children under the age of five for malnutrition using mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurement, of whom 2830 (21.4%) had moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 897 (6.8%) had severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Children with MAM were referred to an outpatient therapeutic programme (OTP) while those with SAM were referred to stabilization centres.
- 867 pregnant women were given iron and folic acid supplements, 716 children aged 6 to 59 months were given vitamin A supplements, and 7990 lactating mothers were sensitized on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) activities.
- 2756 severely malnourished children with medical complications were admitted to 48 nutrition stabilization centres that are supported by WHO, of whom 2470 (89.6%) were cured, 25 (0.9%) were registered as defaulters, while 21 (0.8%) died.
- 16 511 people in drought-affected communities, including 6014 (36.4%) children under 5 years, received integrated primary health care services.

## Coordination meetings

- WHO convened coordination meetings with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) cluster partners to identify the needs of the 1.2 million people at risk of El Niño that is projected to start in October 2023. During the meeting, participants resolved to re-activate the WASH/Health Technical Working Group on cholera response and update the cholera preparedness and response plan for Somalia. The partners also conducted a mapping exercise of the available supplies and WHO prepositioned cholera kits to districts at higher risk of cholera outbreaks. The state-based health teams also identified urgent needs for the response to El Niño.
- In Galmudug state, WHO convened a meeting with health cluster partners including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to develop a response plan for suspected cases of diphtheria that have been reported through District Health Information System (DHIS-2) mainly from camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) located in Galkayo town. Partners were concerned about the low vaccination coverage in Galkayo and developed a response plan to deploy outreach teams to vaccinate children in IDP settlements. WHO donated 100 doses of diphtheria anti-toxoid (DAT) that will be used to treat suspected cases.



Community engagement for vaccination campaign with nomadic population in Puntland. Photo credit: © WHO Somalia

## Implementation of community-based surveillance

WHO deployed 222 Community Health Workers (CHWs) in nine districts in which WHO is supporting drought response operations. The CHWs conducted risk communication, community education, alert detection, reporting, screening for malnutrition among children, and home-based management of common childhood illnesses.

- CHWs visited 33 218 households and sensitized an estimated 75 362 people with preventative messages for epidemic-prone diseases including COVID-19.
- CHWs detected and reported 945 alerts of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD), 826 alerts of suspected measles and 474 alerts of COVID-19

In the nine drought-affected districts where WHO has scaled up the implementation of health interventions, CHWs conducted the following activities:

- Identified and treated 945 children under the age of five with acute diarrhoea with ORS and zinc. 472 (49.9%) children with severe dehydration were referred for further management in health facilities.
- Screened 13 195 children under the age of five for malnutrition using MUAC, of whom 2830 (21.4%) had MAM and 897 (6.8%) had SAM. Children with MAM were referred to an OTP while those with SAM were referred to stabilization centres.
- Provided iron and folic acid to 867 pregnant women, vitamin A supplementation to 716 children aged 6 to 59 months and deworming tablets to 1494 children aged 12 to 59 months and sensitized 7990 lactating mothers with key messages on IYCF activities.
- Reported 54 community deaths of whom 20 (37.0%) were children under five years.

## Cholera response in drought-affected districts

Somalia is currently emerging from the risk of famine that was projected in 2022 following five failed rained seasons. However, El Niño is projected by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to affect 1.2 million people in riverine districts from October 2023. The resulting floods further increase the risk of outbreaks of cholera and other water-borne diseases. Currently 29 drought-affected districts have reported 13 652 cholera cases and 35 deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR) 0.3%) resulting from limited access to safe water, poor sanitation and uncontrolled populations movements

internally and to neighboring countries. As the cholera case load increased by 30% from 167 cases in week 36 to 223 in week 39, WHO has scaled up preparedness and response activities for districts at risk of flooding.

To reduce the risk of new cholera cases, WHO has supported the MoH to implement the following activities:

- WHO supported community sensitization targeting 1.2 million IDPs in districts prone to flooding during El Niño on home-based water treatment and community management of water sources to prevent contamination.
- WHO supported district-based rapid response teams on the investigation and validation of 80 alerts of cholera of which 16 were tested positive for *Vibrio cholerae* 0139 Ogawa.
- WHO teams in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya convened cross-border coordination meetings and reviewed the progress of cholera response activities as well as planning for reactive oral cholera vaccination campaigns in the three countries.
- WHO prepositioned 29 metric Tonnes of cholera kits and RDTs, that are sufficient to manage the projected 450 cases until the end of the year.

## Investigation of suspected cases of diphtheria in Galmudug state

- The state-based MOH in Galmudug reported alerts of suspected cases of diphtheria to the Federal MOH, WHO and health cluster partners. In response, WHO supported the district-based rapid response team who conducted field visits and identified cases with signs and symptoms in line with diphtheria case definition. Seven suspected cases including three deaths (CFR 42.9%) were listed in standard line list. Three (42.9%) of the seven cases were aged under 5 years and were from Gargar IDP settlement in Galkayo. The team collected six blood samples that will be shipped to the WHO collaborating center in London for further analysis. In addition, WHO provided 100 doses of DAT for the management of suspected cases. The district response teams have been supported to scale up active case search in Galkayo and surrounding villages. The Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) team developed a plan to scale up vaccination campaigns targeting children under five years who have never been vaccinated in Galkayo and surrounding villages.

## Implementation of drought response activities in affected districts

WHO is collaborating with other UN agencies to scale up the provision of integrated primary healthcare services to drought-affected communities in nine districts in Galmudug, Jubaland, Southwest, Hirshabelle and Banadir region. WHO deployed integrated outreach teams, who:

- Delivered integrated primary healthcare services to 16 511 people in drought-affected communities, of whom 6014 (36.4%) were children under 5 years of age.
- Treated 644 children under 5 years with acute diarrhoeal diseases using ORS while 1936 children aged 6 to 59 months were given vitamin A supplementation.
- Vaccinated 1440 children under 5 years with the first dose of pentavalent vaccine, 1055 with the third dose of pentavalent vaccine, 1088 with the first dose of measles containing vaccine (MCV1) and 618 with the second dose of measles containing vaccine (MCV2).
- Vaccinated 584 pregnant women against tetanus.



Service provision at Midnimo Health Center, Kismayo. © WHO Somalia/ Ismail Taxta

Additionally, WHO expanded service delivery in Kahda and Daynile districts in Banadir, which have the highest concentration of IDPs. Integrated outreach teams delivered the following activities:

- Provided primary healthcare services to 8190 displaced people suffering from different drought-associated diseases, of whom 3527 (43.1%) were children under 5 years.
- Screened 3193 children for malnutrition, of whom 279 (8.7%) had SAM and were referred to stabilization facilities for therapeutic nutrition while 922 (28.9%) with MAM were referred to OTP for supplementary feeding.

- Provided 2290 children with vitamin A, dewormed 1868 children using albendazole tablets and treated 190 cases of AWD using ORS.
- Vaccinated 565 children with Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) as well as 763 with the first dose of oral polio vaccine (OPV1) and first dose of pentavalent vaccine (DPT1), 625 children with the second dose (OPV2) and second dose of pentavalent vaccine (DPT2), and 646 with the third dose of oral polio vaccine (OPV3) and third dose of pentavalent vaccine (DPT3). 649 children received the first dose of inactive polio vaccine (IPV1) and 660 received the second dose (IPV2). 752 children received the first dose of measles containing vaccine (MCV1) and 413 received the second dose (MCV2).

## Nutrition update in drought-affected districts

- WHO, in collaboration with the nutrition cluster, supported 63 stabilization centres to provide care for children suffering from SAM with medical complications in drought-affected districts. In August 2023, 47 (74.6%) stabilization centres submitted reports on time, including three in Banadir region, nine in Jubaland, six in Galmudug, three in Hirshabelle, 16 in Southwest State and 10 in Puntland. In August, 2756 children suffering from SAM with medical complications were admitted to stabilization facilities – of whom 2470 (89.6%) were cured, 41 (1.5%) were registered as defaulters, while 25 (0.9%) died. The districts that reported the highest number of SAM cases with medical complications were Dolow in Gedo region (227) and Baidoa (230).
- WHO donated five kits for the management of severe cases of malnutrition with medical complications (WHO-PED-SAM) to Garowe, Bosaso, Wanlaweyn and Marka General Hospital stabilization centers. These supplies will be used to treat an estimated 250 vulnerable children affected by the drought in Lower Shabelle, Nugal and Bari regions, meeting the urgent needs of children under five years and improving the case management of SAM with medical complications in the affected communities.



Malnutrition screening at Kismayo General Hospital stabilization centre.  
Photo credit: © WHO Somalia/ Ismail Taxta

## Capacity building for the implementation of infection prevention and control activities in Galmudug states

- WHO supported the state-based MOH in Galmudug to build the capacity of 25 frontline health workers on the implementation of infection prevention and control (IPC) activities in health facilities. The 25 health workers, of whom 11 were female, were selected from Dhusamareb health facilities including the regional hospital, the district hospital, Hanano Hospital, Central Hospital and the mother and child health unit.. Health workers were trained on the implementation of IPC guidelines in health facilities, coordination of IPC activities, medical waste management, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), risk assessment for IPC, safe injection practices, and monitoring and evaluation of IPC implementation.

## Contacts

Dr Mirza Mashrur Ahmed, [ahmedmi@who.int](mailto:ahmedmi@who.int)  
Ms Fouzia Bano, Communications Officer, [banof@who.int](mailto:banof@who.int)  
Mr Kyle Defreitas, External Relations Officer, [defreitask@who.int](mailto:defreitask@who.int)  
Dr Omar Omar, Information Management Officer, [oomar@who.int](mailto:oomar@who.int)

## Our weekly and monthly information products

### Weekly cholera infographic:

- <http://www.emro.who.int/somalia/information-resources/acute-watery-diarrhoeacholera-situation-reports.html>

### Monthly reports:

- <http://www.emro.who.int/countries/somalia/index.html>
- COVID-19 Dashboard-Somalia



@WHO Somalia



@WHOSom



somaliawho