



Drought crisis in the Horn of Africa

United Nations response



UN Department of Public Information

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Backgrounder # 7

United Nations response to the drought crisis in the Horn of Africa

Situation overview

The famine across the Horn of Africa – in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia – has left more than 12.4 million people in desperate need and claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people - half of them younger than five.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon continues to press for an urgent international effort to address the humanitarian emergency in the region.

In the past week, the United Nations has added Bay to the list of areas facing famine in Somalia. The other five are the Bakool agropastoral livelihood zones, all areas of Lower Shabelle, the Balcad and Cadale districts of Middle Shabelle, the Afgoye corridor IDP settlement, and the Mogadishu IDP community.

Famine implies extreme food shortages for at least 20 percent of households, acute malnutrition in over 30 per cent of people, and two deaths per 10,000 people every day.

The situation in the Bay region is worse than anything previously recorded. "The rate of malnutrition [among children] in Bay region is 58 per cent. This is a record rate of acute malnutrition," a UN official told a press conference in Nairobi.

According to UNHCR, children are bearing the brunt of the Horn of Africa crisis and constitute the majority of all Somali refugees in Ethiopia. UNHCR is concerned about the high mortality rates due to severe acute malnutrition and diseases, as well as the number of separated or unaccompanied children.

UNHCR has been supplementing food aid delivered by other agencies in famine-stricken areas in the south of Somalia. By the end of August, UNHCR had reached almost 220,000 people and aimed to reach an additional 180,000 by the end of September.

According to UNICEF, one in six children is severely malnourished in most regions of southern Somalia. Without urgent help, these children could die in a matter of weeks. However, once treated, these children could recover quickly.

The [regional consensus climate outlook](#) for the September to December 2011 season predicts normal rainfall for most of the Horn, with the exception of dry conditions over Sudan, northern

Ethiopia and much of Eritrea. These rains will not immediately relieve the impact of previous dry seasons and some areas are likely to receive above-normal rainfall, with risks of flooding.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA, the appeal for funds to respond to the hunger crisis in the Horn of Africa is still only 63 per cent funded (as of 8 September 2011).

Despite the ongoing response to the humanitarian crisis, projections indicate that famine will become widespread throughout southern Somalia by the end of this year.

How to Help

OCHA website: Horn of Africa Crisis – DONATE

<http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/how-to-give>

UNICEF website: Crisis in the Horn of Africa – DONATE NOW

<http://www.supportunicef.org/site/pp.asp?c=9fLEJSOALpE&b=7542627>

WFP website: Horn Of Africa: 10 Ways You Can Help

<http://www.wfp.org/stories/horn-africa-10-ways-you-can-help>

UNHCR website: Somali refugees need your help now!

<http://www.unhcr.org/emergency/somalia/>

Websites of UN Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes

OCHA website: Horn of Africa Crisis

<http://www.unocha.org/crisis/horn-africa-crisis>

UN Africa Renewal (DPI) online report *Famine in the Horn of Africa*

<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/famine-in-africa/index.html>

WFP website: Horn of Africa Crisis

<http://www.wfp.org/crisis/horn-of-africa>

FAO website: Crisis in the Horn of Africa

<http://www.fao.org/crisis/horn-africa/home/en/>

UNICEF website

<http://www.unicef.org/>

UNHCR website: Crisis in the Horn of Africa

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4e1ff4b06.html>

WHO websites

<http://www.who.int/en/>

<http://www.emro.who.int/index.asp>

IFAD website: Horn of Africa: The rains will fail in 2015, 2016, or 2017, but must we also fail?

<http://www.ifad.org/>

UNOOSA/UN-SPIDER SpaceAid Framework supports information flow on crisis in Horn of Africa

<http://www.un-spider.org/horn-of-africa-2011>

Recent UN News Centre stories

Djibouti: UNICEF launches scheme to provide safe drinking water

7 September 2011 – The United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has begun a 75-day operation to provide thousands of Djiboutians with safe drinking water as the country continues to suffer from the drought gripping much of the Horn of Africa.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39472&Cr=Horn+of+Africa&Cr1=&Kw1=horn+&Kw2=africa&Kw3=>

More than 80 per cent of Somali refugees in Ethiopia are children – UN

6 September 2011 – Children are bearing the brunt of the Horn of Africa crisis and constitute the majority of all Somali refugees in neighbouring Ethiopia, the United Nations reported today.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39459&Cr=horn+of+africa&Cr1=&Kw1=horn+&Kw2=africa&Kw3=>

Horn of Africa food crisis remains dire as famine spreads in Somalia – UN

5 September 2011 – The United Nations agricultural agency today called for greater efforts bring the food crisis in the Horn of Africa under control, saying that famine conditions had spread to a sixth area in Somalia, putting an estimated 750,000 people in the country at risk of starvation over the next four months.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39450&Cr=Horn+of+Africa&Cr1=>

UN and partners boost food aid to Somali refugees amid alarming malnutrition

2 September 2011 – United Nations agencies and their partners are stepping up food distribution in refugee camps in Ethiopia that house people who have fled famine in neighbouring Somalia amid alarming malnutrition rates among children, the UN refugee agency reported today.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39435&Cr=Horn+of+Africa&Cr1=&Kw1=somalia&Kw2=&Kw3=>

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