

ZOOM-IN: DROUGHT IN WAJID DISTRICT, BAKOOL REGION, SOMALIA

March, 2023

Wajid district, Bakool region

KEY MESSAGES

- Findings suggest pervasive food insecurity in Wajid - which may be due to a decline in incomes caused by low crop yields coupled with limited market access.
- On-site healthcare was seldom reported - with KIs in 55% of all assessed settlements reporting that most people in the community sought healthcare outside of their settlement, and KIs in 29% of settlements reporting that most people in the community did not seek healthcare at all.
- There were high protection concerns regarding women and girls in-district in three quarters of the assessed settlements, especially threats of violence.
- Displacement was occurring, yet some residents wanted to move and could not do so in Wajid. Elderly people were reportedly among the most likely to remain, yet also among the most likely to face barriers to information or humanitarian assistance.

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Somalia's protracted and dynamic humanitarian crisis includes ongoing conflict, climate-related shocks and communicable disease outbreaks¹. Years of failed rainy seasons continue to exacerbate the precarity of agropastoral livelihoods, the consequences of seasonal flooding, and abet insecurity - and may have caused an estimated 43,000 excess deaths in 2022². Drought, flooding and active conflict are driving internal displacements, and were the most reported reasons for displacement from the 1,285,404 recorded displacements between 1 January 2023 and 1 June 2023 in Somalia³.

Displacement, active conflict, and natural disasters (i.e., drought, flooding) in-country continue to abet communicable disease outbreaks including measles, cholera, and acute watery diarrhea (AWD)⁴. UNICEF included Somalia in its May 2023 global call to action on cholera - which reported that climate change, active conflict, and underinvestment in WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene) placed an estimated 1.1 billion people at risk of cholera⁵. Cholera cases have been continuously reported across 28 drought-affected districts in Somalia since 2022, and in Banadir district since 2017⁶.

In tandem, since January 2023, 19,943 cases of AWD were reported (of

which 14,643 (73%) were children under five), and 2,349 cases of measles were reported (of which 1,618 (69%) were children under five)⁷. Due to a lack of services in the hard-to-reach areas, humanitarian needs there may be more acute⁸. Wajid district is among the most inaccessible and isolated districts in the Bakool region, and findings from REACH's [Somalia, Humanitarian Situation Monitoring \(HSM\) key findings, March 2023](#), indicate that 64% of KIs in the assessed settlements reported that households had to use surface water for drinking, and that the WASH and health needs may be acute in this hard-to-reach district. These findings motivated the HSM unit to zoom in on Wajid.

Wajid communities rely on agropastoral livelihoods that depend on regular rainfall, yet the broader Bakool region has experienced six consecutive rainy seasons with below average rainfall^{9,10}. Wajid was also among the most severely affected districts by the drought in August 2022, and the broader Bakool region may have been among the regions with the highest amount of excess deaths due to drought between January 2022 and December 2022^{11, 12}.

Separately, Wajid was projected to remain in Integrated Phased Classification-IPC Phase 4 (Crisis) from April 2023 to June 2023¹³. This factsheet relies on data collected through Key Informants in hard-to-reach districts between 6 and 23 March 2023.

Food Security and Livelihoods

Pervasive food insecurity

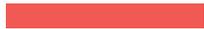
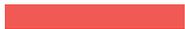
Key informant interviews (KIIs) regarding assessed settlements in the district indicated pervasive food insecurity. KIs in three quarters (78%) of assessed settlements reported that there was a time when there was no food to eat of any kind in their respective households due to a lack of resources to get food within the 30 days prior to data collection.

Key Informants in 48% of settlements reported that either they or members within their household had gone to sleep hungry because there was not enough food within the 30 days prior to data collection.

Declining incomes due to low crop yields

Food insecurity may be partially caused by a decline in incomes due to low crop yields¹⁴. KIs in almost 3 in 4 assessed settlements reported that most households in the assessed settlements had earned “less money” between January and March 2023 compared to October to December 2022 (71% of assessed settlements); and KIs in 80% of assessed settlements reported that the crop quantity was “much less than normal” for most households.

Most reported reasons for crop loss, by % of assessed settlements*

High temperatures		72%
Lack of water for irrigation		65%
Lack of rainfall		65%

Findings could further suggest that past failed rainy seasons and the weather were continuing to hinder farmers from accessing the amount of water needed to harvest a “normal” crop yield.

The findings complement the dry, warm conditions expected in the jilaal (December to March) dry season and the poor vegetation conditions in the Bakool region from January and February 2023 at the time of the post-deyr harvest^{15,16}. Reportedly high temperatures and low rainfall in the current gu (April to June) rain season could again hinder crop yields and may perpetuate food insecurity¹⁷.

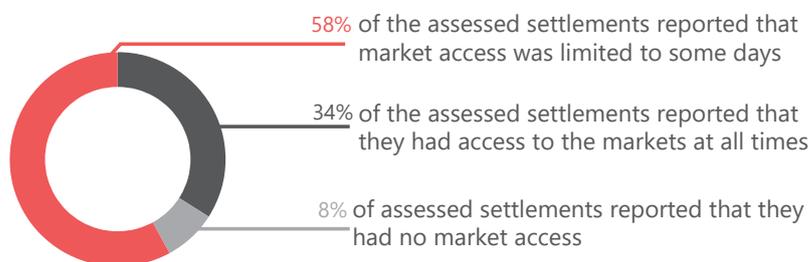
Markets

In tandem with a decline in incomes due to low crop yields, limited market access may be driving food insecurity in Wajid.

Markets accessibility

KIs from two thirds of the assessed settlements reported market accessibility barriers with access to markets which can be reached by households in the settlement being either limited to some days (58% of assessed settlements) or not being accessible at all (8% of assessed settlements).

Market accessibility to most households in the settlement at the time of data collection, by % of assessed settlements.



Market barriers in almost all assessed settlements

Key Informants in 89% of assessed settlements reported at least one barrier to accessing markets. Findings further suggest that cost, rather than limited days, may be the most prevalent barrier to accessing markets. The most commonly reported barriers to accessing markets were the cost of transportation (59% of all assessed settlements) to the markets, high prices in the markets (57%) and high taxes at the checkpoints en-route to the markets (43%).

Rising food prices

75%

of assessed settlements reported that food prices had increased between January 2023 and March 2023.

Findings further suggest that food prices were rising in the markets that assessed settlements in Wajid relied on.

This complements broader analysis of market prices in the Hirshabelle and Southwest regions where prices largely increased or stayed the same between January and March 2023, particularly in March 2023 due to reduced food supplies¹⁸.

*KIs could choose several answers and the results may exceed 100%. The question was only asked to KIs that reported most Households in their settlement experienced some crop loss.

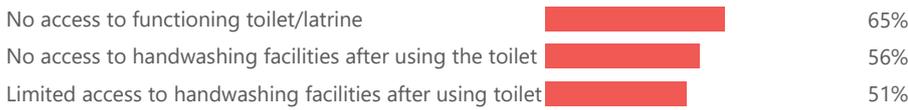
Sanitation

A lack of sanitation facilities could increase household exposure to disease outbreaks in Wajid.

Sanitation issues in almost all assessed settlements

KIs in almost all assessed settlements (91%) reported at least one sanitation issue. The most commonly reported sanitation issues suggest a lack of sanitation facilities.

Most commonly reported sanitation issues at the time of data collection, by % of assessed settlements**.



Water

A lack of sufficient access to an improved water source could similarly increase household exposure to disease outbreaks.

Reliance on unimproved water sources for drinking

Findings suggest that in the majority of assessed settlements some households were relying on unimproved water sources to meet basic needs. KIs in most settlements reported that some households relied on surface water from a river or pond for drinking (70% of assessed settlements).

KIs in 29% of assessed settlements mentioned that households in their community reduced water consumption for drinking.

Reducing water consumption for cooking and other basic needs

KIs in the majority of assessed settlements similarly reported using untreated water or surface water for cooking (60% and 55% of assessed settlements, respectively).

Findings further suggest that more than half of the assessed settlements were reducing water consumption for bathing, cleaning the house and sanitation (51% of assessed settlements).

These findings complement reportedly high reliance on water from unimproved and untreated water sources in the Wajid district Nutrition Survey led by Action Against Hunger in January 2023, which also notes the negative influence that poor WASH conditions have had on nutrition outcomes in the district¹⁹.

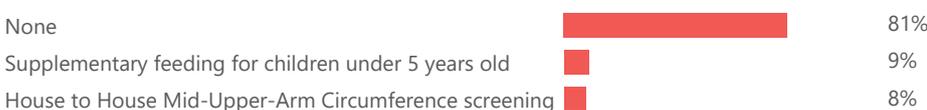
Health

Lack of healthcare services in assessed settlements

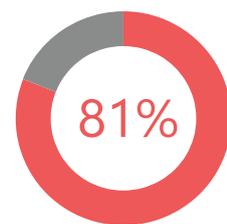
The reported lack of healthcare services could exacerbate the negative influence of poor WASH conditions in the assessed settlements. KIs in over half of assessed settlements reported that healthcare workers never come to the settlement (55%).

Findings further suggest that households had to seek healthcare services outside the settlement or did not seek healthcare services at all. KIs in 55% of all assessed settlements reported that most people in the settlement went to a health facility outside of the settlement for healthcare services, and KIs in almost a third (29%) of assessed settlements reported that most people did not go to seek healthcare services at all.

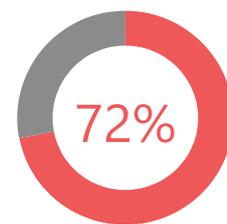
Most commonly reported healthcare, nutrition or food services provided to the settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection, by % of assessed settlement and service***.



Large distance to nearest health facilities



% of assessed settlements where there had been no healthcare, nutrition or food services provided in the 30 days prior to data collection.



% of assessed settlements where the nearest functional facility was an hour or more away at the time of data collection.

**KIs who did not report any sanitation issues, were not asked the follow up questions regarding sanitation. KIs could choose up to three answers. Therefore, results may exceed 100%. In addition, 9% of assessed settlements did not report any sanitation issues.

***KIs could choose multiple answers. Therefore, results may exceed 100%.

Protection

High protection concerns among women and girls

Findings indicate high protection concerns, particularly threats of violence, regarding women and girls in the assessed settlements in Wajid. Three quarters (75%) of assessed settlements reported that women and girls had safety or security concerns.

Most commonly reported safety & security concerns for women and girls in the settlement, by % of assessed settlements.

Threatened with violence		57%
Forcibly married		27%
Sexual harassment or violence		26%

Protection concerns

High protection concerns among women parallel external reporting of security incidents involving Al-Shabab, clan militias and government forces in the broader Southwest State, including 2 incidents relating to small arms fire in March 2023 and 3 incidents relating to small arms fire and light weapons in February 2023 in Wajid district²⁰.

Displacement

Displacement leaves some behind

KIs from almost all (97%) assessed settlements reported that people had moved out of the settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection; yet KIs in 40% of assessed settlements where displacement was mentioned reported that specific household members rather than the entire household had moved together - indicating that some family members remained behind. In parallel, almost all assessed settlements (95%) reported that there were people who remained in the settlement and who wanted to move but could not do so. Findings suggest that this may be because people largely could not move by vehicle on Wajid roads.

High needs among remaining elderly populations (60 years and above)

Findings further indicate that elderly people were among the most likely to remain in assessed settlements (34% elderly women, 27% elderly men), yet were also among the most likely to face barriers to information or humanitarian assistance. With regards to information in the assessed settlements, of the 66% of sites where KIs reported that particular groups of people struggled to receive information, KIs from 41% of assessed settlements reported that elderly women and KIs from 31% of assessed settlements reported that elderly men faced barriers to information.

95%

% of assessed settlements where KIs reported that there remained people in the settlement who wanted to move but could not do so.

Humanitarian assistance

KIs in 58% of assessed settlements reported that most people in the settlement struggled to access humanitarian assistance. Of those, 69% of the settlements said that the aid was too far, 53% that transportation to the aid was too expensive, 39% that there was insecurity or danger travelling to, and from the aid collection place. KIs in 30% of those settlements reported that elderly women were among the groups in the settlement that struggled to access humanitarian assistance.

Conclusion

Findings suggest pervasive food insecurity in Wajid - which may be due to a decline in incomes caused by low crop yields coupled with limited market access. Lack of sanitation facilities, improved water sources and healthcare services in-district could increase household vulnerability to contagious diseases which are already present in Somalia, including cholera, AWD and measles, and subsequently compound the influence of food insecurity in-district. Potential future natural hazards (i.e., lack of rainfall, flooding or drought) could exacerbate these current conditions.

In parallel, high reporting of protection incidents and residents who wanted to move and could not do so may further reflect the acute needs of Wajid. Reported high protection concerns among women and girls, in tandem with external reporting of violent incidents in South West State, could indicate percolating insecurity. High reporting of people who wanted to move but could not do so could reflect an inability to access basic services - particularly noting that elderly populations were among the most commonly reported population groups who wanted to move but could not do so, yet were also the most likely to face barriers to information or humanitarian assistance.

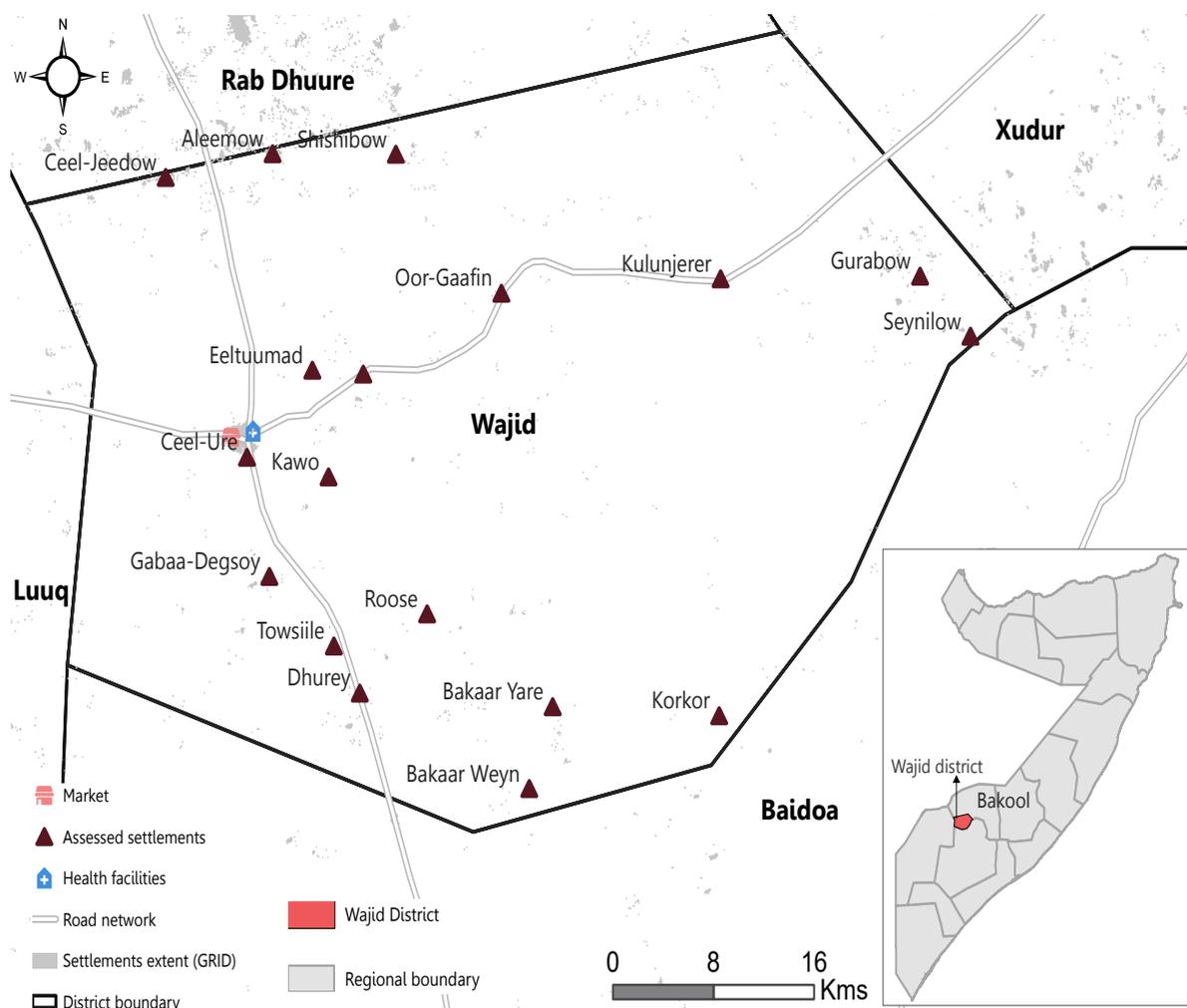
METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This Hard to Reach (H2R) assessment is based on an Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology which relied on key informants (KIs) quantitative interviews to provide an indicative overview of the situation in the inaccessible district of Wajid Somalia. The key informants (KIs) were selected if they were members of the local community living in the settlement and were knowledgeable enough to report on the settlement with regards to basic services, markets and livelihood, and protection. 77 interviews were conducted in 20 settlements, 71% of the respondents were female and 29% were males. 89% of the respondents were farmers in the hard-to-reach settlement and only 11% were livestock keepers. The data collection process took place between 6 and 23 March. When possible, enumerators interviewed KIs who were living in hard-to-reach districts at the time of data collection by mobile phone. Respondents were found via snowballing through the AoK KIs interviewed. The KIs were aggregated at the settlement level with a minimum of 3 KIs interviewed per settlement. Where there was non-consensus among the KIs from the same settlement the results were

not aggregated and thus no consensus is indicated in the response. Despite the AoK methodology usually asking KIs to report on behalf of their community, KIs were asked to report at the household level in this assessment. The above analysis is INDICATIVE and not statistically representative of the assessed hard-to-reach district of Wajid.

The AoK methodology intends to support strategic planning and contribute to a more focused, evidence-based humanitarian response in areas where humanitarian workers cannot go on a regular basis due to logistics and/or security constraints. For more information, please see the [Methodology Note](#).

ASSESSMENT COVERAGE



ENDNOTES

1. Source: Reliefweb (8 February 2023). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-february-2023>.
2. Source: Reliefweb (8 February 2023). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-february-2023>.
3. Source: United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) Somalia - Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) (2023) Retrieved from <https://prmn-somalia.unhcr.org/>.
4. Source: WHO EMRO (2023). Retrieved from <https://www.emro.who.int/somalia/information-resources/weekly-epi-watch.html>.
5. Source: United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF) (17 May 2023). Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/reports/cholera-global-call-action>.
6. Source: WHO EMRO (2023) Retrieved from <https://www.emro.who.int/somalia/information-resources/acute-watery-diarrhoeacholera-situation-reports.html>.
7. Source: Reliefweb Somalia: Retrieved from [Humanitarian Situation Monitoring - Key Findings, March 2023](#)
8. Source: WHO EMRO (2023) Retrieved from <https://www.emro.who.int/somalia/information-resources/weekly-epi-watch.html>.
9. Source: Reliefweb (8 February 2023). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-february-2023>.
10. Source: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) (April 2015). Retrieved from <https://fsnau.org/downloads/FSNAU-FEWSNET-Updated-Somalia-Livelihood-Zones-Map-April-2015.pdf>
11. Source: Reliefweb (2023). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2015-000134-som>.
12. Source: Reliefweb (18 August 2022) Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2022-drought-impact-snapshot-august-2022>.
13. Source: Intergrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (13 December 2022). Retrieved from https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Snapshot_Oct2022Jun2023.pdf
14. Almost all KIs in assessed settlements (97% of assessed settlements) reported farming as a main source of income in the assessed settlement in Wajid. This finding complements the existing livelihood zone map for Somalia from FSNAU. Source: FSNAU (April 2015). Retrieved from <https://fsnau.org/downloads/FSNAU-FEWSNET-Updated-Somalia-Livelihood-Zones-Map-April-2015.pdf>.
15. Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Somalia Water and Land Information Management (FAO SWALIM) (2023). Retrieved from <http://www.faoswalim.org/water/climate-somalia#:~:text=Jilal%3A%20a%20warm%2C%20sunny%20and,from%20December%20to%20mid%2DMarch>.
16. Source: FSNAU (May 2023). Retrieved from <https://fsnau.org/downloads/ndvi-index-somalia-jan-2004-aug-2022>.
17. Source: Reliefweb (17 March 2023). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-climate-outlook-2023-gu-long-rains-season-issued-17th-march-2023>.
18. Source: Reliefweb (27 March 2023). Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-joint-markets-and-supply-chain-update-19-25-march-2023>.
19. Source: Humanitarian Response Info (January 2023). Retrieved from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/final_wajid_smart_survey_report_acf_jan_2023.pdf.
20. Source: International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) (2023). Link not available.

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