

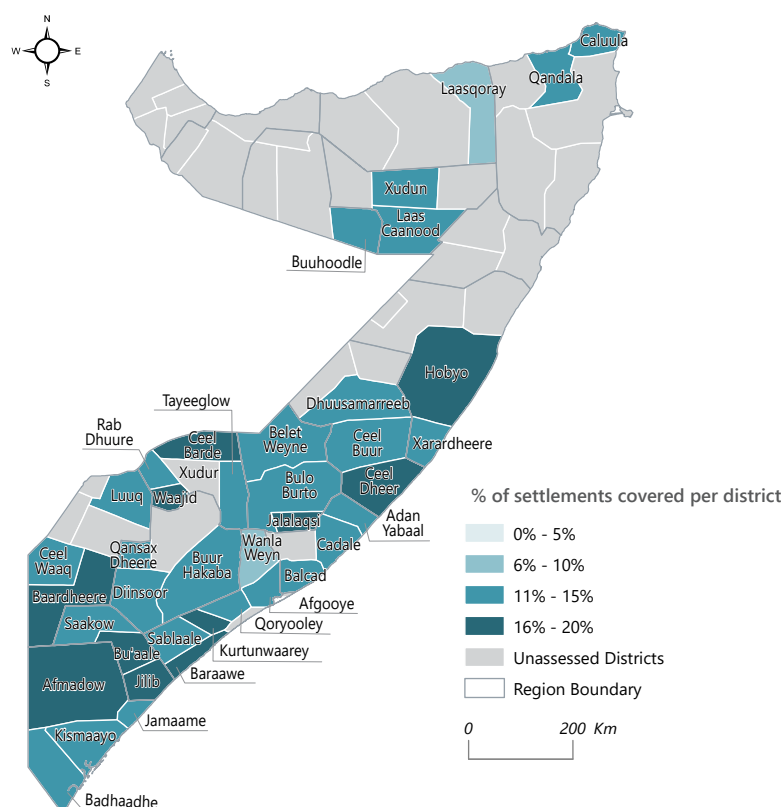
Humanitarian Situation Monitoring: Key Findings From Hard-to-Reach Areas

April 2026 | Somalia

KEY MESSAGES

- Drought remains a key driver of humanitarian conditions in hard-to-reach areas, with key informants in the majority of assessed settlements reporting prolonged rainfall failure as the main recent shock, driving cascading impacts across food security, livelihoods, water access, and protection.
- Food access remains a critical challenge across hard-to-reach areas, with key informants in more than half of assessed settlements reporting insufficient food. Households are widely relying on negative coping strategies, including the sale of productive assets, likely undermining their future resilience.
- Widespread crop losses, declining numbers of livestock (reported in 64% of settlements), and reduced incomes are severely weakening households' ability to recover from shocks.
- Populations in hard-to-reach areas reportedly face barriers to healthcare and rely on unsafe water sources and inadequate sanitation facilities, compounding existing vulnerabilities.

Coverage Map (April 2026)



CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Somalia continues to face a protracted humanitarian crisis driven by recurrent drought, localized conflict, and structural vulnerabilities, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. Climatic shocks, especially below-average rainfall and prolonged dry conditions, have compounded pre-existing fragilities in livelihoods, water access, and food security. Drought conditions continue to negatively affect livelihoods, water access, and food security across Somalia¹. Displacement and population movements are increasingly linked to drought-related shocks, with households moving in search of water, food, assistance, and essential services.² Humanitarian needs remain high, while ongoing socioeconomic pressures continue to limit households' capacity to cope and recover.^{1, 3} REACH's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) tracks multi-sectoral needs across shelter, WASH, livelihoods, markets, health, education, protection, and displacement dynamics. This factsheet presents priority humanitarian needs and emerging trends based on findings from [January](#) and April 2026.

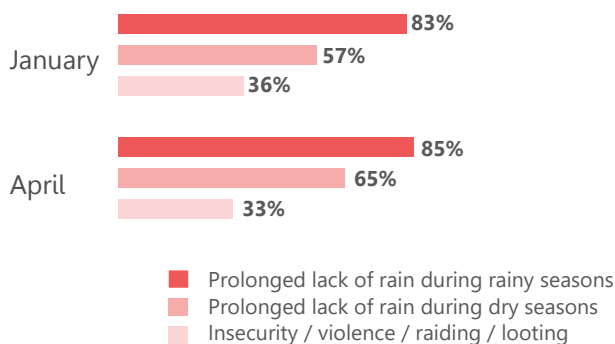
ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Two rounds of data collection in hard-to-reach settlements were conducted in January and April 2026. In the most recent round, 1,773 key informants were interviewed across 625 assessed hard-to-reach settlements in 41 districts between 30 March and 8 April. Sampled settlements were defined as having Very Heavy Restrictions by the Access Working Group (AWG),⁴ due to physical access constraints (e.g., lack of roads, flooding) or security concerns (e.g., clan conflict, presence of armed actors). Key Informants, were selected because they had either been recently displaced from these areas, frequently travel to them, or maintain contact with family or friends still residing there. Data collection in both rounds was carried out in the same 41 districts. However, the number of settlements decreased in the second round, which should be taken into account when interpreting the results. All findings are indicative and are not statistically generalizable. For more detailed information on the methodology, please refer to [page 7](#).

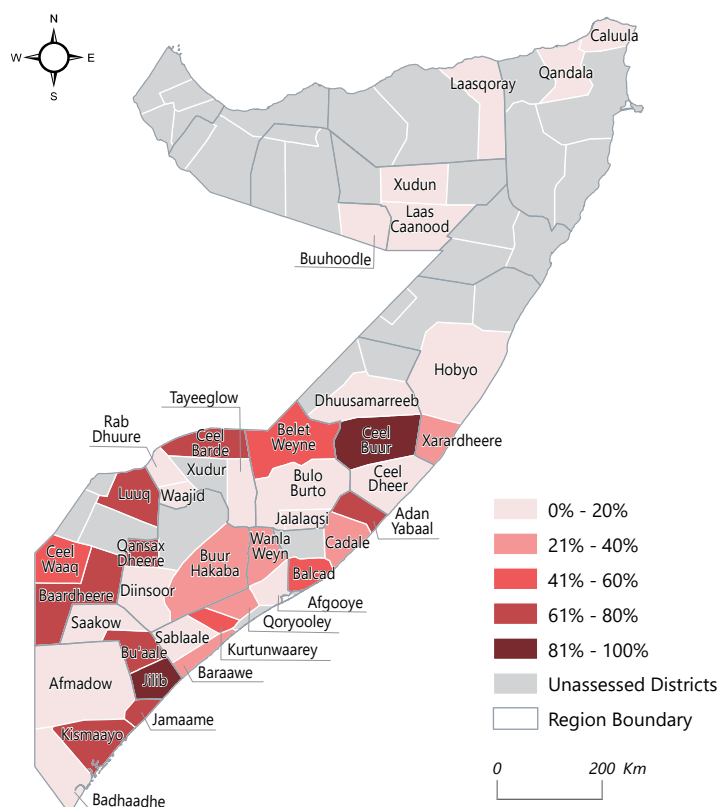
SHOCKS AND ACCESS

In both January and April 2026, key informants in almost all settlements reported a prolonged lack of rainfall following the 2025 Gu (April–June) and/or Deyr (October–December) rainy seasons as the primary shock experienced over the previous 12 months.

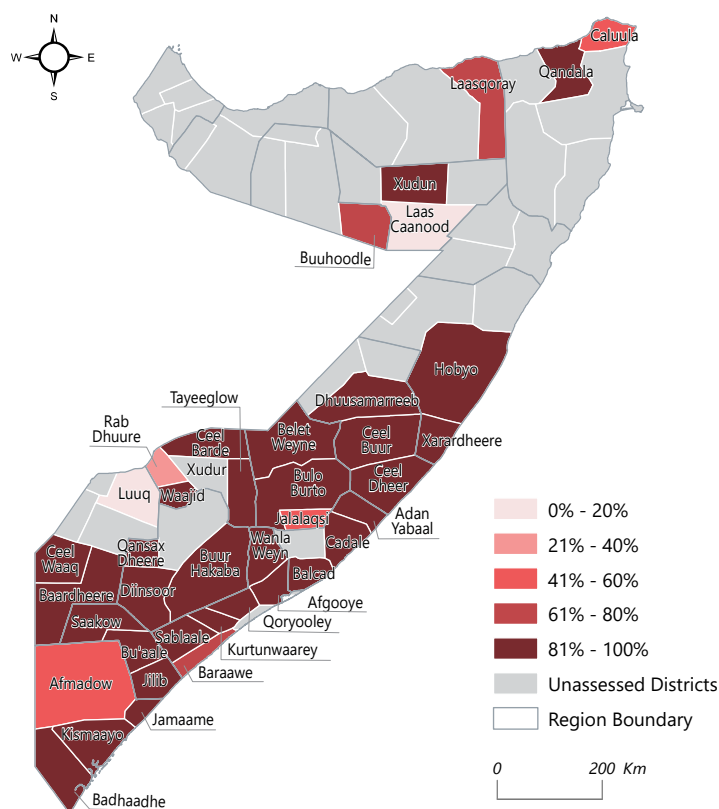
Three most commonly reported shocks affecting assessed settlements in the year preceding data collection, as reported by key informants:*



% of assessed settlements where key informants reported insecurity as one of the shocks affecting the settlement in the year preceding April data collection:



% of assessed settlements where key informants reported prolonged lack of rain during the rainy seasons (Gu 2025 or/and Deyr 2025):

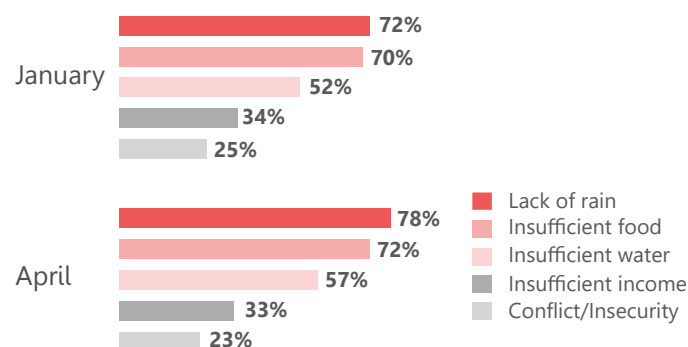


Across both rounds, key informants in 51% of assessed settlements reported that, even where settlements were physically accessible, the roads leading to them were either perceived as unsafe or not passable by vehicle, posing a major barrier to reaching people in need. Safety-related access constraints reportedly increased between January and April, rising from 19% to 27% of settlements.

Population Movement Dynamics

In the month preceding data collection, key informants in more than three quarters of assessed settlements (84%) reported population outflows, with most movements occurring within the same district (51%). This pattern aligns with findings from January, where reported intentions were similar. Key informants identified adult women aged 18–59 (49%) and girls under 18 (43%) as the primary groups leaving the settlements.

Five most commonly reported reasons for population outflows from assessed settlements in the 30 days preceding data collection, as reported by key informants (% of settlements)*



*Key informants could select multiple answers; figures may therefore exceed 100%.

A shift in reported intentions was observed between the January and April rounds. At the beginning of the year, key informants in 39% of settlements reported that most households intended to remain in their current location; by April, this proportion had increased to 51%.

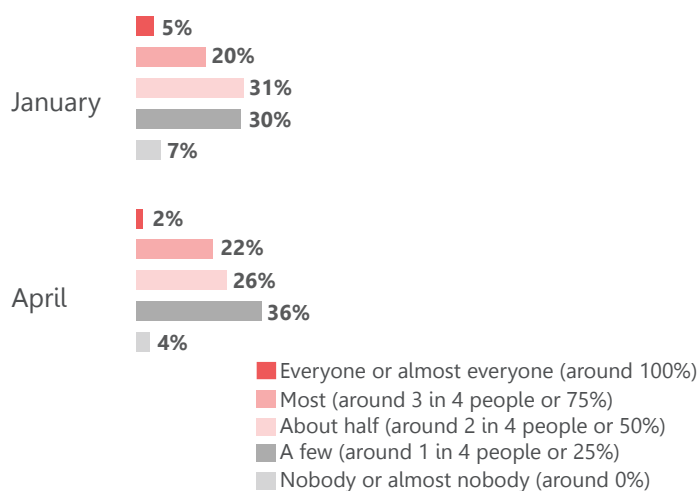
In April, key informants in 67% of assessed settlements reported the presence of people who intended to leave but were unable to do so, representing a decrease of nearly 10 percentage points compared to January (76%). In particular, nearly three quarters of these settlements reported that unaccompanied vulnerable individuals were among the primary groups unable to leave (69%, compared to 59% in January). This is consistent with reported barriers to movement, including individuals being too elderly to travel (48%, compared to 42% in January) and the need for some household members to remain to provide care to dependents (33%, compared to 41% in January).

Concerns related to livelihood loss also appeared to influence mobility. Key informants identified the need to remain in order to protect income-generating assets (44%) and to continue earning income (28%) as barriers to leaving the settlement. This pattern remains consistent with findings from January, when these constraints were reported in 33% and 31% of assessed settlements respectively.

FOOD SECURITY

Key informants in more than half (52%) of the assessed settlements reported that all, almost all, or many households did not have enough food to eat. The results are broadly consistent with those reported in January (48%). In addition, it was reported in one quarter of the settlements that, in the month prior to data collection, more than 75% of households had to resort to unusual and desperate measures to obtain small amounts of food.

% of assessed settlements reporting households resorting to extreme coping strategies to obtain small amounts of food:



Key informants in the majority of assessed settlements reported that food prices had increased (89% in April and 82% in January). The proportion of settlements where households were unable to purchase food remained notable, with over one third reporting this issue in the month preceding data collection (33% in April and 37% in January).

% of assessed settlements where key informants reported increased food and water prices in the three months prior to data collection:

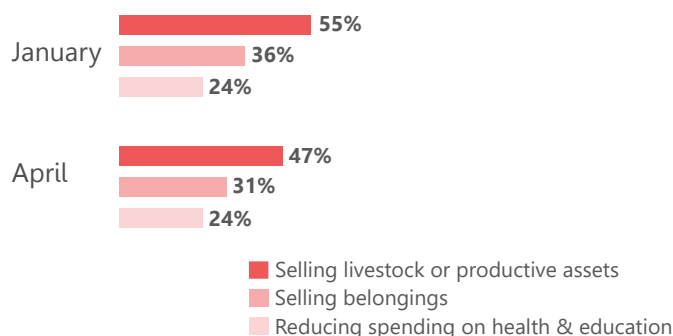


In April, key informants in only 3% of assessed settlements reported that no community members had engaged in food-related coping strategies in the month preceding data collection, highlighting the near-universal prevalence of food insecurity across assessed communities.

Crisis coping strategies were more prevalent than stress strategies. The most commonly reported include selling productive assets (47%) and household belongings (31%), suggesting that households were compromising their future income-generating capacity.

Additionally, key informants in 24% of settlements reported the consumption of seeds. Given that crop production is a key livelihood activity in the assessed area, this practice carries serious implications for future agricultural output and underscores the progressive erosion of household resilience.

% of assessed settlements where key informants reported that some households resorted to using the below strategies to cope with lack of food or money to buy food at the time of data collection:*



Key informants identified farming and livestock herding combined as the main sources of income in nearly half of assessed settlements (41%), followed by settlements where households relied exclusively on farming (24%) or livestock herding (22%). This represents a shift compared to January, when farming alone was identified as the primary income source in a larger share of settlements (37%), while approximately one third (26%) reported engaging in both farming and livestock herding.

In this context, 54% of assessed settlements in April and 46% in January reported the presence of households experiencing a reduction in income from livelihood activities during the three months preceding data collection. This is consistent with the significant impact observed in the types of coping strategies employed.

*Key informants could select multiple answers; figures may therefore exceed 100%.

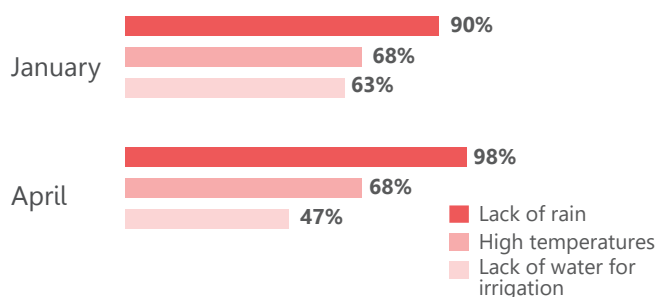
LIVELIHOODS

Among the 87% of assessed settlements where key informants reported farming and/or livestock herding as the main source of income, nearly half (45%) reported that households had lost all, almost all, or a large share of their crops during the most recent harvest season preceding data collection. This points to a significant impact on household livelihood stability, including damage to harvests and the loss of key inputs such as seeds, labour, and time.

The three main drivers of reduced crop production capacity were largely drought-related. Lack of rainfall was reported in nearly all settlements (98%), followed by high temperatures (68%) and insufficient irrigation water (47%).

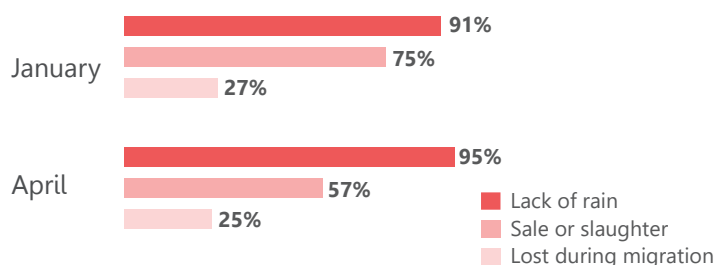
These findings are consistent with those from the January round and align with the FSNAU/FEWS NET Somalia Food Security Outlook, which reported widespread crop failure due to prolonged dry conditions and below-average rainfall across southern and central Somalia in early 2026.⁵ This reflected a direct reduction in earnings and purchasing power, with implications across sectors including food access, WASH, and health. As a result, key informants in over half of assessed settlements (54%) reported a decrease in household income in the three months preceding data collection, an increase compared to January (46%).

Most commonly reported reasons for crop loss, by % of assessed settlements where key informants reported crop loss during the most recent harvest season:*



Livestock ownership was reported in almost all assessed settlements (92%). Water access for livestock relied mainly on boreholes (34%) and wells (27%), indicating dependence on constrained water sources. Against this backdrop, significant impacts on livestock were observed, with a large decline in herd sizes reported in 64% of settlements, compared to 41% in January. The primary driver of this decline was lack of rainfall (95%), likely affecting both water availability for livestock and grazing conditions.

Reported reasons for decreased livestock ownership in the three months preceding data collection, by % of assessed settlements:*



*Key informants could select multiple answers; figures may therefore exceed 100%.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

Key informants in more than half of assessed settlements reported that markets were only accessible on certain days (53% in April and 56% in January), indicating limited and irregular access.

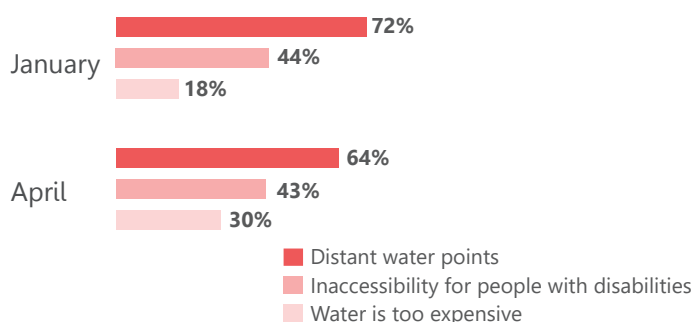
Distance to the nearest marketplace remained the primary barrier to market access (46%, compared to 65% in January). In April, drought (65%) and extreme heat (30%) emerged as additional constraints, reflecting the compounding effect of climate shocks on market functionality. Linked to this, key informants in slightly fewer than half of assessed settlements (40%) reported water and sanitation items as unavailable in the month preceding data collection.

WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

Although reliance on surface water for drinking decreased (47% in April compared to 66% in January), key informants in more than one third of assessed settlements (39%) reported continued reliance on unimproved water sources.

62% of assessed settlements were reported by key informants to have the nearest functional water point located more than 30 minutes away.

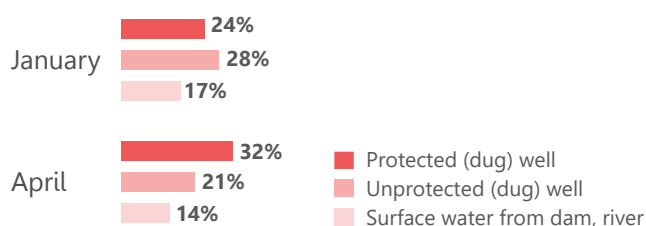
Top three problems with water access as reported by key informants, by % of assessed settlements:*



Due to limited access to sufficient water, key informants in half of assessed settlements reported households reducing water consumption for personal hygiene (50%), laundry (47%), and cleaning (41%). Additionally, key informants in one quarter of settlements (25%) also reported households reducing drinking water consumption. These strategies were reported by key informants as being regularly implemented by households in more than one quarter (26%) of the assessed settlements.

Key informants identified three main coping strategies reported by households facing water shortages. The most common was fetching water from a source farther than usual, cited in 40% of settlements (compared to 36% in January). More than one third of settlements (36%) also reported households relying on less preferred or unimproved water sources for drinking, a slight decrease from 39% in January. Similarly, 35% reported households using less preferred water sources for other purposes such as cooking and washing (34% in January).

Top three drinking water sources as reported by key informants, by % of assessed settlements:*



In addition, key informants in almost all assessed settlements reported that households relied on unimproved sanitation facilities (100% in April and 99% in January).

Regarding the main problems reported, the most common were related to sanitation facilities not functioning at all (48%) and being unclean or unhygienic (44%).

% of assessed settlements where key informants reported households using unimproved sanitation facilities:*

	April	January
Pit latrine without slab	65%	59%
Open defecation	27%	33%
Plastic bag	4%	3%
Hanging toilet	4%	3%
Bucket	0%	1%

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Over the past two rounds of data collection, key informants in over half of assessed settlements reported that residents had to travel outside their settlement to access healthcare (66% in April and 68% in January).

According to key informants interviewed in the assessed settlements, the share of settlements where residents were reported to travel more than 30 minutes to reach the nearest functional health facility increased from 66% in January to 73% in April. Pharmacies were the only health facility available in more than half of the settlements (55%, compared to 65% in the previous round).

Key informants in a minority of assessed settlements reported that communities received at least one service related to healthcare, nutrition, or food (20% in April and 27% in January). In over half of settlements (56% in April, similar to 57% in January), healthcare workers were reported not to visit these areas, indicating persistent gaps in service coverage.

80%

of assessed settlements reported by key informants as having received no healthcare or nutrition services in the month preceding data collection.

Main barriers to accessing healthcare services as reported by key informants in assessed settlements:*

	April	January
No information about health facilities' services, locations or opening times	26%	40%
Specific medicine, treatment or service needed unavailable	25%	40%
Could not afford cost of treatment/medicines	40%	32%
Health facility was too far away	4%	3%

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Across both rounds, key informants in most assessed settlements reported a lack of educational facilities within 15 minutes of travel by regular means of transportation (71% in January and 63% in April). Among the 45% of sites where such facilities were reported to be available, 42% of key informants reported that those schools** were functional.

School attendance appeared to be severely constrained across both primary- and secondary-school-aged children. In 63% of sites, key informants reported that no boys or girls aged 13–17 had attended secondary school regularly (at least four times per week) in the previous six months. In addition, in 71% of sites, key informants reported that not all primary-school-aged boys and girls (5–11 years old) were currently attending school. Limited physical access further exacerbates this situation: in 62% of settlements, the nearest educational facility is located more than 30 minutes away using the most common mode of transport.

UNICEF Somalia's education situation reports identify chronic underfunding, insecurity, and displacement as key factors driving low enrollment and attendance in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas.⁶

Among the barriers reported in accessing education services, in addition to the lack of facilities within or near the settlement, high school fees, including the cost of materials, and the need for children to support household or farming activities were commonly cited. Furthermore, gender-specific constraints were noted, with marriage and/or pregnancy reportedly affecting girls' access to education in 19% of settlements.

*Key informants could select multiple answers; figures may therefore exceed 100%.

**For this indicator, schools include primary schools, secondary schools, and facilities offering basic literacy and numeracy classes.

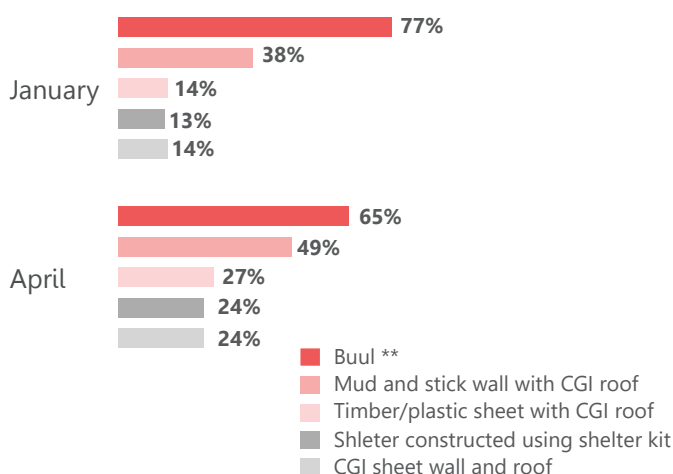
Barriers to accessing education for primary and secondary school-age children (aged 5–17), as reported by key informants, by % of assessed settlements:*

	April		January	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
No school in the settlement	72%	71%	58%	56%
High school fees	35%	30%	33%	33%
Helping at home or farm	27%	30%	32%	32%

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE SHELTER

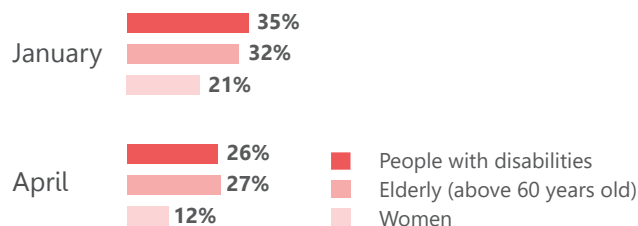
Key informants reported that households in assessed settlements continued to rely on inadequate shelter types.⁷ Despite key informants in three quarters of settlements (75%) reporting private ownership as the predominant tenure arrangement, in more than half of settlements (65%) the main shelter type was identified as buul, while mud and stick walls with corrugated iron roofs was identified as the main shelter type in 49% of settlements.

Five most commonly reported inadequate shelter types as identified by key informants, by % of assessed settlements.*



These shelter options were not equally accessible to all population groups. Key informants in assessed settlements consistently identified vulnerable groups as facing greater barriers to accessing adequate shelter, including older persons (reported in 27% of settlements), individuals with significant difficulties in seeing, hearing, walking, communicating, self-care, or understanding (26% of settlements), and women (12% of settlements).

% of assessed settlements where key informants reported population groups facing unequal access to shelter types:*



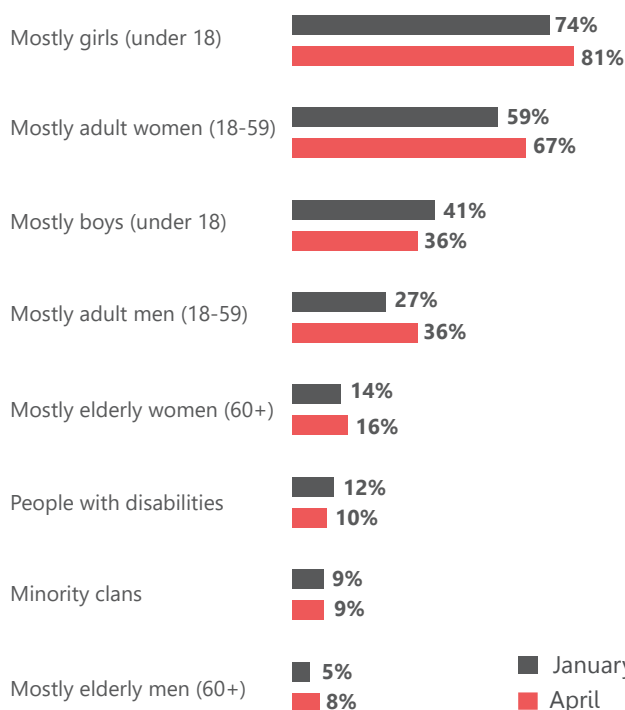
PROTECTION

Across both rounds of data collection, key informants in more than half of assessed settlements reported at least one protection risk at the time of data collection (66% in April and 68% in January). In April, female genital mutilation (FGM) was the most frequently reported risk, followed by verbal harassment and gender-based violence (GBV). In January, the three most commonly reported risks were robbery, FGM, and verbal harassment.

Six most commonly reported protection risks in assessed settlements at the time of data collection, as identified by key informants:*

	April	January
Female genital mutilation	22%	21%
Suffering from verbal harassment	21%	19%
Gender-based violence	18%	11%
Threat of violence	15%	18%
Forced marriage	14%	14%
Robbery	14%	22%

Population groups identified by key informants as facing the greatest protection risks at the time of data collection, by % of assessed settlements:*



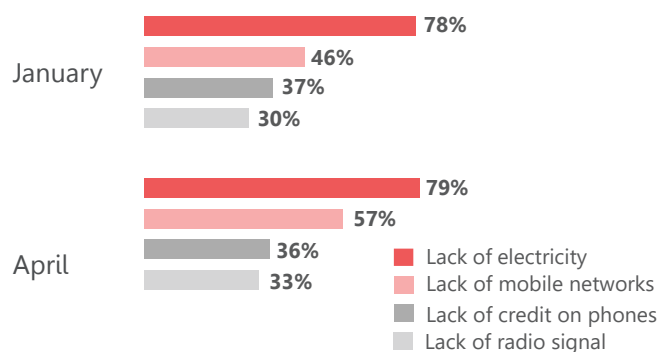
*Key informants could select multiple answers; figures may therefore exceed 100%.

**Buul (timber structure with plastic sheet).

COMMUNICATION

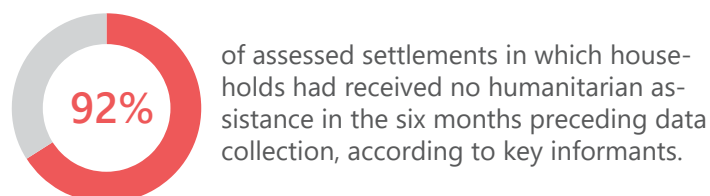
Key informants reported SMS/mobile phones (73%), radio (72%), and community meetings (34%) as the most preferred communication channels, consistent with findings from January. Limited electricity access, weak mobile networks, poor radio signal coverage, remoteness, and insecurity continued to hinder timely access to information across assessed settlements.

Main barriers to accessing information as reported by key informants, by % of assessed settlements:*



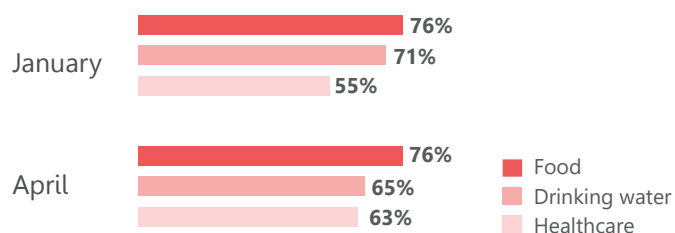
Among the 54% of settlements where key informants reported population groups facing difficulties in accessing information, elderly people were the most affected, with elderly women cited in 42% of settlements and elderly men in 41%.

AAP & HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



The main barriers reported by key informants were long distances (61%), expensive transportation costs (34%), and insecurity or danger when travelling to receive assistance (32%). Key informants in half of assessed settlements reported population groups facing difficulties in accessing aid, with elderly women (34%) and adult women (32%) identified as the most affected groups.

Top three priority needs for most households as reported by key informants, by % of assessed settlements*



METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

This assessment was based on an Area of Knowledge (AoK) methodology, which relies on key informant (KI) quantitative interviews to provide an indicative overview of hard-to-reach areas in Somalia. When possible, enumerators interviewed KIs who were living in hard-to-reach areas at the time of data collection by mobile phone. Where mobile phone interviews were not possible, then face-to-face interviews were conducted in accessible areas. Accessible areas included Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) sites and markets, among others. The KIs were selected if they were from the target hard-to-reach settlement and were knowledgeable enough to report on the settlement with regards to basic services, markets, livelihoods, and sectoral needs. Data collection took place between 11 to 21 January for the first round, and from 30 March to 8 April for the second round.

Respondents were identified using a key informant database developed by REACH over multiple rounds of data collection, with additional respondents identified through snowball sampling. Data was collected at the settlement level, i.e., the questionnaire related to site-level humanitarian needs, not individual needs. A total of 3,458 key informant interviews were conducted across 1,063 settlements in 41 districts categorized as facing very heavy access restrictions by the Access Working Group in January, while in April, 1,773 interviews were carried out across 625 settlements in the same districts. Three KIs were conducted per settlement. When there was no consensus among the KIs from the same settlement, the results were not aggregated and thus no consensus is indicated in the response. The analysis and findings in this brief are indicative and not statistically representative of the assessed districts. For more information, please see the [April methodology note](#) and [January methodology note](#).

*Key informants could select multiple answers; figures may therefore exceed 100%.

ENDNOTES

1. OCHA, [Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan](#), January 2026.
2. IOM Somalia, [Drought Now Drives 75% of Displacement in Somalia's Most Affected Districts](#), 24 April 2026.
3. WFP, [Somalia Country Brief](#), March 2026.
4. OCHA, [Somalia – Access Severity Map 2025](#), March 5, 2026.
5. IPC, [Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis](#), January–June 2026; FSNAU, [Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit - Somalia](#), February 2026.
6. UNICEF Somalia, [Humanitarian Action for Children](#), (2026), p.2.
7. Shelter Cluster, [Minimum Standards in Shelter, Settlement and Non-Food Items](#), (2016).

ABOUT REACH

REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, Acted and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

