KEY FINDINGS BRIEF

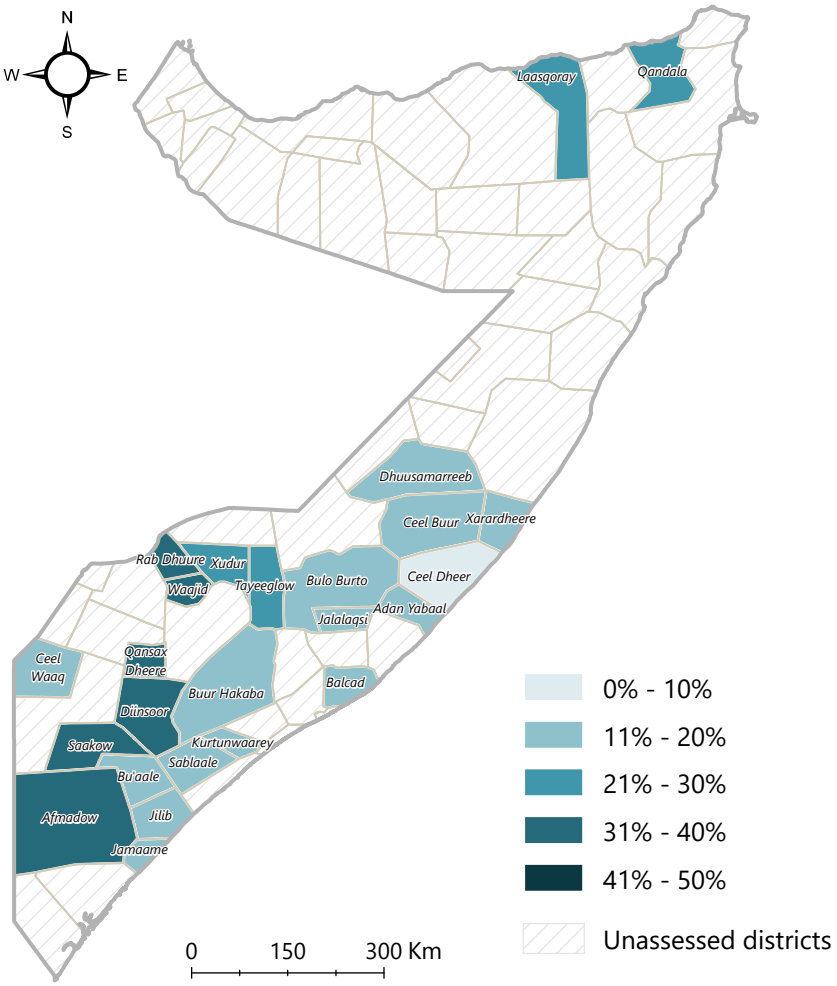
Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) - Key Findings

March 2024 | Somalia

KEY MESSAGES

- Deyr flooding may have exacerbated existing accessibility issues in hard-to-reach districts in riverine areas, with Key Informants (KIs) in the majority of assessed settlements reporting that roads to the settlement are unsafe and/or inaccessible. The situation might be even worse during the current Gu floods.
- The absence of sufficient Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, along with limited healthcare facilities in the assessed settlements may exacerbate the vulnerability of hard-to-reach settlements to disease outbreaks, particularly cholera.
- Protection risks were prevalent in hard-to-reach districts. At least one protection risk had been reported in 74% of the assessed settlements, which could reflect broader insecurity/violence in hard-to-reach districts.

Assessment Coverage Map, March 2024.[ii]



CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Somalia's protracted and dynamic humanitarian crisis includes ongoing conflict, climate-related shocks, and communicable disease outbreaks. Between January and March 2024, heavy rainfall and flooding, compounded by the lingering impact of past droughts, have resulted in 4 million people (21% of the population) in Somalia being classified under IPC AFI Phase 3 or worse (Crisis or Emergency).[1] Persistent and intense rainfall from October - December 2023, due to the dual influences of the Indian Dipole and El-Nino, could be exacerbating the current humanitarian situation in areas grappling with the influence of past failed rainy seasons, past/current insecurity and continued limited access. Humanitarian needs may be particularly acute in the pockets of the country where humanitarian interventions are severely limited due to security concerns and physical access constraints – i.e. Hard-to-Reach (H2R) districts. These districts have already been categorized as Extreme Constraints or Hard-to-Reach by the Access Working Group (AWG) or Category 5 (catastrophic) by the Protection Cluster.[2] [3]

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This brief presents the key findings from 2013 Key Informant Interviews in 598 assessed settlements across 25 hard-to-reach districts in South, East, and Central Somalia. The data was collected as part of REACH's March 2024 HSM assessment. The interviews focused on gathering information about the humanitarian conditions and needs of the population residing in H2R areas, as well as assessing the respondents' knowledge of the situation. The recall period referred to throughout the brief is "at the time of data collection" unless otherwise stated. It is important to note that these findings provide an indication of the situation and should not be generalized. For more detailed information, please refer to page 6.

i. Somalia Deyr 2023 Flooding, Photo by OCHA Somalia.
ii. A district is considered to be covered when the targeted threshold of 15% assessed settlements is met.

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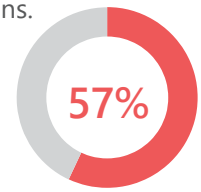
SHOCKS AND ACCESS

Deyr flooding may have exacerbated existing accessibility issues in hard-to-reach districts in riverine areas, with the majority of assessed settlements reporting that roads to the settlement are unsafe and/or inaccessible. This is congruent to FAO SWALIM and SODMA reporting that Deyr flooding had made roads impassable in the regions where the assessed settlements are located.[4] Key informants (KIs) reported that roads were either unsafe or inaccessible by vehicle in more than half of the assessed settlements (57%). In parallel, KIs reported that more than half of the assessed settlements had been affected by flooding in the year prior to data collection (59%). OCHA reported that multiple airstrips in Somalia continue to be inaccessible due to a lack of crucial maintenance following the Deyr floods in 2023,[5] and Somalia Logistics Cluster reporting indicates that roads in hard-to-reach districts remain largely impassable.[6] Reported limited accessibility and the anticipated Gu riverine floods could compound the vulnerability and excerbate the humanitarian needs among hard-to-reach populations.

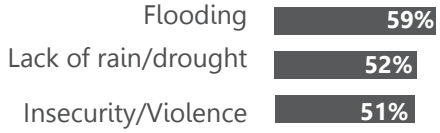
% of assessed settlements where roads were either unsafe and/or inaccessible by vehicle at the time of data collection.



59%

Of assessed settlements where KIs reported flooding as a shock in the year prior to data collection.

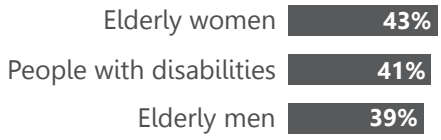
Three most commonly reported shocks by KIs regarding the assessed settlements in the year prior to data collection:*



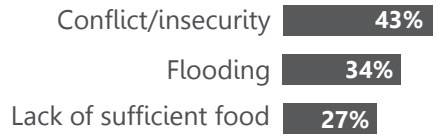
DISPLACEMENT

Deyr flooding, coupled with conflict/insecurity and lack of food, may be driving displacement from hard-to-reach districts. Movement out of the settlement was reported by almost all KIs in assessed settlements, with the majority relocating to another district. Findings suggest that those who can leave their settlements are doing so. Adult women and young girls under 18 years old were the most commonly reported population groups that had moved out. In parallel, there are reportedly people who wanted to move but were unable to do so in almost all assessed settlements (76%), primarily due to physical disabilities and age. The most commonly reported population groups who wanted to move but were unable to do so are elderly and people with disabilities, which could suggest that the most vulnerable in hard-to-reach districts may be the least able to physically access support available in accessible areas.

Three most commonly reported population groups which reportedly want to move but could not do so at the time of data collection, by % of assessed settlements:*



Three most commonly reported reasons why people moved out of their settlements within the 30 days prior to data collection, by % of assessed settlements:*



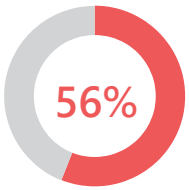
79%

Of assessed settlements where some people reportedly had moved away in the 30 days prior to data collection in March 2024

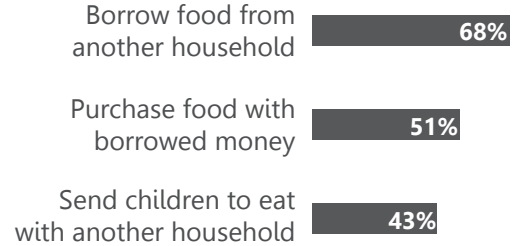
FOOD SECURITY

Food Insecurity is prevalent in hard-to-reach districts, while similarly lack of food was reported as a common driver of displacement. KIs in just over half of assessed settlements reported that at least one in four households did not have enough food to eat (56%). This aligns with Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) Acute Food Security analysis, which categorised 21% of Somalia's population in Crisis (IPC 3) or Emergency (IPC 4).[7] To cope with this situation, households reportedly resorted to borrowing food from another household (68%), sending children to eat with another household (43%), or purchasing food with borrowed money (51%). However, in some assessed settlements households reportedly had exhausted coping strategies, underscoring the limited options available for addressing their food insecurity. The absence of humanitarian actors in hard-to-reach districts may contribute to a lack of reported use of humanitarian assistance as a coping strategy, underscoring the need for increased support in those areas.

% of assessed settlements where at least one in four households reportedly did not have enough food to eat at the time of data collection.



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



*KIs could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

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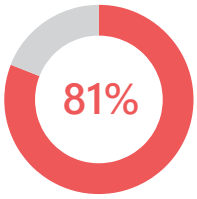
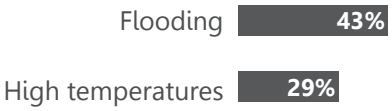
LIVELIHOODS

Climate conditions, including flooding and high temperatures, appear to be constraining the primary livelihoods of agriculture and livestock in hard-to-reach districts. Key findings indicate that farming is the primary income source for most households in almost half (40%) of assessed settlements, with an additional 19% relying on both farming and livestock herding. Despite high planting rates (71%), crop loss occurred in nearly all settlements (80%) during the last harvest season. Most commonly reported reasons for crop loss included flooding (43%), high temperatures (28%), and drought (28%). OCHA reported that some districts in Puntland experienced a two-week period of intense heatwaves and high temperatures accompanied by strong winds in early April 2024, which resulted in several fire outbreaks in pastoral and agricultural settlements. The reported crop loss in the hard-to-reach areas can be attributed to these fires.[8] In addition, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that extensive flooding during the October to December Deyr rainy season in southern Somalia has led to significant crop damage. As a result, cereal production during the main season is projected to be below the five-year average.[9] This aligns with the reported crop loss in the assessed settlements. Gu flooding could exacerbate these crop damages in hard-to-reach districts, as OCHA reported that Gu flash flooding have had a severe effect on agricultural livelihoods in states where hard-to-reach districts are located (Hirshabelle, Jubaland and South West).[10]

% of assessed settlements where crop loss was reported for most households during the most recent harvest season.**



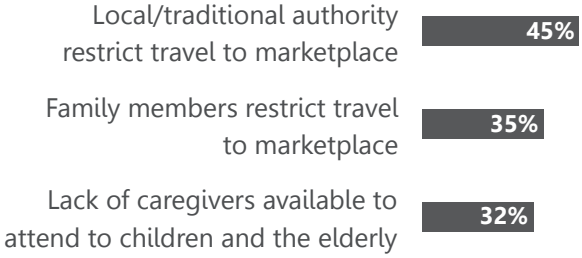
Most commonly reported reasons for crop loss, by % of assessed settlements where crop loss was experienced during the most recent harvest season (81%):*



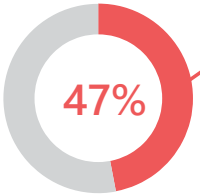
ACCESS TO MARKETS

Limited market accessibility, combined with barriers imposed by authorities and family members, may be hindering access to markets for households in assessed settlements. Reported lack of affordability of food and water could be driving food insecurity, with both food and water prices reportedly increasing in the majority of the assessed settlements. The impact of Gu flooding could pose a threat to the availability of food and water supplies in markets accessible to households in hard-to-reach settlements and contribute to a potential rise in prices, thereby intensifying food insecurity. Simultaneously, the persistent insecurity and violence in the area can perpetuate socio-cultural barriers, as family members may continue to restrict household access to markets due to local insecurity concerns. International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) reporting aligns with these findings, as clashes between clans have caused several casualties in hard-to-reach districts at the time of data collection.[11]

% of assessed settlements by most commonly reported three main barriers to accessing marketplace for most households in the settlement at the time of data collection:*



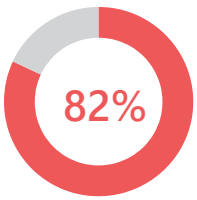
% of assessed settlements where there was a functioning marketplace but access was limited to only some days at the time of data collection.



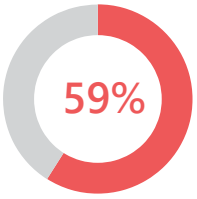
67%

of those settlements where access to marketplace was limited to only four days a week or less.

% of assessed settlements where KIs reported increased food prices in the three months prior to data collection.



% of assessed settlements where KIs reported increased water prices in the three months prior to data collection.



* KIs could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.
** Note: Crop loss estimates from KIs for most households during the recent harvest season are included in this finding, regardless of the reported level of crop loss.

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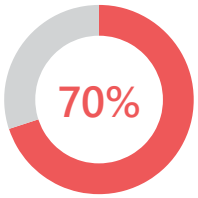
LACK OF ACCESS

ACCESS TO WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH)

The lack of adequate Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in hard-to-reach settlements could increase the vulnerability of hard-to-reach settlements to disease outbreaks, particularly cholera. There were already confirmed cases of cholera in the hard-to-reach districts of Balcad, Buur Hakaba, Jalalalqsi, Kurtunwaarey and Qansax Dheere at the time of data collection.[12] The reliance on surface drinking water sources (70%), coupled with long distances to water points, could reflect a lack of access to improved water facilities and could amplify the risk of contamination and the spread of waterborne diseases. Moreover, the practice of open defecation in some of the assessed settlements (21%) could reflect a lack of access to sanitation facilities and increase exposure to infectious diseases. The impact of Gu flooding or in the case of continued insecurity/violence could further reduce household access to existing WASH infrastructure in hard-to-reach settlements. This, in turn, may increase open defecation practices and reliance on surface water for drinking, due to lack of access to WASH infrastructure.

% of assessed settlements where KIs reported that some households used surface water for drinking at the time of data collection.



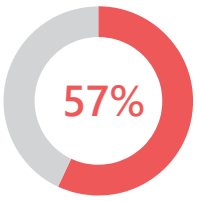
56% **% of assessed settlements where households traveled more than 30 minutes to reach the nearest water point at the time of data collection.**

21% **of assessed settlements where open defecation was practiced by most households at the time of data collection.**

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Accessing healthcare services in the assessed hard-to-reach settlements posed significant challenges due to the lack of both health facilities nearby and provision of healthcare services. Findings show that there was no health facility within 30 minutes for the majority of assessed settlements (57%). In tandem, in almost half of the assessed settlements (45%), neither healthcare nor nutrition services had been provided in the month prior to data collection. In light of the Gu flooding, it is expected that the access to healthcare services in the assessed settlements may be further limited.

% of assessed settlements with reported access to a health facility that was more than 30 minutes away using the most common mode of transportation at the time of data collection.

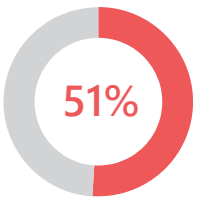


45% **of assessed settlements where neither healthcare nor nutrition services had been provided in the month before data collection.**

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

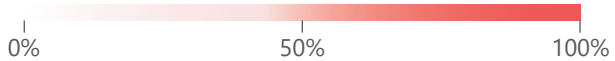
Limited availability of learning facilities, coupled with lack of accessible schools, could be driving low attendance rates. More than half (59%) of assessed settlements reportedly do not have any learning facilities available within a 15 minute radius of the assessed settlement. The majority of school-aged children were reportedly not attending schools three times per week, and the most commonly reported barrier was the absence of a school in the settlement or distance to nearest school was too far. Gu flooding could further impede access to schooling and decrease attendance rates, as reported by the Education cluster.[13]

% of assessed settlements where school-aged children (5 - 17) travel more than 15 minutes to reach their nearest education facility using regular mode of transportation at the time of data collection.



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

	Boys (5-12)	Girls (5-12)	Boys (13-17)	Girls (13-17)
No school in the settlement	56%	55%	56%	56%
High school fees	16%	14%	14%	15%
Help at home or farm	13%	16%	15%	15%



*KIs could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

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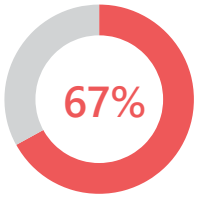
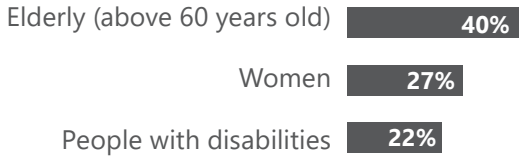
ACCESS TO ADEQUATE SHELTER

Congruent to the absence of schools, healthcare facilities and WASH infrastructure, households in most assessed settlements live in inadequate shelters. Households in the majority of assessed settlements relied on buuls (67%) - which are categorized as an inadequate shelter type. Moreover, there is an inequitable distribution of shelter types, with elderly people, women, and persons with disabilities facing challenges in accessing suitable shelter. OCHA reports that there has been significant damage to shelters due to Deyr flooding, with the current Gu flooding potentially exacerbating the situation.[14]

% of assessed settlements where Buul (inadequate shelter) was the most commonly reported shelter type that people lived in.



% of assessed settlements by the most commonly reported population groups who did not have equal access to the same shelter types*

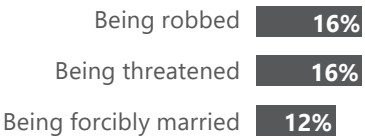


PROTECTION

Protection risks are prevalent in hard-to-reach districts, which could reflect broader insecurity/violence in hard-to-reach districts. Protection risks were reported in almost all assessed settlements (74%), just as insecurity/violence was the most commonly reported driver of displacement (43%). The most commonly reported protection risks were: Being robbed (16%), Being threatened with violence (16%), Being forcibly married (12%) and Female Genital Mutilation (10%). INSO similarly reported incidents in hard-to-reach districts at the time of data collection,[15] and UNHCR reported that a clan conflict in the hard-to-reach district of Diinsoor resulted in initial clashes and escalating tensions.[16]

74% **of assessed settlements where at least one protection risk was reported at the time of data collection.**

The three most commonly reported protection risks in the assessed settlements at the time of data collection:*



*KIs could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

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 districts in Somalia. When possible, enumerators interviewed KIs who were living in hard-to-reach districts at the time of data collection by mobile phone. Where mobile phone interview was not possible, then face-to-face interviews were conducted in the accessible areas. Accessible areas included Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) sites and markets among others. The key informants (KIs) were selected if they were members of the assessed settlement and were knowledgeable enough to report on the settlement with regards to basic services, markets, livelihood, and protection. Data collection took place between 03 March 2024 and 17 March 2024. Respondents were identified via snowballing through the KIs interviewed. Data was collected at the settlement level, i.e., the questionnaire related to site level humanitarian needs, not individual needs. A total of 2013 key informant interviews across 598 settlements in 25 hard-to-reach districts were included in the final analysis. A target threshold of 15% of known settlements in each hard-to-reach district was set. The KIIs were aggregated at the settlement level with a minimum of 2 to 3 KIs interviewed 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 25 hard-to-reach districts in Somalia. For more information, please see the Methodology Note.

Endnotes

1 IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis January - June 2024, retrieved from: https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Jan_Jun2024_Report.pdf
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5 Somalia Humanitarian Access Snapshot (01 January to 31 March 2024), retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-access-snapshot-01-january-31-march-2024-31-march-2024
6 Somalia Logistics Cluster Dashboard, retrieved from: https://logie.logcluster.org/?op=som
7 Somalia Situation Report, as of 30 April 2024, retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-situation-report-30-apr-2024
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9 Somalia: 2024 Gu (April to June) Season Floods Weekly Situation Report No. 1, retrieved from: https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/somalia/?_gl=1%2a1104at9%2a_ga%2aMTQ1MTEyNTI2OS4xNzAwMTQzNzkw%2a_ga_E60ZNX2F68%2aMTcxNTA5Mjc3My45My4xLjE3MTUwOTY2MTguMjYuMC4w
10 INSO Quarterly Report - Quarter 1, 2024.
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12 Somalia Health Cluster Bulletin, March 2024, retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-health-cluster-bulletin-march-2024
13 Education Cluster 2024 HNRP Snapshot January 2024, retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/education-cluster-2024-hnrp-snapshot-jan-2024
14 Somalia: 2024 Gu Season Floods Weekly Situation Report, retrieved from: https://reports.unocha.org/en/country
15 INSO Quarterly Report - Quarter 1, 2024.
16 Somalia Protection and Return Monitoring (PRMN), retrieved from: https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-protection-and-return-monitoring-flash-alert-04-31-march-2024

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