

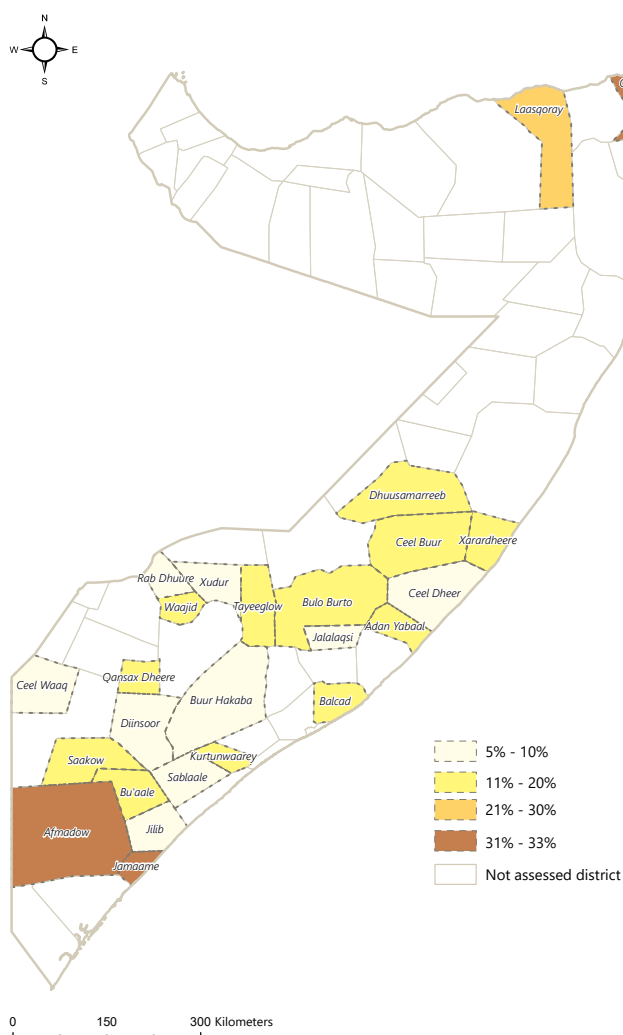
Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) - Key Findings

December 2023 | Somalia

KEY MESSAGES

- Pervasive flooding in hard-to-reach districts may have increased Health and Shelter needs.
- Widespread reliance on unimproved water sources and inadequate sanitation facilities in assessed settlements continue to put these settlements at risk of waterborne disease outbreaks. Lack of basic infrastructure, coupled with gaps in Health services, could allow water-borne diseases to spread further.¹
- The absence of assistance persists across assessed hard-to-reach districts, with almost all settlements reporting that no aid was received by residents. Barriers such as distant aid locations, concerns about insecurity during travel, and limited access to information reportedly hindered communities' ability to access humanitarian support.

Map 1: Assessment coverage in December 2023.



CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Somalia's protracted and dynamic humanitarian crisis includes ongoing conflict, climate-related shocks, and communicable disease outbreaks. Years of failed rainy seasons continue to exacerbate the precarity of agropastoral livelihoods, the consequences of seasonal flooding and insecurity – and may have caused an estimated 43,000 excess deaths in 2022.² Persistent and intense rainfall from October - December 2023, due to the dual influences of the Indian Dipole and El-Nino, could worsen the humanitarian crises in areas already affected by previous failed rainy seasons, ongoing insecurity, and limited access.³ 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)⁴ or Category 5 (catastrophic) by the Protection Cluster.⁵

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

This key findings brief includes 1,685 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) regarding 25 H2R districts in 460 assessed settlements across Somalia in the December 2023 and January 2024 round of the HSM assessment. During the interviews, KIIs were asked about the humanitarian conditions and needs of people in H2R areas and their knowledge of the situation. The findings are indicative and cannot be generalised. When possible, comparisons were made across the last two rounds (August 2023 round and December 2023 round). See [page 6](#) for more details.



FLOODING

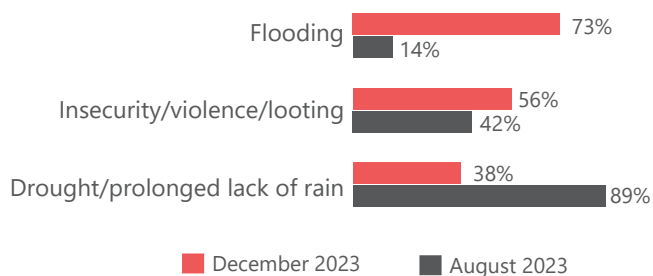
Flooding exacerbate needs

Flooding, primarily attributed to the Deyr rain season between October and December 2023, could be changing current humanitarian needs in hard-to-reach districts of Somalia. Findings suggest pervasive flooding in hard-to-reach districts, with 73% of assessed settlements reporting flooding in the year prior to data collection.

73%

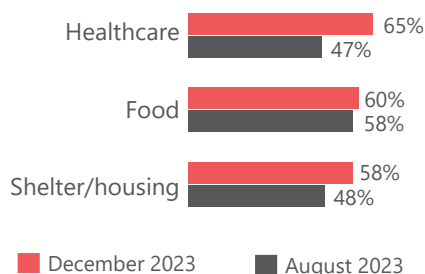
Of assessed settlements which reported flooding in the year prior to data collection (compared to 14% in the August 2023 round).

Most commonly reported shocks that affected the settlements in the year prior to data collection, by % of assessed settlements:*

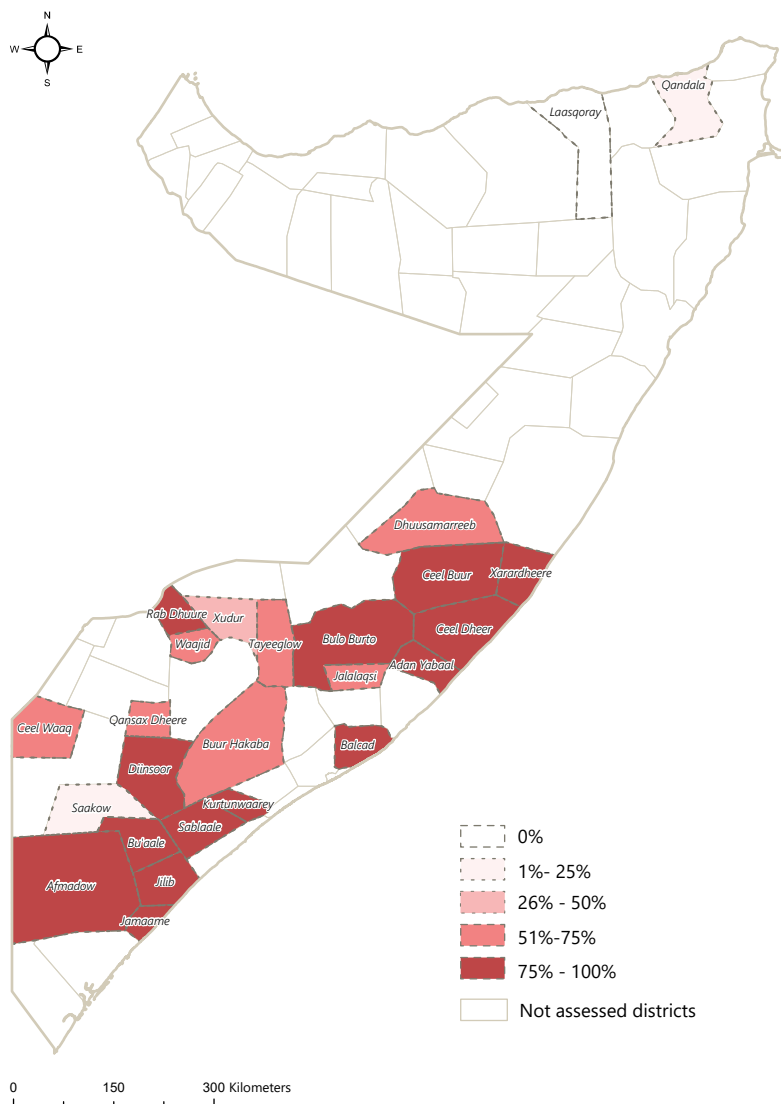


In parallel with high reporting of flooding, priority needs have shifted with higher humanitarian needs in Health and Shelter/Housing. In the December 2023 round, more KIs in assessed settlements reported Health and Shelter/Housing.

Top three priority needs of most households in assessed settlements:*



Map 2: % of assessed settlements reporting flooding as a shock in the year prior to data collection, per district.



DISPLACEMENT

Flooding and conflict drive displacement

Flooding and conflict/insecurity are driving populations that can move out of hard-to-reach settlements to do so. In almost all assessed settlements, KIs reported that people had moved away from the settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection (91%). Flooding (62%) and Conflict/insecurity (51%) were the primary drivers of this movement. These findings complement broader displacement trends in Somalia. The Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) reported flooding and conflict as the lead drivers of displacement in December 2023.⁶

These findings differ from PRMN and HSM findings from August 2023, when drought/protracted lack of rain were among the top two primary drivers of displacements - just prior to the October to November 2023 Deyr floods.

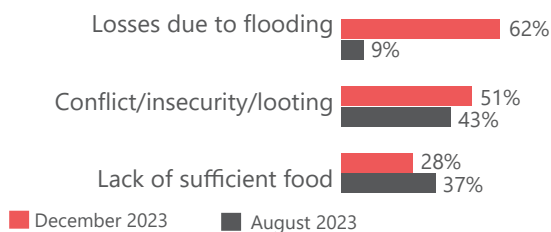
*Respondents could choose multiple answers, therefore results might exceed 100%

Damage/losses due to flooding was reportedly the driving factor behind displacement, due to the effects of the Deyr flooding from October - December 2023. A lack of access to basic services (health, education, shelter, markets) could escalate further displacements.

91%

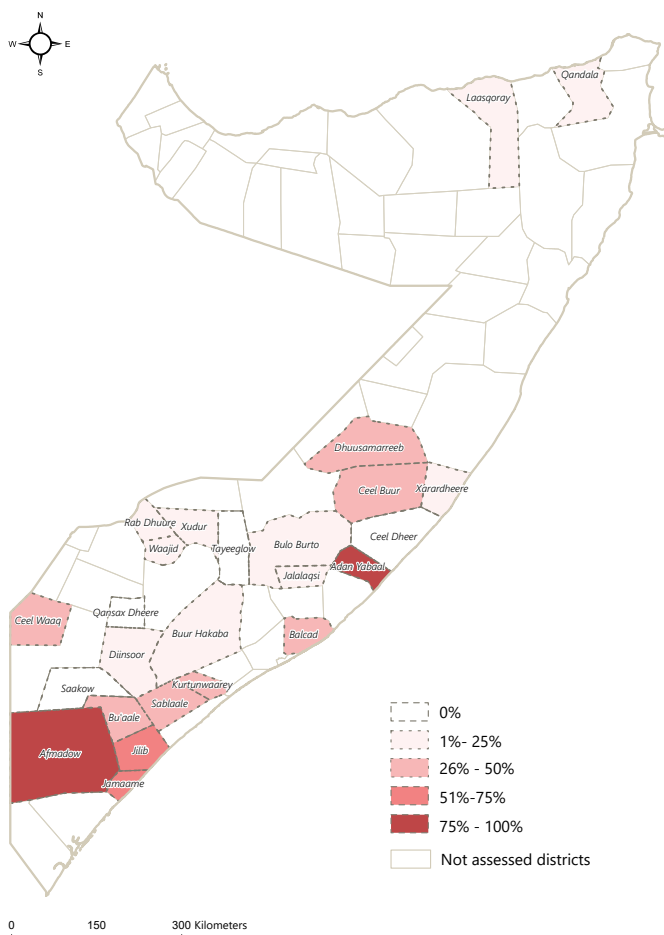
Of assessed settlements indicated that people had moved away from the settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection.

Most commonly reported reasons why people moved out of the assessed settlements, by % of settlements where people had moved away in the 30 days prior to data collection:*

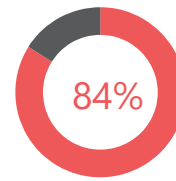


Moreover, KIs reported that only a minority of people who have been displaced from the assessed settlement intended to remain in their current location (29%), which could suggest that most IDPs from hard-to-reach districts may move again in the near-medium future.

Map 3: % of assessed settlements where most IDPs from that settlement intended to remain in their current location in six months following data collection, per district.

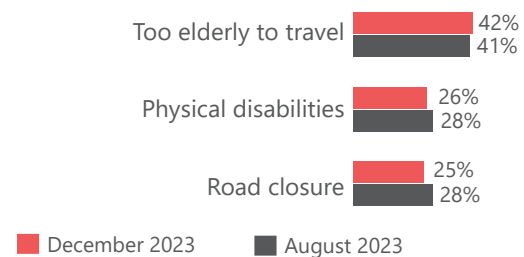


Almost all assessed settlements (84%) further reported that there were people who wanted to leave the settlement but could not do so due to barriers impeding their movement such as elderly age, physical disabilities and road closures.



Of assessed settlements where KIs reported that people wanted to leave the settlement but could not do so.

Most commonly reported movement barriers, by % of assessed settlements which reported people who wanted to leave but could not do so:*



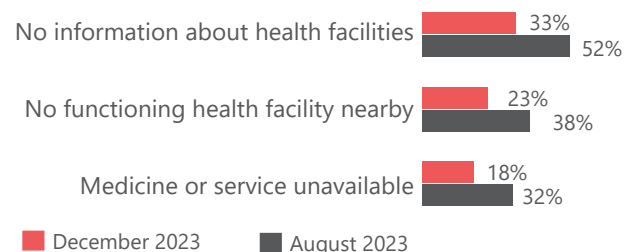
HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Access to health services is constrained

Lack of information and lack of services could be broadly constraining access to healthcare services - at a time when more KIs in assessed settlements were reporting Health as a priority need (65%).

Nearly all assessed settlements reported at least one barrier to healthcare services (97% in December 2023, 95% in August 2023) with a lack of adequate information, limited availability of services and insufficient healthcare facilities reported as the most common barriers to healthcare services. Some assessed settlements (13%) continued to report that most households did not have access to any healthcare facility.

Three main reported barriers to accessing healthcare services for households at the time of data collection, by % of assessed settlements:*



These findings align with the 2024 HNRP. Reportedly, the Somali healthcare system is debilitated by prolonged conflict and insufficient investments in infrastructure, maintenance and skilled personnel. Recent Deyr flooding in the country has also worsened the spread of outbreaks, including cholera.⁷

*Respondents could choose multiple answers, therefore results might exceed 100%

WATER AND SANITATION

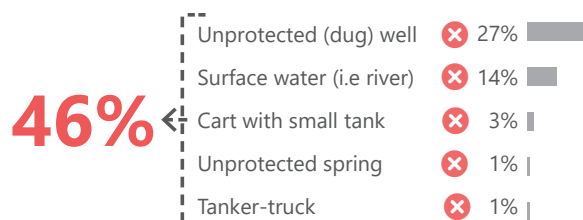
Limited access to water and sanitation facilities, along with poor sanitation, persists in assessed settlements. Some residents in the vast majority of assessed settlements reportedly relied on surface water for drinking (74% in December 2023, 70% in August 2023). Reported challenges included distant water points, difficulty accessing water for people with disabilities and safety issues at main water points.

74% Of assessed settlements reported some households using surface water for drinking, compared to 70% in August 2023.

Additionally, approximately half of assessed settlements (50%) continued to rely on unimproved water sources for essential activities such as cooking and washing (compared to 47% in August 2023).

This persistent and pervasive reliance on unimproved water sources could exacerbate waterborne disease outbreaks, including cholera, particularly among the most vulnerable populations.

% of assessed settlements where households primarily relied on unimproved water sources for drinking at the time of data collection:



In almost all settlements, there was a reported need to manage with limited water resources. Prevalent strategies included reliance on untreated water for drinking (29%), reliance on surface water for drinking (25%) and relied on unimproved/untreated water for other purposes including cooking (21%).

Unimproved sanitation facilities

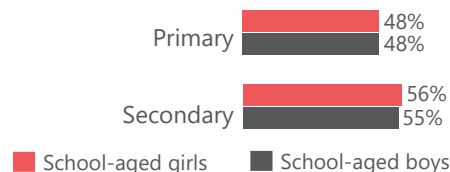
Findings suggest a similarly strong reliance on unimproved sanitation facilities. Households in 85% of assessed settlements were found to primarily rely on unimproved sanitation facilities. Households in almost half (47%) of assessed settlements reportedly relied on open pit latrines, and households in 23% of assessed settlements primarily practiced open defecation. Strong reliance on open pits or open defecation, coupled with reliance on unimproved water sources could heighten the risk of waterborne diseases - i.e. Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) and cholera, which are already prevalent across Somalia.⁸

EDUCATION

A lack of learning facilities

Findings suggest a gap in education services. A substantial proportion of the assessed settlements (38%) did not have any learning facilities within a 15-minute radius. Children in approximately half of assessed settlements were not attending school regularly.

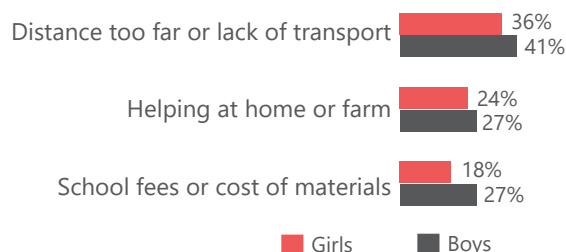
% of assessed settlements where no school-aged boys and girls attended school (at least 4 days per week) in the six months prior to data collection, per gender and school type:*



Hindered access to education

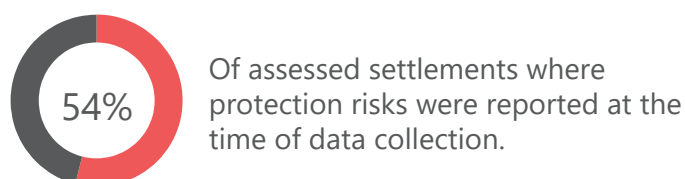
Commonly reported barriers included long distances or lack of transportation, school fees or costs, and school-aged children staying at home or working on farms. Additionally, children living in districts prone to flooding are particularly vulnerable to interruptions in their education, especially during the rainy seasons.⁹

Most commonly reported barriers to access education services for girls and boys, by % of assessed settlements:*



PROTECTION

Protection risks persisted among populations living in the majority of assessed hard-to-reach districts.¹⁰ Protection risks most commonly reported in the assessed settlements were related to insecurity including threats of violence, kidnappings, and robberies.



Three most reported main protection risks, by % of assessed settlements:



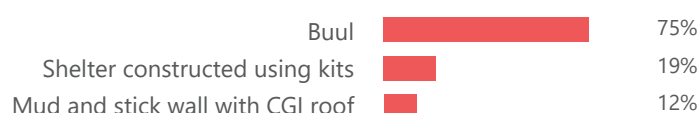
*Respondents could choose multiple answers, therefore results might exceed 100%

🏠 SHELTER

Inadequate access to shelter

The majority of households in assessed settlements were relying on inadequate shelter types as their primary shelter - at a time when more KIs reported shelter/housing as a primary need (58%). Most households, in most assessed settlements, were reportedly living in Buul shelters - which may not be able to withstand flooding.

Three most commonly reported shelter types people lived in, by % of assessed settlements:*



Elderly, women and children have least access to shelter

Effects may be particularly acute among the more vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach districts: elderly, women and children. The lack of access to shelters could compound other vulnerabilities among these population groups - i.e. health and protection risks that are already prevalent in hard-to-reach settlements.

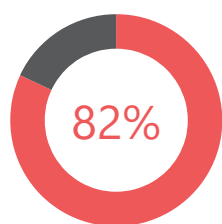
% of settlements by population groups without equal access to same shelter types by, % of assessed settlements:*



👤 AAP & HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Continued absence of humanitarian assistance

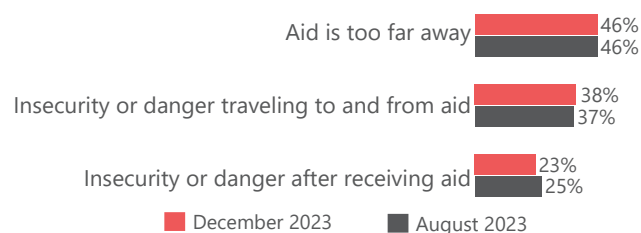
The absence of humanitarian assistance persists, with almost all assessed settlements reporting that no humanitarian assistance was received in the six months prior to data collection.



Of assessed settlements reporting that households had not received humanitarian assistance in the 6 months prior to data collection, compared to 84% in August 2023.

Barriers contributing to this situation include distant aid locations, concerns regarding insecurity or dangers associated with travel to/from aid distribution points and insecurity or danger after receiving aid.

Three most commonly reported barriers that most households in the settlement faced when trying to access humanitarian assistance, by % of assessed settlements:*



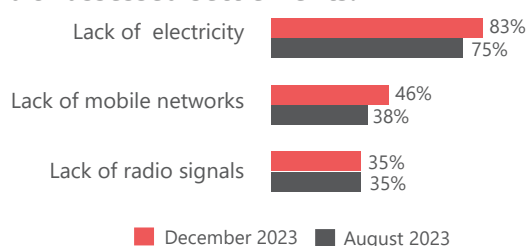
These barriers could create additional obstacles to obtaining information about accessing humanitarian assistance. According to the 2024 HNRP, many communities across Somalia reportedly face challenges in accessing comprehensive information on how to seek assistance.¹¹ Additionally, findings show that households in most hard-to-reach settlements were not receiving adequate information for when humanitarian assistance was accessible (63% in December 2023, 68% in August 2023). Investment in telecommunications infrastructure, particularly supporting the reportedly preferred modalities of SMS/phone and radio, could increase overall access to humanitarian assistance for households in hard-to-reach settlements that need it.

📶 COMMUNICATION

Persistent electricity shortages hinder access to information

Almost all settlements continued to report a lack of electricity as a barrier to accessing information (83% in December 2023, 75% in August 2023). The lack of electricity remained the most commonly reported barrier, followed by the lack of mobile networks. Despite the lack of telecommunications infrastructure, SMS/mobile phone messages (58%), followed by radio (54%), were the most commonly preferred modalities for information. Many communities reportedly faced challenges in accessing comprehensive information on how to seek assistance.

Most reported barriers to accessing information, by % of assessed settlements:*



*Respondents could choose multiple answers, therefore results 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 interviews were 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 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 24 December 2023 -08 January 2024. Respondents were found via snowballing through

the KIs interviewed. All KIs were asked a structured, closed-ended questionnaire through the KOBO application. Data was collected at the settlement level, i.e., the questionnaire related to site level humanitarian needs, not individual needs. A total of 1685 key informant interviews across 460 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 KIs were aggregated at the settlement level with a minimum of 2 to 3 KIs interviewed per settlement. When 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. The above analysis is indicative and not statistically representative of the assessed 25 hard-to-reach districts in Somalia. For more information, please see the [Methodology Note](#).

ENDNOTES

¹Somalia: 2024 AWD/Cholera outbreak Flash update No.1 (As of January 2024)- <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2024-awdcholera-outbreak-flash-update-no1-22-january-2024>

²WHO study on mortality <https://www.emro.who.int/somalia/news/new-study-finds-that-43000-excess-deaths-may-have-occurred-in-2022-from-the-drought-in-somalia.html>

³Reliefweb <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2023-000190-som>

⁴Somalia Humanitarian Access: [Humanitarian Data Exchange](#)

⁵Methodology for calculating protection severity and estimating people affected and in need: https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/methodology_for_calculating_protection_severity_and_estimating_people_affected_and_in_need.pdf

⁶UNHCR Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN): <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-internal-displacements-monitored-protection-return-monitoring-network-prmn-december-2023>

⁷Somalia: 2024 AWD/Cholera outbreak Flash update No.1 (As of January 2024)- <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2024-awdcholera-outbreak-flash-update-no1-22-january-2024>

⁸Somalia: 2024 AWD/Cholera outbreak Flash update No.1 (As of January 2024)- <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2024-awdcholera-outbreak-flash-update-no1-22-january-2024> OCHA,

⁹Unicef-Education Cluster Snap Shot, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/education-response-snapshot-jan-dec-2023?_gl=1*12hf2it*_ga*MzQ3NTUzOTQwLjE2ODgzMDU0NDM.*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*MTcwNzcwOTA1NS41NS4xLjE3MDc3MjAzNjguNTluMC4w

¹⁰Global Protection Cluster, Protection Risks explanatory Note, https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/protection_risk_explanatory_note_1.pdf

¹¹Somalia 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP): <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2024-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-hnrp>

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative 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).

Funded by



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Funded by
European Union
Humanitarian Aid

REACH Informing more effective humanitarian action