

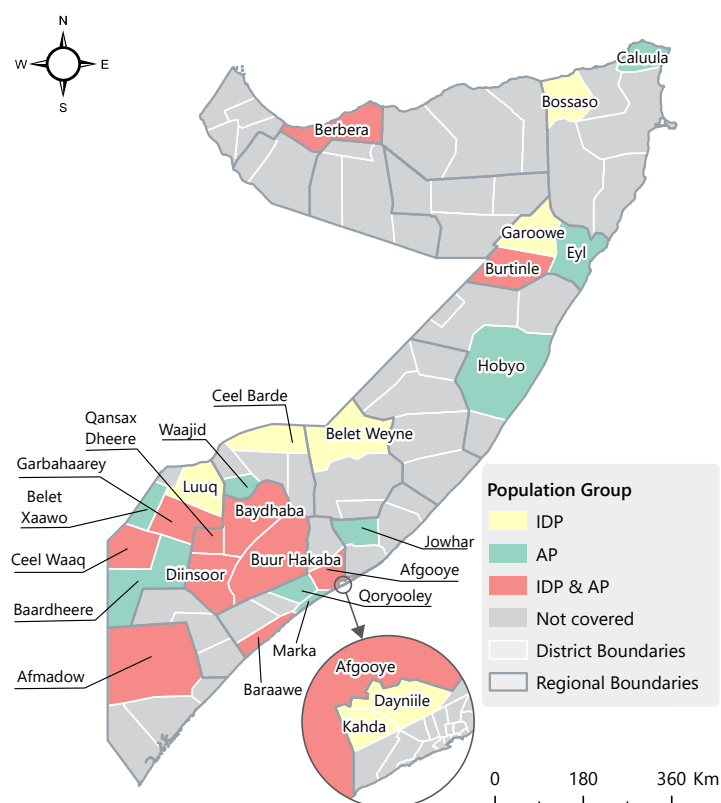
Somalia | Needs Analysis in Drought-Affected Areas

April 2026

KEY MESSAGES

- Somalia's most recent drought - officially declared in November 2025 - disrupted access to food and water, and weakened the livelihoods households depended on to afford them. As a result, food access increasingly relied on markets, taking on debt, and food-for-work, while rising prices further strained households' ability to meet basic needs.
- The drought reshaped daily life within affected households, increasing health concerns, disrupting children's routines, and adding pressure to household responsibilities. Heat-related illness, school disruption, and children taking on tasks such as collecting water or firewood reflected impacts on household well-being that went beyond income and access to basic services.
- Drought-affected households faced multiple barriers to meeting basic needs, including lost assets, inadequate shelter conditions, limited assistance, and difficulties accessing markets, water points, schools, and health facilities. These challenges reinforced households' prioritisation of support for food, water, shelter, healthcare, and livelihoods.

ASSESSMENT COVERAGE



IDP: Districts in which drought-displaced populations were assessed

AP: Districts in which existing populations affected by the drought were assessed

IDP & AP: Districts in which both drought-affected existing populations and drought-displaced populations were assessed

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

Somalia faces a protracted humanitarian crisis driven by recurrent climate shocks, conflict, and structural vulnerabilities. Ranked the second most climate-vulnerable country in the world,¹ Somalia declared a national drought emergency in November 2025 following a rapid deterioration of conditions since August 2025.² By December 2025, 4.61 million people had been affected, at least 120,000 had been displaced, and 75,000 students had been forced to drop out of school.³ Recurring droughts continued to erode household coping capacity and inflict significant losses that remained systematically underreported in existing monitoring systems.⁴ To address these critical information gaps, REACH conducted a household-level quantitative needs assessment across 27 drought-affected and displacement arrival districts, generating comparable evidence on multisectoral needs to inform humanitarian planning and decision-making.

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The Needs Analysis in Drought-Affected Areas provides a comprehensive, district-level overview of humanitarian needs experienced by drought-affected populations in Somalia. The assessment delivers up-to-date, multi-sectoral data on the severity of needs across shelter, food security, livelihoods, WASH, health, education, and protection. It focuses on two population groups: drought-affected internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in displacement arrival districts, and affected populations, including host communities and longer-term IDPs, living in drought-affected areas (for more details, refer to the [annex](#)). The assessment captures variations across population groups and covers close to one third of Somalia's 90 districts. By generating comparable, district-level evidence across sectors and population groups, this assessment supports strategic planning and prioritisation processes in the country.

A total of 3,852 face-to-face interviews were conducted with newly displaced IDPs and affected populations in 27 drought-affected districts from 12 to 26 April 2026. Two-stage random sampling ensured district-level representativeness for accessible areas at a 90% confidence level and 10% margin of error, with at least four households interviewed per selected site. Inaccessible locations were replaced from a prepared backup list. For more information, please refer to the methodology overview on [page nine](#).

Note: all references to a six-month period are measured relative to the data collection period (April 2026).

Drought-affected internally displaced populations (drought IDPs) refers to people displaced due to the drought within the past six months, following the official declaration of the drought. This includes IDPs in arrival districts who were displaced less than six months ago and explicitly reported drought as the cause of displacement, as well as IDPs in districts classified as both drought-affected and arrival districts who were displaced within the same time frame and identified drought as the reason for their displacement.

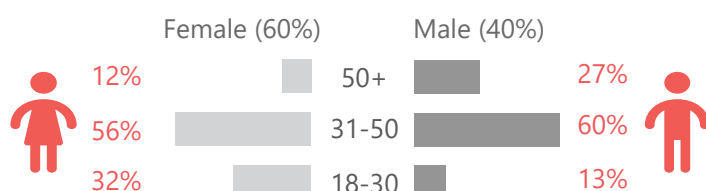
Affected population refers to people who had been living in drought-affected areas (according to the FAO-SWALIM CDI)⁵ for at least the past six months or more, following the November 2025 declared drought. This includes the host population in drought-affected districts, IDPs who had been in the area for more than six months, returnees who had returned more than six months ago, and IDPs displaced within the past six months for reasons other than the drought.

DEMOGRAPHICS

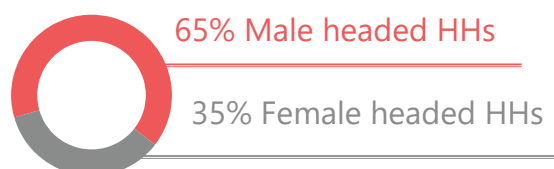
Household Information

5.8 Average people living in one household (including the respondent)

Age and gender distribution of respondents



% of households by gender of head of household



52% of households reported having been displaced and remaining displaced at the time of the data collection

% of households by length of displacement

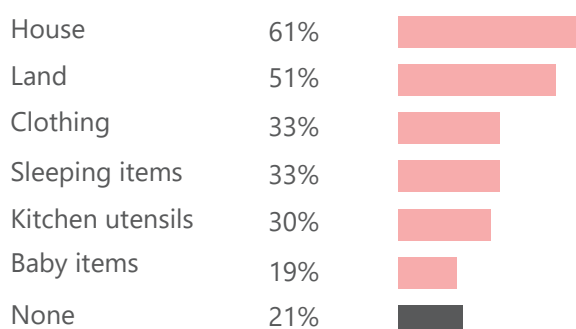


* Responses may total more than 100%, as this was a select-multiple question.

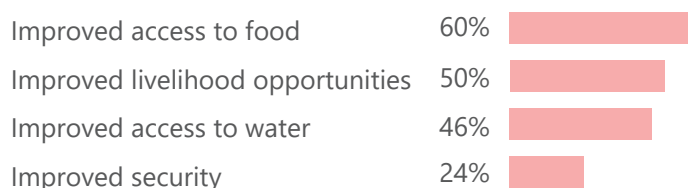
DISPLACEMENT

Drought was the main reason for displacement (99%). Among IDPs, more than half of households (55%) reported that some members of their household had remained in their previous location, along with some assets that they now considered lost (see table below). In addition, 40% of households reported that their previous location was in one of three main districts: Baydhaba (15%), Afgooye (13%), or Qoryooley (11%). Pull factors that led households to choose their current location included access to food and water, opportunities for economic activities and improved security.

% of displaced households, by type of asset left behind and considered unrecoverable*



% of IDP households, by main reason to come to their current location at the time of data collection*

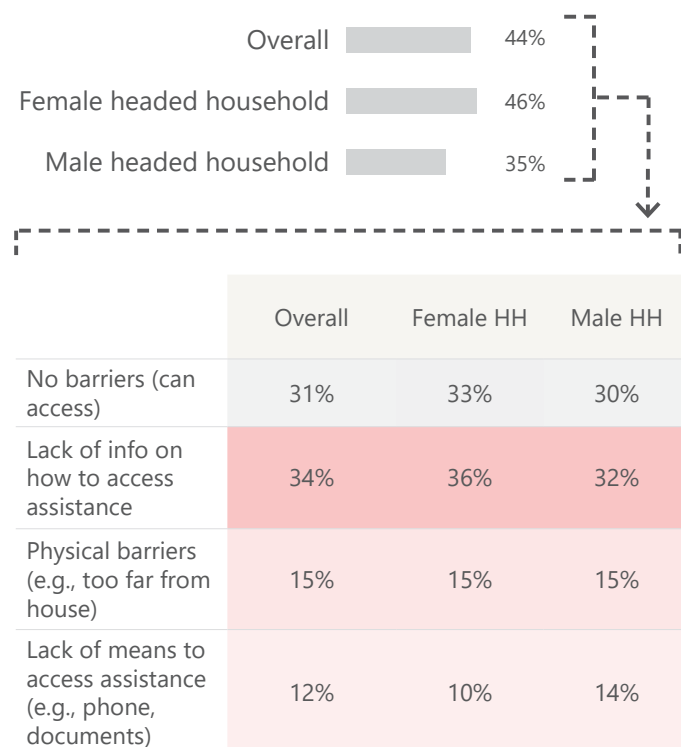


More than half of the surveyed IDP households (65%) reported that they planned to stay in their current location for the six months following data collection, while only 11% said they planned to return to their place of origin.

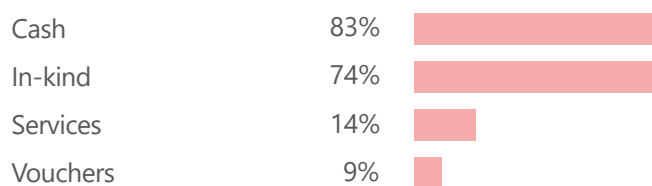
ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

Respondents reported on the most significant challenges facing their household, most frequently mentioning insufficient amounts of food (65%) and safe drinking water (41%), as well as a lack of suitable living space (36%). Reflecting the severity of food insecurity, households' most common type of preferred support was food (85%), followed by shelter (47%) and healthcare (44%). While almost half of households (44%) reported having received humanitarian assistance in the 12 months prior to data collection, respondents experienced several barriers to accessing aid in the six months prior to data collection, including lack of information on how to receive aid and physical barriers.

% of households who received aid in the 12 months prior to data collection, by population group and reported barriers to receiving aid:



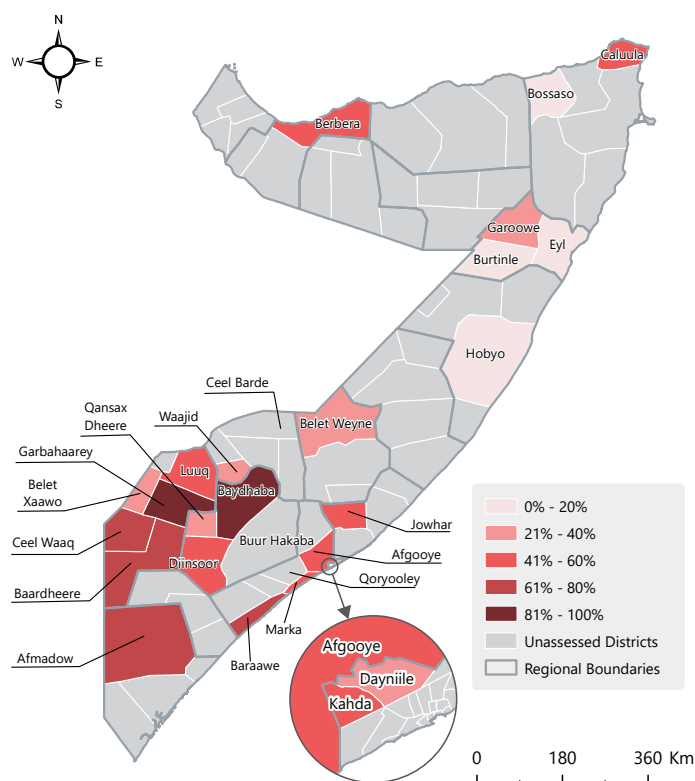
Preferred reported modalities* of assistance*



% of households by most commonly reported preferred type of support*

	Overall	Female HH	Male HH
Food	85%	87%	83%
Shelter/housing	47%	59%	38%
Healthcare	44%	41%	46%
Livelihoods support/employment	31%	28%	34%
Nutrition (e.g. infant formula, nutrition supplements)	29%	32%	27%
Drinking water	12%	9%	14%

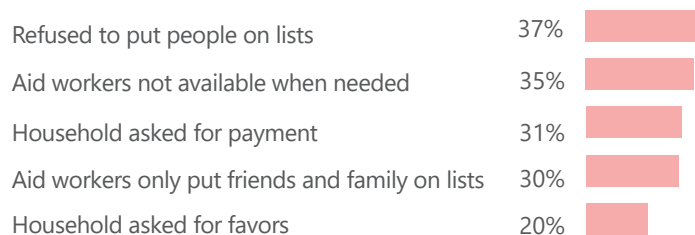
% of households that reportedly did **not** receive aid in the 12 months prior to data collection, per district:



Delivery of assistance

While 84% of households reported being satisfied with the behaviour of aid workers in their area, 14% expressed dissatisfaction with their conduct.

% of households not satisfied with aid workers' behaviour in their area, by reason**



Complaint and feedback mechanisms

More than half of the respondents (59%) reported having no feedback to provide regarding the humanitarian assistance received, while 23% stated that they had feedback but had not used any available mechanism to share it. Respondents indicated a preference for providing feedback through face-to-face channels, particularly via community leaders (43%), NGO staff (38%), and information centres (31%).

* Responses may total more than 100%, as this was a select-multiple question.

♦ Response options for this indicator were consolidated into four modalities: cash assistance (including physical cash, mobile money, bank transfers, and cash via prepaid cards), in-kind assistance (food and essential hygiene/personal items), services (e.g., healthcare, education, and infrastructure construction or rehabilitation) and vouchers.

PROTECTION

More than half of the households (62%) reported feeling very safe. Furthermore, 40% reported no presence of violence in their communities. However, despite this apparent stability and the low reported incidence of violence or direct threats, more than one quarter of households (26%) reported feeling unsafe when moving around their community. Concerns about threats in their community affected households' access to services (see table, below).

% of households reporting difficulties in accessing services due to the presence of protection threats in the community in the last 6 months*

Healthcare access	40%	
Education access	40%	
Governmental services	22%	
Social services	15%	

33% of households reported that women and girls had avoided areas of the community at least once or twice in the six months prior to data collection due to security concerns. The main areas avoided were markets (35%), distribution sites (28%), and water points (20%). Moreover, during the same period, households reported difficulties accessing healthcare (40%) and education facilities (40%).

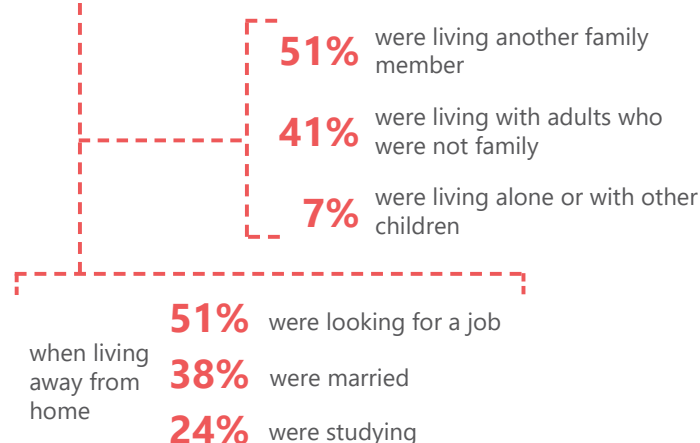
27%

of households reported child, early or forced marriage as one of the main three safety concerns for women and girls, followed by gender-based violence and forced family separation.

Child protection

17%

of households reported that at least one child was living away from home due to lack of rain in the six months prior to data collection.

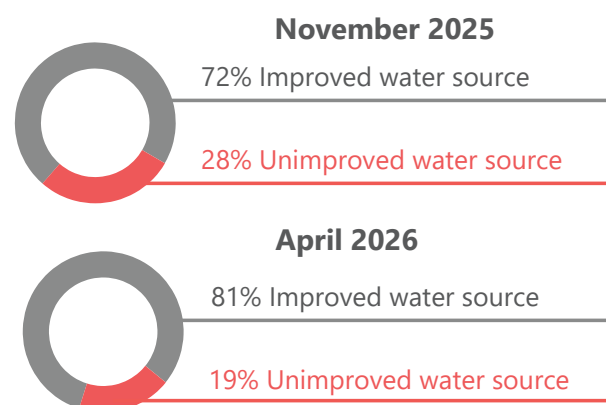


WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE

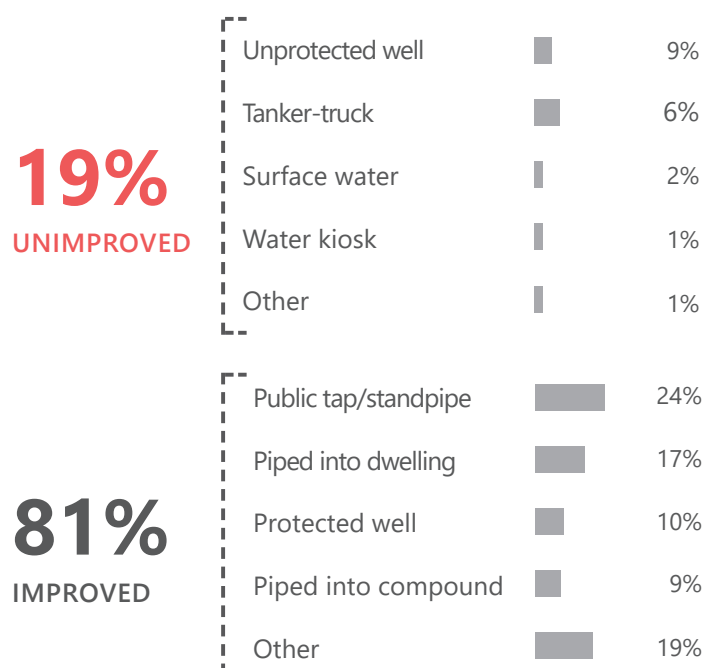
Water

More than one quarter of households (26%) reported not having enough drinking water on some days (3–10 days) in the six months prior to data collection. In addition, 28% of households relied on unimproved drinking water sources that do not meet recognised safety standards, increasing their exposure to health risks. Reflecting these concerns, 42% of households reported that at least one household member had experienced symptoms such as diarrhoea or vomiting after drinking water during the same period. Among the 48% of households that reported fetching water, the average round-trip time to reach the water point, collect water, and return home was 20 minutes

% of households reporting an improved or unimproved water source as their main source of drinking water six months ago and at the time of data collection**



% of households found to be using "improved" and "unimproved" water sources at the moment of data collection



62%

of households reported having to pay to access water from their main water source.

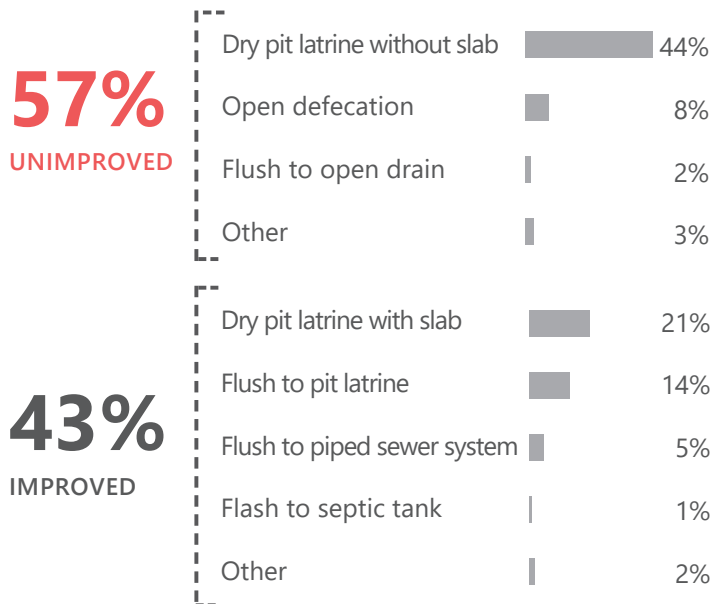
* Responses may total more than 100%, as this was a select-multiple question.

** It is possible that six months ago the household was in a different location.

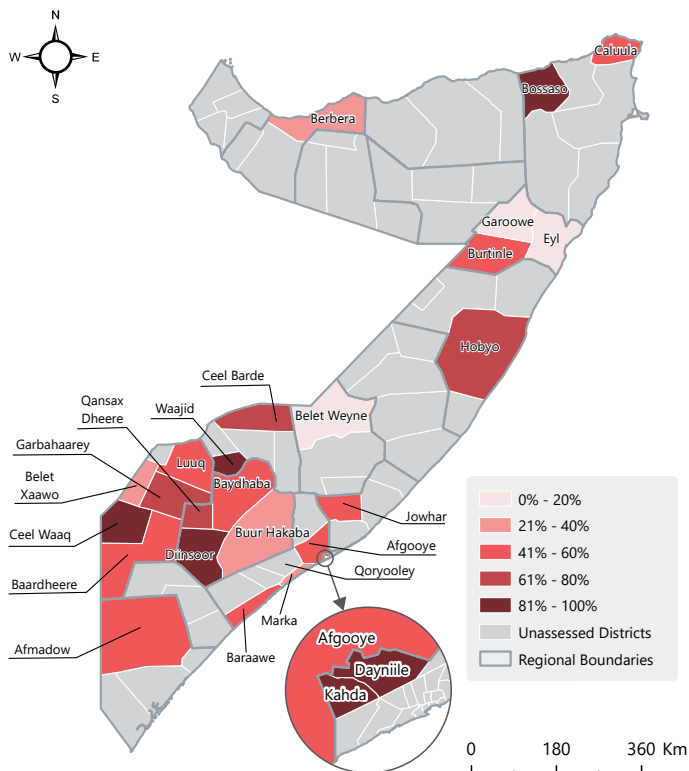
Sanitation

More than half of households (57%) did not have access to improved sanitation facilities and often used facilities that may fall below minimum sanitary standards. Many households (52%) reportedly shared their toilet facilities with others who are not members of their households; among the surveyed population sharing their facilities, an average of five households shared the same toilet.

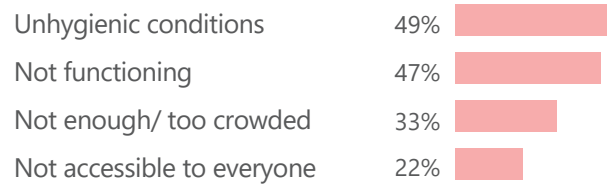
% of households found to be using **"improved"** and **"unimproved"** sanitation facilities



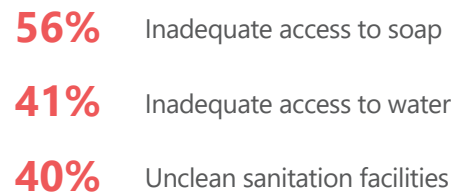
% of households found to be using **"unimproved"** sanitation facilities at the time of data collection, per district



% of households, per type of problem with sanitation facilities (latrines/bathing) among those with access to these facilities at the time of data collection*



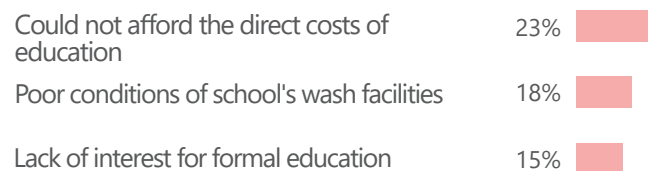
% of households, per type of barrier to adequate menstrual hygiene*



EDUCATION

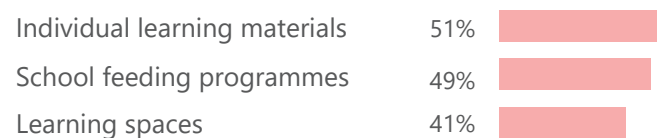
Education access remains significantly constrained for assessed populations. Among households with school-aged children (5 to 18 years old), less than half (42%) reported that at least one child attended school or early childhood education during the six months prior to data collection, while 57% indicated that their children missed school or any early childhood education programme. Nearly all of those households (94%) stated that the main reason was linked to the drought, primarily due to school closures (32%), loss of income preventing the payment of school-related expenses (24%), or high temperatures making attendance impossible (20%). Children were also reported to be engaged in household chores, particularly collecting firewood (65%) and fetching water (50%).

% of households with school-aged children who reportedly did not attend any form of formal education during the six months prior data collection, by reason (other than drought)*



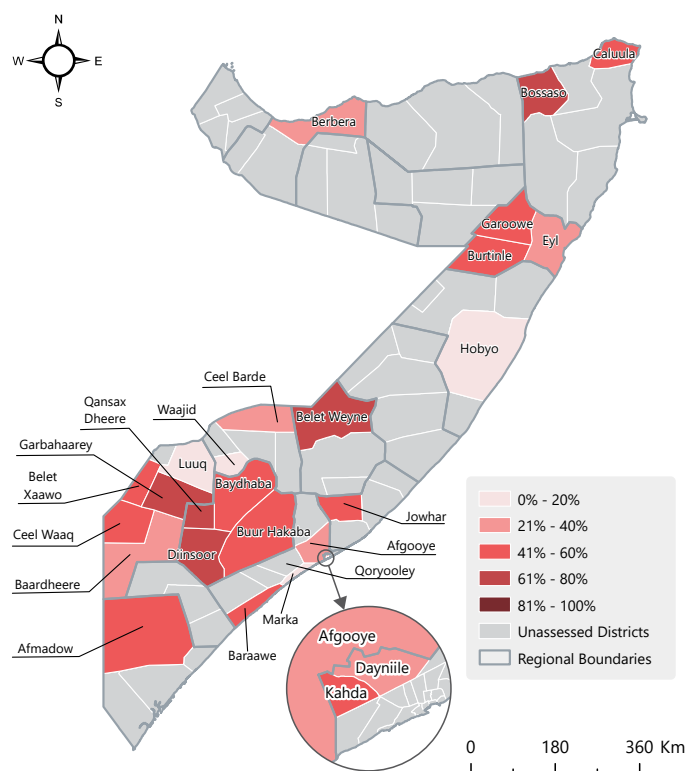
26% of households reported child/children attending to school at the time of the data collection.

Top three most critical education needs, as reported by interviewed households with school-aged children



* Responses may total more than 100%, as this was a select-multiple question.

% of households with school-aged children who reportedly did not attend any form of formal education during the six months prior to data collection, by district



HEALTH

More than half (53%) of households reported that, due to high temperatures, someone in their household felt unwell or sick more than three times in the six months prior to data collection. The most affected groups were infants and young children (62%), followed by elderly family members (42%). The most commonly reported symptoms were dehydration (59%) and heat exhaustion (53%).

67% of the households reported that drought conditions have made access to healthcare facilities more difficult in the six months prior to data collection.

% of households by impact of drought on access to healthcare facilities*

Overwhelmed by health issues related to the lack of rain	36%
Water shortages affecting facility operations	36%
Staff shortages due to migration	29%
Supply reductions of essential and lifesaving medicines and /or equipment	27%
Populations unable to arrive to health facility	16%
Staff unable to arrive to health facility	14%

32% of households reported that, in the six months prior to data collection, there was no functional health facility within a one-hour walking distance.

64% of households reported an increase in their health expenditures in the six months prior to data collection.

SHELTER AND NON FOOD ITEMS (NFIs)

A majority of households (62%) reported living in their own shelters; however, many shelter types, such as non-enclosed buildings and makeshift shelters, are highly vulnerable to climatic hazards like extreme temperatures and precipitation. The most commonly reported occupancy arrangements for these shelters were living free of charge (44%) and ownership (39%). Only 25% of households reported being at risk of eviction in the month prior to data collection.

% of households by most commonly reported type of shelter*

Emergency shelter	26%
Solid / finished house	25%
Makeshift shelter	18%
Unfinished / non-enclosed building	16%
Tent	10%
Solid / finished apartment	4%
Other	1%

Most households (80%) reported experiencing at least one type of damage to their homes in the six months prior to data collection. The most commonly reported damages were to roofs (40%) and walls (34%). Additionally, 94% of households reported that this damage was mainly due to drought conditions.

% of households reporting issues with their current dwelling, by type of issue*

High temperatures inside the house	55%	
Lack of space inside shelter	43%	
Lack of privacy inside the shelter	40%	

26 USD was the average reported household expenditure on rent in the 30 days prior of data collection.

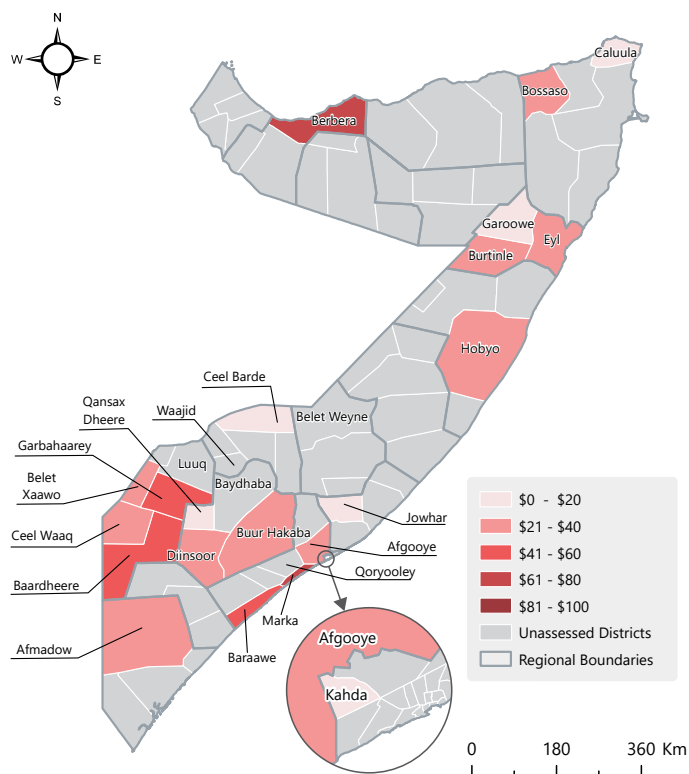
11 USD was the average reported household expenditure on electricity or gas in the 30 days prior of data collection.

Top three priority NFIs reported by households

Sleeping mat	65%	
Mosquito net	59%	
Plastic sheets	57%	

* Responses may total more than 100%, as this was a select-multiple question.

Average reported household expenditure on rent in the month prior to data collection



FOOD SECURITY & MARKETS

The three main sources of food reported by households were local markets (62%), debt (62%), and food-for-work programmes (56%). However, households reported that access to markets was regularly difficult due to distance (43%) and the high cost of transportation (37%). In terms of product availability, almost two-thirds of households reported that food items were too expensive (63%), and 43% indicated that the products they needed were not available. Consistent with this, 34% reported a drastic increase in the prices of basic food commodities, while 54% reported a slight increase.

63 USD was the average reported household expenditure on food in the 30 days prior to data collection (April 2026).

79 USD was the average reported household expenditure on food in April 2025.

Even though most households reported an increase in prices, the average spend was lower. This could be a signal of a reduction in the quality and/or quantity of purchased food, challenges in purchasing products, or less purchasing power.

46%

of households reported that, in the six months prior to data collection, there was frequently **no food of any kind to eat** in their household due to a lack of resources.*

40%

of households reported that, in the six months prior to data collection, **at least one household member frequently went an entire day and night without eating anything at all** because there was not enough food.*

39%

of households reported that, in the six months prior to data collection, **at least one household member frequently went to bed hungry** because there was not enough food.*

% of households that reported using each coping strategy due to a lack of food or money to buy food, in the six months prior to data collection*

Relied on less preferred / cheaper food	71%
Limited the portion size of meals	61%
Borrowed food or relied on help from friends or relatives	59%
Reduced the number of meals eaten per day	52%
Restricted adults' consumption so that children could eat	49%

LIVELIHOODS

Households reported casual labour (44%), animal husbandry (40%), and agriculture (37%) as their main livelihood activities in the six months prior to data collection; these activities were highly exposed to climatic shocks and market disruptions. In the same period, households reported that their sources of income had been severely (70%) or partially (27%) affected by the drought.

Impacts reported on income from agriculture and animal husbandry in the six months prior to data collection, due to the drought**

Loss of livestock	36%	
Activity stopped completely	25%	
Had to complement with another activity	24%	
Land less productive	21%	
Basic crops lost/significantly affected	19%	
High water prices	19%	
Cash crops lost/significantly affected	17%	

* The percentages shown combine the 'often' and 'very often' responses.

** Responses may total more than 100%, as this was a select-multiple question.

ANNEX

Number of surveys collected per district and per population group

Region	District	Affected Population	Drought-affected IDPs	Total
Bakool	Ceel Barde	0	100	100
	Waajid	105	0	105
Banadir	Kahda	0	90	90
	Dayniile	0	90	90
Bari	Bossaso	0	105	105
	Caluula	105	0	105
	Baydhaba	90	112	202
	Buur Hakaba	149	88	237
	Diinsoor	128	73	201
	Qansax Dheere	117	90	207
Gedo	Baardheere	95	0	95
	Belet Xaawo	110	0	110
	Ceel Waaq	95	77	172
	Garbahaarey	97	65	162
	Luuq	0	95	95
Hiraan	Belet Weyne	0	95	95
Lower Juba	Afmadow	99	101	200
Lower Shabelle	Afgooye	97	108	205
	Baraawe	126	107	233
	Marka	100	0	100
Lower Shabelle	Qoryooley	46	0	46
Middle Shabelle	Jowhar	95	0	95
Mudug	Hobyo	100	0	100
Nugaal	Burtinle	95	111	206
	Eyl	95	0	95
	Garoowe	0	105	105
Woqooyi Galbeed	Berbera	107	189	296
Total		2,051	1,801	3,852

METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The Needs Analysis in Drought-Affected Areas employed a household survey tool developed by REACH, building on the Drought Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool previously designed in consultation with OCHA and iMMAP, adapted from a key informant to a household-level instrument. The household served as the primary unit of analysis, enabling detailed understanding of needs at the community level. All data were collected through in-person interviews conducted by trained enumerators using KoBo Collect to ensure methodological rigour and high data quality. For sampling, December 2024 data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Round 3, was used.

To ensure representativeness across districts and key population groups, the assessment applied a probability-based sampling approach. This ensured that each unit in the target population had a known and non-zero chance of selection, allowing results to be generalised to wider populations. Sample sizes were calculated using established probability theory to meet a 90% confidence level with a 10% margin of error, and a 10% buffer, in order to support robust comparison across geographic and demographic strata.

A two-stage cluster sampling design was used in all accessible areas within the selected districts. In the first stage, clusters, consisting of villages or IDP camps, were selected randomly with probability proportional to population size, giving locations with larger populations a greater likelihood of selection. In the second stage, households within each selected cluster were randomly selected.

Data collection was conducted between 12 and 26 April 2026, during which face-to-face household interviews were completed with drought-affected IDPs and affected populations across 27 districts. Teams used GPS-guided movement plans to reach sampled locations, and inaccessible sites were systematically replaced in accordance with predefined protocols. Daily data quality checks were carried out throughout the data collection period.

To ensure the results accurately reflected population distributions, weights were applied by district and population group prior to analysis. The final dataset met desired precision levels, ensuring statistical representativeness of accessible areas in the districts included in the assessment. For further explanation of the assessment's methodology and disaggregated results, see the [Terms of Reference](#) and the [Analysis Tables](#).

ENDNOTES

1. European Union. (2026). [The interactive country fiches - Somalia](#). European Commission.
2. FAO-SWALIM. (2026). [Combined Drought Index \(CDI\) analysis](#), Somalia. Food and Agriculture Organization. FSNAU-SWALIM. (2025). [Food security and nutrition analysis unit – Somalia](#). FAO.
3. Government of Somalia. (2022). [Somalia's National Adaptation Plan \(NAP\) framework 2022–2030](#). Ministry of Environment and Climate Change
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5. FAO-SWALIM. (2026). [Combined Drought Index \(CDI\) analysis](#), Somalia. Food and Agriculture Organization. FSNAU-SWALIM. (2025). [Food security and nutrition analysis unit – Somalia](#). FAO.

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).

