

Humanitarian Situation Monitoring - Key Findings, March 2023

Somalia

KEY MESSAGES

- Prolonged drought is continuing to drive people out of hard-to-reach districts. Key Informants (KIs) in 93% of assessed settlements reported that there are people who have moved out of the hard-to-reach settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection. These displacements are mainly due to **droughts** and **lack of sufficient food**, as reported by 87% and 45% of KIs in assessed settlements respectively.
- Water access in hard-to-reach districts is constrained and **could exacerbate vulnerability to water-borne diseases**. In almost two-thirds (64%) of the assessed settlements, KIs reported that households in the settlements had to use surface water for drinking. In order to cope with insufficient water supply, households in the assessed settlements are relying on negative coping strategies that could increase household exposure to water-borne diseases. This includes reducing water consumption for other purposes including bathing, cleaning the house, sanitation (toilet usage) etc., according to KIs in 61% assessed settlements, or relying on less preferred water sources for cooking according to KIs in 43% of assessed settlements.
- Lack of healthcare services could further strengthen the influence of constrained water access. KIs in three in four of assessed settlements (75%) reported that none of the healthcare, nutrition or food services (such as the provision of Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes or blanket supplementary feeding for pregnant women, vaccinations, etc.) were provided in the 30 days prior to data collection; and KIs reporting on two in three assessed settlements (64%) reported that the healthcare facilities which most households in the hard-to-reach settlements use are located outside of the settlement.

93%

% of assessed settlements reported that there are people who have moved out of hard-to-reach settlements in the 30 days prior to data collection, while in 89% of assessed settlements, KIs reported that there people who want to move out of hard-to-reach settlements but cannot.

CONTEXT & RATIONALE

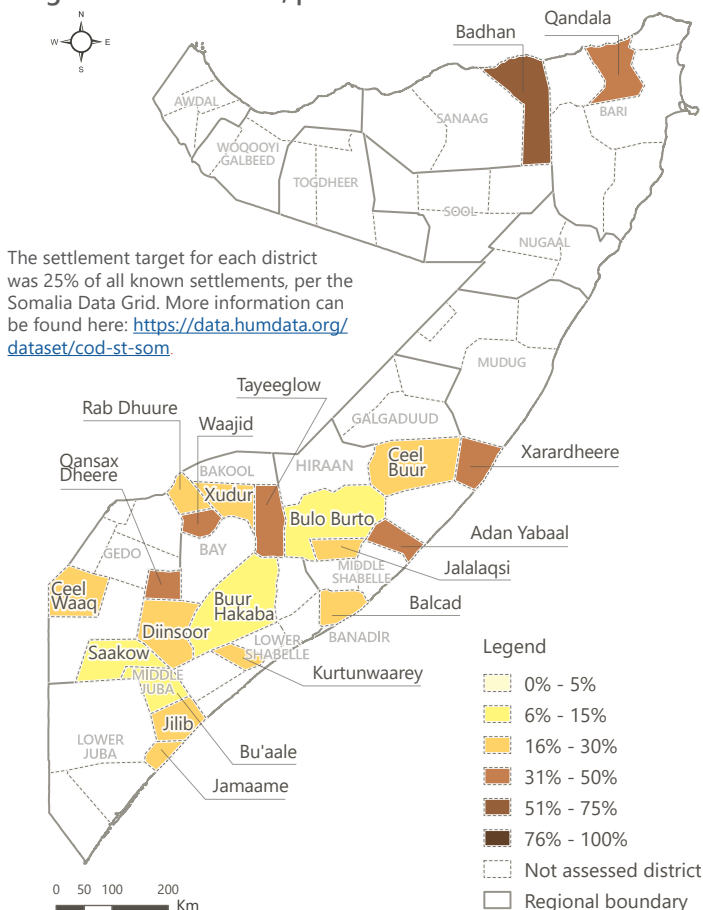
Somalia's protracted and dynamic humanitarian crisis includes ongoing conflict, climate-related shocks and communicable disease outbreaks. [Consecutive failed rainy seasons](#) exacerbate the influence of seasonal flooding and insecurity caused by armed conflicts – and may have caused an estimated [43,000 excess deaths](#) in 2022. The degradation of soil due to drought, coupled with poor soil management and soil transpiration due to high temperatures, increases the [overall vulnerability of Somali communities in semi-arid areas to seasonal flooding](#); while lack of water and livelihoods [abets active conflict and insecurity in-country](#). Drought, flooding and active conflict are then driving internal displacements, and were the most reported reasons for displacement among the [1,189,097 recorded displacements](#) between 01 January 2023 and 20 May 2023.

Displacement, active conflict and natural disasters (i.e. drought, flooding) in country continue [to abet communicable disease outbreaks](#) – including measles, cholera and acute watery diarrhea (AWD). UNICEF included Somalia in its [May 2023 global call to action on cholera](#), which reported that climate change, active conflict and underinvestment in Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) placed an estimated 1.1 billion people at risk of cholera. [Cholera cases](#) have been continuously reported across 28 drought-affected districts in Somalia since 2022, and in Banadir district since 2017. In tandem, [since January 2023](#), 19,943 cases of acute watery diarrhea (AWD) were reported of which 14,643 (73%) were children under five and 2,349 cases of Measles were reported of which 1,618 (69%) were children under five.

Due to a lack of data from hard-to-reach areas, isolated populations within hard-to-reach districts may be facing worse conditions. To help inform humanitarian planning, this factsheet relies on findings on collected through REACH's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM) assessment* in hard-to-reach districts collected from 06 March 2023 to 23 March 2023.

* Methodology note for this assessment can be found on page 6.

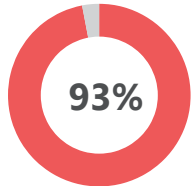
Map 1: % of assessed settlements out of the settlement target for each district, per hard-to-reach district.



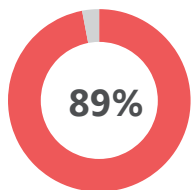
Prolonged drought, lack of food continues to drive displacement

Findings indicate that **prolonged drought and lack of food** are continuing to drive people out of hard-to-reach districts, with almost all (93%) of KIs in assessed settlements reporting that there are people who have moved out of the hard-to-reach settlements in the 30 days prior to data collection. Findings further indicate that it is largely women and children who are on the move from these hard-to-reach districts. These displacements are **mainly due to droughts and lack of sufficient food** as reported by KIs reporting on 87% and 45% of the assessed settlements respectively. In tandem, KIs in **97% of the assessed settlements reported that drought is the main shock** that has affected their settlements in the past year.

The most commonly reported population groups leaving the settlement are children (39%) and women aged 18 - 59 years (45%). KIs in almost all of assessed settlements (89%) further reported that there are people who wanted to leave their settlements as well but **could not**. These were mostly reported to be middle-aged men (18 -59 year of age) and elderly (above 60 years of age) men and women. The most common reasons why these people could not move are reported to be that they were **too elderly to travel (32%)** or **unable to afford transportation costs (29%)**.

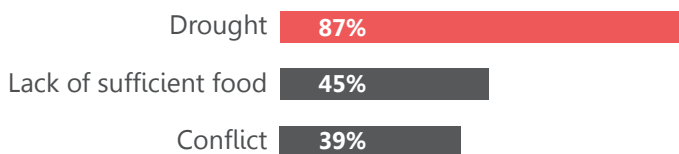


% of assessed settlements reported that people had moved out of the hard-to-reach settlements 30 days prior to data collection

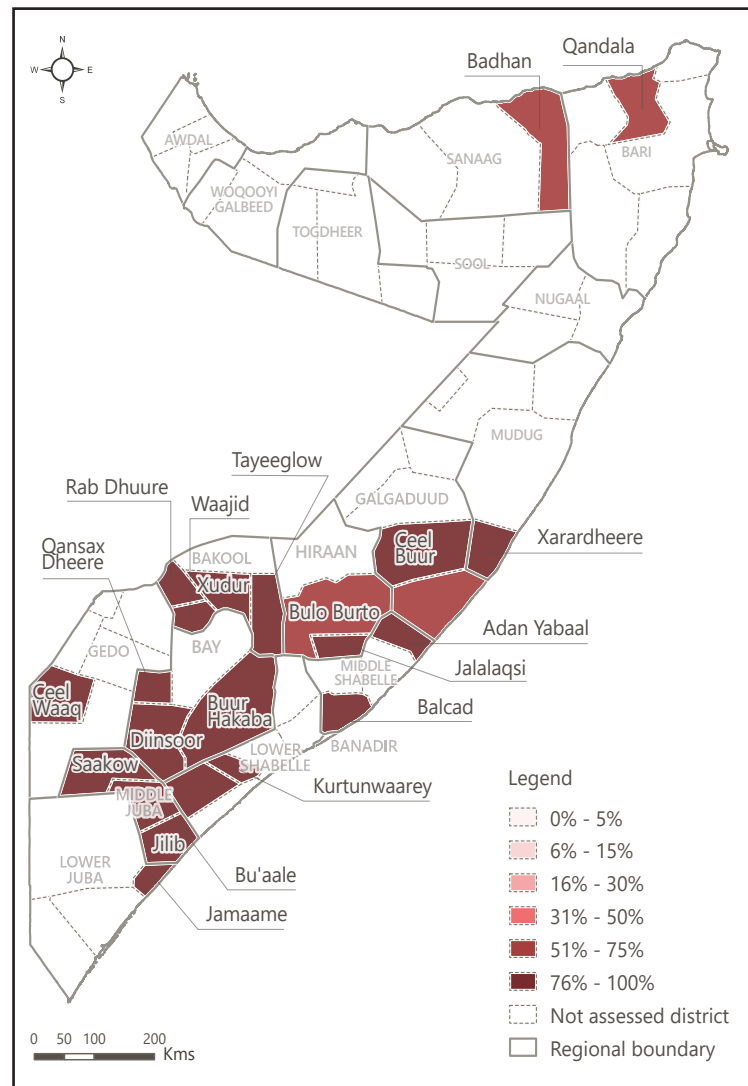


% of assessed settlements reported there are people who want to leave the hard-to-reach settlement but are not able to do so

Most reported displacement drivers in the assessed settlements in the month prior to data collection, by % of assessed settlements¹



Map 2: KIs reporting drought as the most common reason for displacement from the settlement in the 30 days prior to data collection, by % of assessed settlements.



Declining agropastoral livelihoods may be increasing food insecurity...

The situation has been aggravated by the declining food security and livelihoods situation in hard-to-reach districts in Somalia. Many to almost all (51% - 100%) households do not have enough food to eat across all assessed hard-to-reach settlements, according to KIs in 43% of assessed settlements. This food insecurity is more severe in Middle-Shabelle region, particularly in Jamaame, Jilib and Saakow districts where all assessed settlements (100%) were reported that 51%-100% of households do not have enough food to eat.

These findings differ from the [IPC categorisation of districts in Middle Shabelle](#) for January 2023 to March 2023, and April 2023 to June 2023 - which largely [ranged from IPC 1 \(Normal\) to IPC 3 \(Crisis\)](#). This could indicate that food insecurity is more severe in hard-to-reach districts, and complements [FAO](#) identification of populations in rural, hard-to-reach areas as among the most vulnerable groups requiring immediate humanitarian assistance.

Despite continued drought, KIs in the majority of assessed settlements reported farming (69%) and livestock herding (62%) - two livelihoods vulnerable to drought and dependent on cyclical access to water - as primary sources of income. Dependence on these two livelihoods seems to be suppressing both current and future incomes: KIs in more than half (60%) of assessed settlements reported that most households in the settlement had received less money from their livelihood activities in the three months before March 2023, and KIs in the majority of assessed settlements (76%) reported a much less than normal crop yield during the most recent harvest season (January 2023 - February 2023). This significant amount of crop loss was attributed to a lack of rain or a lack of water for irrigation in the assessed settlement, as reported by 75% and 69% of KIs in assessed settlements respectively, which are also the most reported reasons why most households in the settlement did not plant crops in the most recent planting season.

This complements [key findings from the 2023 Gu Rain Season analysis by the WASH Cluster in-country](#), which reported that more rain is required to alleviate the influence of chronic drought.

...and purchasing power is limited.

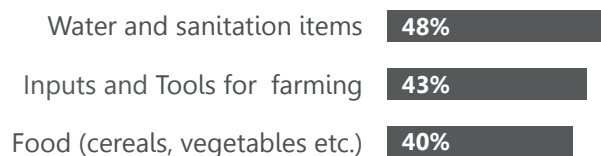
Findings also suggest that limited access to markets, limited access to goods and increasing high prices are constraining purchasing power among populations in hard-to-reach districts. KIs in two-thirds (66%) of the assessed settlements reported that access to the markets which most households go to is [only open some days*](#) (59%), or there is no access at all to markets (7%).

* Map illustrating access to markets across assessed districts, by % of assessed settlements can be found on [page 5](#).

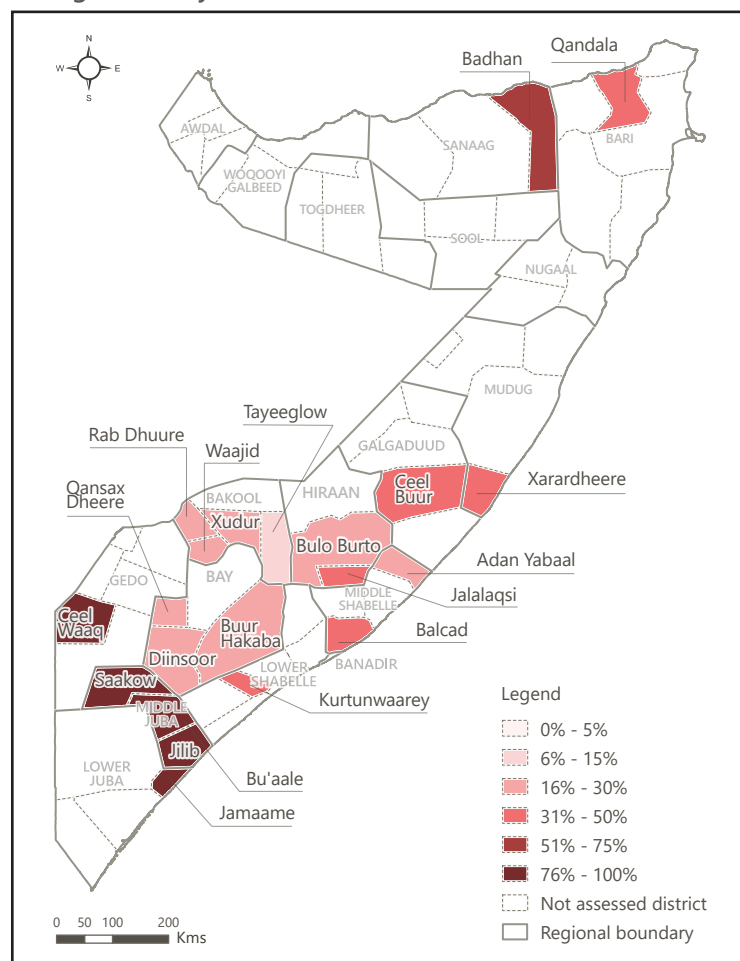
Findings further reflect that basic items are not available in the markets that are accessible to populations in hard-to-reach districts. Water and sanitation items, inputs and tools for crop farming, as well as food (cereals, vegetables, other food items), were the most reported items that were unavailable in the markets by 48%, 43% and 40% of assessed settlements respectively.

Increasingly high prices also limit purchasing power. KIs in 87% of assessed settlements reported increased food prices, while KIs in 79% of the assessed settlements reported increased water prices. High prices - including "High price of items in the marketplace" (50%), and "High cost of transportation" (42%) - were among the most commonly reported barriers to accessing goods in markets in hard-to-reach districts. Price, coupled with constrained access to markets and goods in markets, may suggest limited purchasing power among populations in hard-to-reach districts.

Most commonly reported items that were unavailable in the marketplaces, by % assessed settlements¹



Map 3: KIs reporting 'Many to almost all' (51%-100%) households in the respective assessed settlement not having enough food, by % of assessed settlements.



Decreased water access may be increasing negative coping strategies...

Findings also suggest that limited access to water may be strengthening reliance on negative coping strategies that could increase household exposure to [water-borne diseases](#). KIs in almost two-thirds (64%) of the assessed settlements reported that households in the settlements had to use surface water for drinking. In order to cope with insufficient water supply (reported by KIs in 100% of assessed settlements), households are reducing water consumption for other purposes including bathing, cleaning the house, sanitation (toilet usage), etc., according to KIs in 61% of assessed settlements, or relying on less preferred water sources for cooking, according to KIs in 43% of assessed settlements.

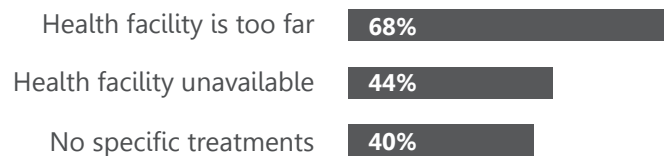
Findings also indicate that households cope with insufficient water supply by traveling long distances to access water. KIs in more than one in three (39%) of assessed settlements reported that it takes between one hour to half a day to get from the settlement to the nearest functional water source using the most common mode of transportation.

...which a lack of nearby healthcare services could exacerbate.

Constrained access to water, and subsequent vulnerability to water-borne diseases, could be exacerbated by a lack of nearby healthcare services. Findings indicate that the majority of households living in hard-to-reach districts are not receiving healthcare services in the settlement. KIs reporting on three in four assessed settlements (75%) reported that none of the healthcare, nutrition or food services (such as the provision of MUAC tapes or blanket supplementary feeding for pregnant women, vaccinations, etc.) were provided in the 30 days prior to data collection. In tandem, KIs in two-thirds (64%) of the assessed settlements reported that the healthcare facilities which most households in the assessed settlements use are located outside of the settlement.

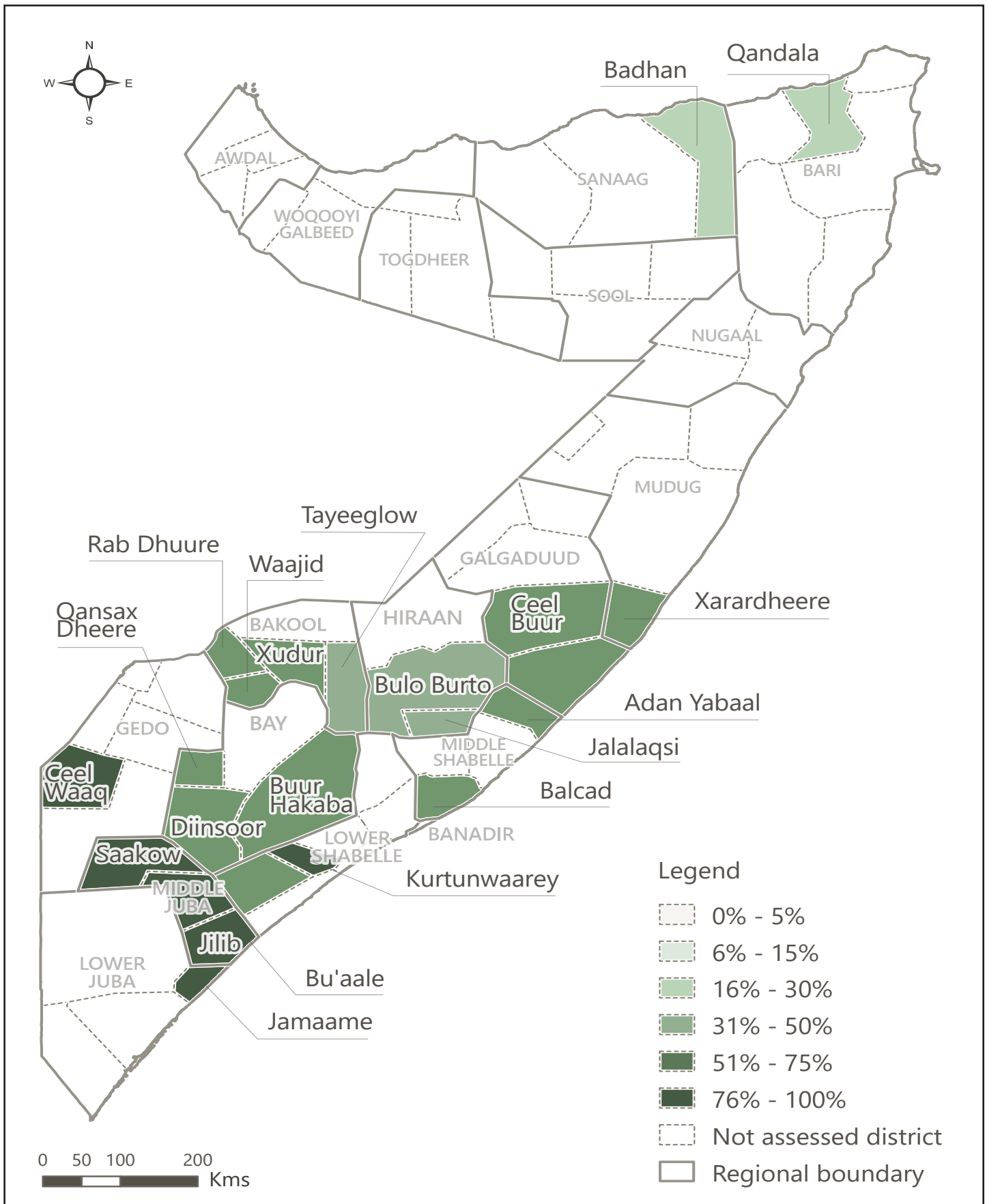
Findings further suggest that distance is a barrier to accessing healthcare services among populations in hard-to-reach districts. KIs in more than two-thirds (68%) of assessed settlements consider the healthcare facilities that most households use too far away from the settlement. In parallel, KIs in almost half of assessed settlements (40%) reported that it usually takes one hour to half a day to get from the settlement to the nearest functional health facility by the most common mode of transportation. Lack of reported healthcare facilities in the settlements, coupled with these findings regarding distance to healthcare facilities, may reflect a lack of nearby healthcare services that could then exacerbate the consequences of constrained water access and could also be linked with water-borne diseases.

Most reported three barriers to accessing healthcare for most households, by % of assessed settlements¹



Annex 1

Map 4: KIs reporting having a functioning marketplace in the respective assessed settlements, however with access limited to somedays, by % of assessed settlements.



METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The March 2023 Hard-to-Reach methodology has followed a different procedure than rounds prior. This hard-to-reach cycle continued to employ the Area of Knowledge (AoK) approach by identifying key informants (KIs) who could testify about the humanitarian needs existing in target hard-to-reach settlements. These KIs were identified based on their knowledge of the specific settlement that was being assessed, either because they had been displaced from this settlement recently or because they travelled a lot in this settlement, or because they still had family or friends residing in the settlement that they have contacted recently.

To capture the most up-to-date data from residents who are living in the hard-to-reach settlements, we have introduced a new approach of mobile phone interviews to strengthen the AoK methodology. Mobile phone interview contacts

were acquired via snowballing sampling through the AoK KIs interviewed in both this round and the October – November 2022 round, and through external contacts.

Data was collected between 6th March 2023 and 23rd March 2023. A total of 2,098 KIs were interviewed during this period to report on a total of 456 settlements across 23 target hard-to-reach districts. We aimed at covering 15% of the settlements within each hard-to-reach district.

This technique intends to support strategic planning and contribute to a more focused, evidence-based humanitarian response in areas where humanitarian workers cannot go on a regular basis due to logistics and/or security constraints. Findings are **indicative** rather than representative, and should not be generalised across the population or district. For more information, please see the [Methodology Note](#).

ENDNOTES

¹ KIs could select multiple answers, thus findings might exceed 100%.

² All findings are presented by % of assessed settlements (456), Unless otherwise noted.

³ Out of the total number of surveys collected (2,098), 603 of these surveys were collected through mobile phone interviews.

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).