



Emergency Aid to Drought-Affected Communities, Somalia

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Project title: Emergency Aid to Drought-Affected Communities

Project location: Kahda District, Banaadir Region, Western Mogadishu and Adale District, Middle Shabelle Region, Somalia



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Background

3.2 million people are facing acute food insecurity as Somalia remains in a severe, protracted drought. According to a recent seasonal assessment,¹ Somalis' livelihoods have been classified as emergency phase IPC 3 and IPC 4, with declared famine being IPC 5. The latest food security updates highlight that drought-affected communities in targeted regions are now facing a humanitarian emergency with the global acute malnutrition (GAM) prevalence being assessed as critical (15–30%) or very critical (>30%). The failure of the most recent March through June seasonal rains² has resulted in a third consecutive season of very poor harvest prospects, limited regeneration of pasture, widespread shortage of water, and reduced rural employment opportunities. In some parts of the country, insurgent activities have impacted economic activity. With the decline in employment, families no longer have the capacity to buy a subsistence level of food to sustain their nutritional requirements. Preliminary results of the post-*Gu* rains food and nutrition analysis indicate overall cereal production across all of Somalia is expected to be 50 percent below normal. Livestock herds have been reduced by 60 percent. Further compounding the crisis are rising food prices, which directly affect food access for poor and displaced households.

These factors have prolonged the crisis and left large numbers of Somalis—agro-pastoralists, farmers, and pastoralist communities—destitute. Between November 2016 and May 2017, 738,600 people were displaced by drought³ after being forced to flee in order to reach lifesaving assistance. Between now and the end of 2017, the number of people experiencing emergency levels of food insecurity is anticipated to increase.



RMF's Presence

In June 2017, RMF distributed 450 food packages to IDPs (internally displaced persons) in Ceelasha Biyaha, Somalia. Our first distribution consisted of 150 food packages containing pasta, canned tuna, and dates. Each package held enough to feed a family of 6 for 10 days. During our second outreach, we successfully distributed 300 food packages. Each of these packages contained enough food to feed a family of 6 for 5 days. The food

¹ Released in August 2017

² Known as the *Gu* rains

³ Some reports indicate numbers over 800,000.

packages were distributed to benefit malnourished children in particular, and to allow the people to celebrate Iftar, breaking their fast with nutritious foods.

Next Steps

RMF's intervention will continue responding to the immediate emergency food crises and needs of drought and conflict-affected communities, through the provision of a food voucher system for 150 households within two identified districts. These efforts will further assist in mitigating displacement to distant areas. According to the United Nations Statistical Working Group, each Somali household averages 6.3 people. This initiative will support over 900 people monthly, for a period of six months. The beneficiaries are comprised of new and destitute IDPs fleeing from government and Al-Shabab clashes and interclan fighting.

Target districts:

- Kahda District, Banaadir Region, Western Mogadishu
- Adale District, Middle Shabelle Region

Kahda District of Banaadir Region is the largest host area of IDPs from three regions, namely Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Bakol. Adale District is a small, coastal, semi-arid rural district that depends on rainfed agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing. It was hit particularly hard by the drought of 2011, where all pasture was depleted with most pastoral families losing 80–100 percent of their herds. Adale has suffered from drought in three consecutive seasons and hosts IDPs fleeing from Al-Shabab.

The proposed intervention will provide a food package once per month to each of the 150 households. Each package will include the following supplies:

- 50 kg of rice
- 25 kg of wheat flour
- 5 kg of pulses
- 25 kg of sugar
- 5 liters of cooking oil

The beneficiaries are selected by community elders and local authorities, together with the project implementation team. The approximate cost of feeding each person for 6 months is USD\$18.00.

The voucher system will be comprised of a ration card distribution in which beneficiaries will independently allow households to access additional household needs from the market. Most IDP sites, particularly in Mogadishu, are controlled by gatekeepers—individuals or groups connected to landowners, government officials, or militia leaders who manage access to IDP sites and demand as “rent” a portion of aid that IDPs receive. Often, this gatekeeper is connected to a region's most dominant clan and has served to exploit displaced people from less dominant groups. Our distribution networks and partner organizations' long-standing experience on the ground in Somalia will help to mitigate any possible issues associated with local power balances.

In the first instance, comprehensive profiling within the proposed working locations will be facilitated, collecting data regarding IDP needs and vulnerabilities to ensure that assistance targets the most vulnerable households and conforms to the most urgent needs within those communities. UNHCR is currently collecting disaggregated data among IDP communities, including service provision or lack thereof.

The implementation team will confirm the identification and selection, as well as facilitate the sensitization of intended recipients. Following this process, there will be registration of recipients. A tender will be put out to select the best quality and price of food items, and facilitation of the voucher system will follow.



Sustainability

RMF is committed to a long-term, integrated approach in Somalia, first by providing emergency food aid to prevent deaths over the coming 3–6 months and then scaling up our work into new areas, providing technical capacity building and other support to key stakeholders to ensure that vulnerable households are identified and supported. There is some evidence that communities which have been the beneficiaries of resilience activities fare better during the drought. Future resilience programs targeting vulnerable communities are required and will be included in RMF’s strategic plan for the Somali country program.

Expected Outcomes

The proposed action was designed in partnership with local target communities, NGOs, and other local authorities and will continue to engage the various stakeholders throughout project implementation. The participation of women will be emphasized with cultural sensitivity. This approach is based on repeated joint rapid needs assessments conducted by RMF and its partners. By acting early to heed pre-famine warnings, the humanitarian community in Somalia and donors were able to stabilize what could have been a catastrophic situation. However, a rapid scale-up of a more coordinated, informed, integrated, and timely delivery of protection and assistance is required by all actors. With improved coordination, especially at the regional level, humanitarian actors will better be able to address gaps in services and prevent worsening conditions. RMF Somalia is committed to coordinating activities with a range of multilateral, bilateral, and non-governmental organizations in the field.