World Health Organization
Somalia

EPI watch
Epidemiological Bulletin

Epidemiological Bulletin For epidemic-prone diseases in Somalia for epidemiological Week 34-35 of 2023 (21 August-3 September 2023)

Current situation

Somalia is experiencing worsening drought following five consecutive seasons of failed rainy season. According to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU) and Famine Early Warning Network (FEWS NEST), Somalia received suboptimal amount of dyer rains than expected since October 2021. Currently, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) estimates that the number of people affected by extreme drought has risen from 7.8 million in January to 8.3 million in March 2023, with 1.3 million displaced from their homes in search of water, food, and pasture. Nearly 6.6 million people – 38.8 per cent of the population - are acutely food insecure. For the first time since 2017, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has confirmed pockets of emergency food insecurity affecting 4.3 million people (IPC 3) and 40350 in catastrophic food insecurity (Phase 5). An estimated 1.8 million children under 5 face acute malnutrition, including 478 000 who are severely malnourished. According to the weather forecast by FSNAU, moderate to heavy rainfall is expected over several areas in southern, central, and north-western parts of Somalia with dry conditions only in the north-eastern coastal areas. The heavy rains that started in April affected 468 000 people and displaced 176 000 in Beletweyne and other districts However reports from OCHA indicate that 90% of the affected communities in Beletweyne have return home as floods are receding. It is also estimated that about 8 million people in Somalia lack access to safe water and proper sanitation. The current situation including the displacement has led to more people being vulnerable to epidemic prone diseases, particularly acute diarrheal disease, and measles.

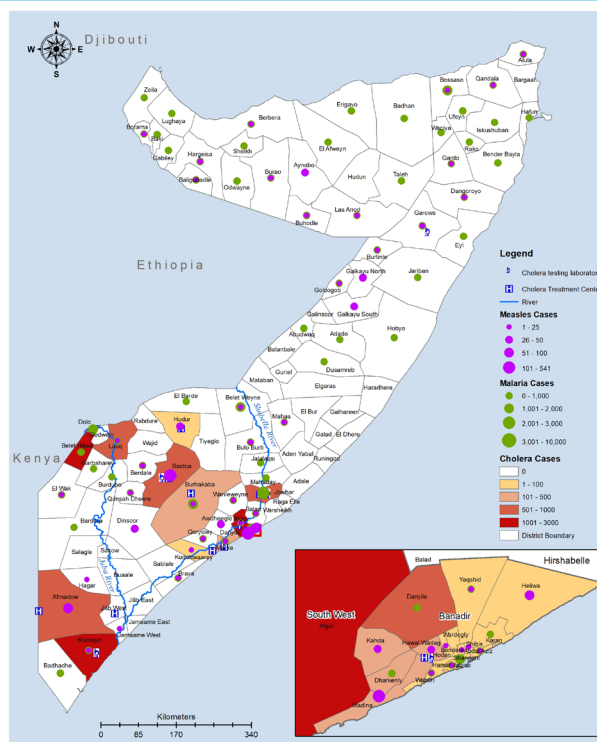### SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR DROUGHT-AFFECTED DISTRICTS

An estimated **8.3 million** people in the country in need of water, humanitarian assistance, and protection[1].

7.8 million people estimated to be affected by the current drought; **1.3 million** have been internally displaced by drought and 50,000 have migrated to Ethiopia and Kenya[2].

Nearly 6.6 million people - **38.8 per cent** of the population - are experiencing acute food insecurity including **4.6 million** in emergency (IPC 3) and **40 350** in catastrophe (IPC 5). **1.8 million** of children are facing acute malnutrition[3].

The projected El Nino expected to start in October to December 2023 is likely to cause flash floods in riverine districts that are likely to lead to disease outbreaks, loss of lives, destruction of property and food crops in field[4].

Epidemiological weeks 34-35, 21 Aug- 04 Sept 2023

528 suspected cholera cases

1181 acute diarrhoeal disease cases

474 suspected measles cases

3402 SARI cases

1655 confirmed cases of Malaria in July 2023

260 health facilities reporting in DHIS2[5]

222 community health workers deployed in high risk areas including in drought affected districts

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1 Somalia: Drought response & famine prevention (15 February - 15 March 2023) - Somalia | ReliefWeb
2 Somalia: Drought response & famine prevention (15 January - 15 February 2023) - Somalia | ReliefWeb
3 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report -April 2023
4 FSNU/FAO report/July 2023-Understanding El Niño: projecting impacts and implications on food security & livelihoods in Somalia
5 Health facilities reporting in 10 regions in DHIS2

Reported cases of acute diarrhoeal disease, suspected measles, SARI and clinically diagnosed malaria cases in drought-affected region of Somalia, (epidemiological weeks 1 -Week 35 2023, 02 Jan to 04 September 2023)

The Federal Ministry of Health and WHO monitor the trends of epidemic-prone diseases in drought affected districts using data from the electronic-based EWARN, DHIS-2, fever and rash surveillance system and community health workers deployed in drought affected districts. With support from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and in collaboration with state ministries of health, WHO is implementing activities aimed at preventing disease outbreaks, including the timely detection and response to alerts of epidemic-prone diseases reported among vulnerable communities in drought affected districts.

CHOLERA IN DROUGHT-AFFECTED DISTRICTS

Recurrent cholera outbreaks have been reported in the drought-affected districts of Somalia since 2022, with no interruption in transmission in Banadir region since 2017. The number of cholera cases reported in drought affected districts have increased significantly in 2023 compared to the same time over the past two years (Figure 1). This increase is attributed to a higher proportion of people with limited access to safe water and uncontrolled cross border movement in Somalia and neighboring countries triggered by drought. Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, a total of 12 902 cases of suspected cholera and 31 deaths (Case Fatality Rate 0.2%) were reported from 29 drought-affected districts of which 6890 (53.4%) cases were children under 5, 6680 (51.8%) were women and 6015(46.6%) were severe cases. In 2023, The regions reporting most of the cases are Gedo (4059), Lower Juba (2659), and Banadir (2542) (see Table 1). However, the number of cholera cases reported in all districts has reduced fourfold from the peak of 867 in week 15 to 221 in week 35. This reduction in the number of new cases is attributed to scaling up of response interventions by WHO, Health and WASH cluster partners. A total of 1846 stool samples collected and tested in WHO supported laboratories of which 545 (33.5%) samples tested positive by Rapid Diagnostic Kit (RDT) while 184 (9.9%) stool samples were tested positive for Vibrio cholerae 01 serotype Ogawa. Culture and sensitivity studies conducted showed that the *Vibrio cholera* serotypes Ogawa isolates are sensitive to chloramphenicol and tetracycline but resistant to ampicillin and nalidixic acid.

ACUTE DIARRHOEAL DISEASES[6]

The number of new acute diarrhoeal disease cases reported through the District Health Information System (DHIS-2), and from the communities in drought-affected districts decreased by two-fold compared to the same period in last year. The reduction in cases is attributed to scaling up the implementation of intervention for water sanitation and hygiene by the WASH cluster partners. Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, 38 251 cases of acute diarrhoeal disease were reported. The regions reporting most of the cases are Gedo (9176), Lower Juba (7115) and Mudug (4351), (Table 1). Despite the reported reduction in the number of new cases, the flash floods that are expected from the anticipated El Nino especially in the riverine districts of Somalia is expected to contribute to increased acute diarrhoeal cases.

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health to conduct sentinel-based surveillance for Rota virus in Banadir region. Since epidemiologic week 1 of 2023, of the 667 cases of acute watery diarrhoea collected from cases admitted in Banadir hospital,184 (27.6%) have tested positive for Rota Virus.

INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE[7]

The number of severe acute respiratory illnesses (SARI) reported through the DHIS-2 system increased by four-fold in 2023 compared to the same time in 2022. This increase may be attributed to increased displaced people who have poor access to standard shelter which resulted in people living in overcrowded conditions in camps (Figure 3). Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, 91 351 cases of SARI were reported from the drought affected districts. The regions reporting most of the cases are Galgadud (32 735), Gedo (11 074), and Banadir (8 980), (Table 1).
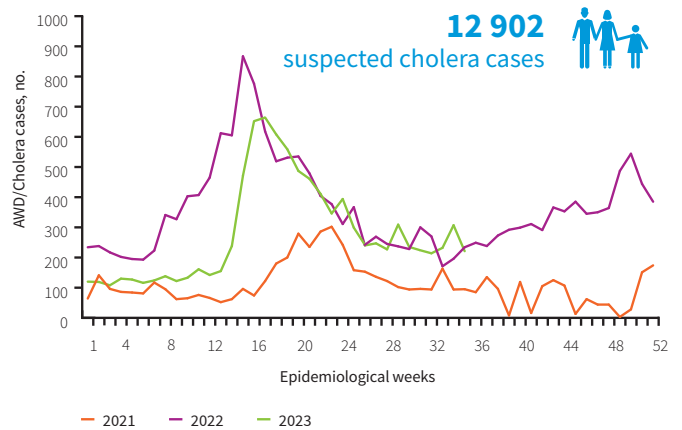
12 902 suspected cholera cases

Figure 1. Trends of suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoea cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2021–2023

38 251 acute diarrhoeal disease cases

Figure 2. Trends of acute diarrhoeal disease cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2021–2023

91 351 SARI cases
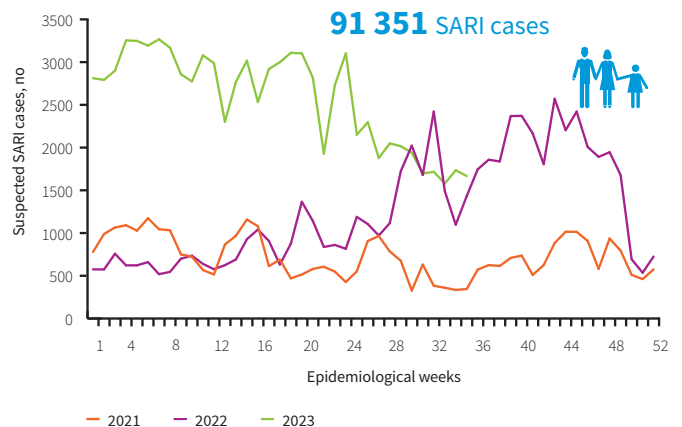
Figure 3. Trends of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) reported from drought affected

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6   The number of acute diarrhoea cases in this report have been extracted from DHIS-2 system that started functioning in week 8 2023 in Banadir region.

7   The number of cases of SARI reported from week 1 to week 7 are extracted from EWARN while after 7, the cases have been extracted from DHIS-2

WHO, in collaboration with United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (US-CDC) and the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework supports Ministry of Health to implement sentinel-based surveillance for seasonal influenza and other respiratory pathogens in four sites-two located in Banadir region ,one in Puntland and one in Hargeisa Somaliland. In 2023, a total of 2574 cases of SARI and ILI were enrolled at four sentinel sites and were reported in the platform of Eastern Mediterranean Flu (EMFLU) network. Since epidemiological week 1 of 2023, 2515 (97.7%) cases were tested at the National Public Health Laboratory of which 160 (6.4%) were tested positive for influenza; 112 (70.0%) were positive for influenza A (H1N1) pdm09, 2(1.3%) positive for influenza A(H3N2) while 11 (6.9%)) were positive for influenza B virus (Victoria Lineage). 5 (0.3%) cases were also positive for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) while 13 (0.8%) were positive for COVID-19.

MEASLES UPDATES

The number of suspected cases of measles reported through the AFP/Polio surveillance system and DHIS2 in 2023 decreased by two-fold compared to the same period in 2022. This reduction in cases is linked to an increase in the number of children vaccinated mainly in IDP camps by WHO supported outreach teams that have scaled up the provision of integrated primary health care services including vaccination services to these camps. (Figure 4). A total of 9060 cases of measles were reported from week 1 to week 35 of 2023. The regions reporting most cases are Banadir (2536), Bay (1807), and Lower juba (1223). Of the 1710 blood samples collected from cases of fever and rash, 1074 (62.8%) were tested positive for measles specific Immunoglobulin M(IgM)

MEASLES VACCINE UPDATES

A total of 44135(78%) out of the targeted 56,482 children under one year received the first dose of measles-containing vaccine (MCV1) in drought-affected districts in June 2023 according to data from district health Information software 2 (DHIS2) (Figure 5). From 2019 to 2023, the measles vaccination coverage ranged between 84% and 78% per month compared to the national target of 95%.

MALARIA UPDATES

The number of laboratory-confirmed cases of malaria reported through DHIS2 has gradually decreased in 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. The observed reduction is linked to scaling up of implementation of additional malaria control interventions in drought affected districts. (Fig 6). As of July 2023, a total of 191078 cases of suspected malaria have been reported of which 8667 (4.5%) have been confirmed positive by Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) and blood smear. However, the number of confirmed cases of Malaria increased from 909 cases in January to 1655 cases in July which represents two fold increase. Of the 8667 confirmed cases, 2095 (24.2%) are children under 5. Regions reporting most of the suspected malaria cases in 2023 are Gedo (23094), Bay (19917) and Banadir (17199) (Table 1).

Week 1-35 of 2023 (2 January to 4 September 2023)

9 060
measles cases

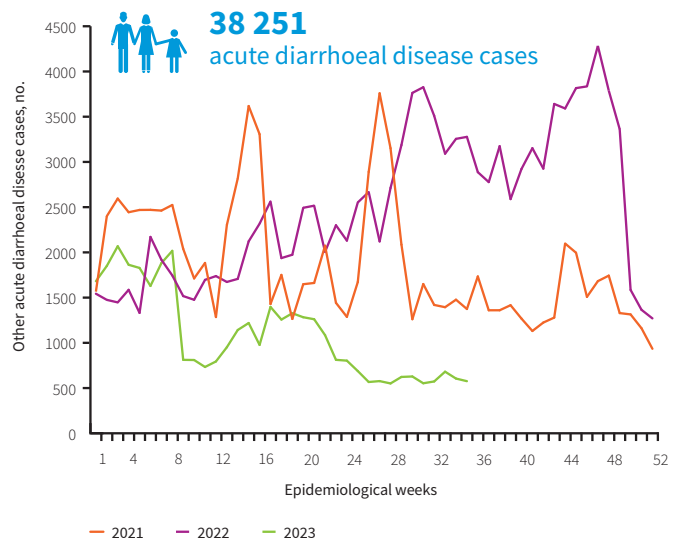**Figure 4. Trends of measles cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2021–2023**
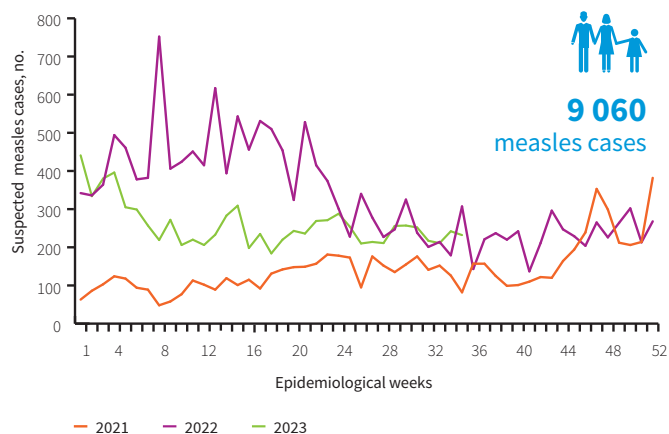

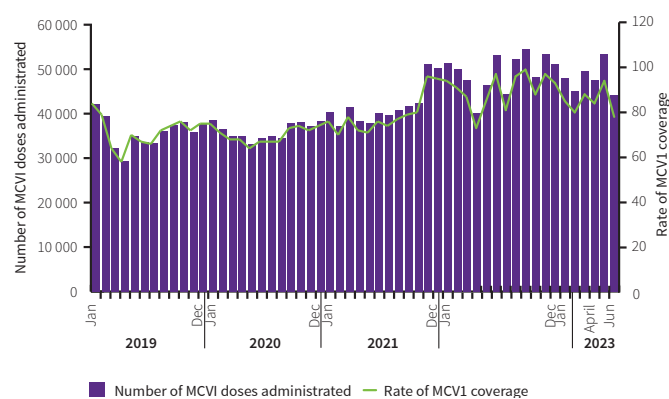**Week 1-35 of 2023 (2 January to 4 September 2023)**

Figure 5. Number of children under 1 vaccinated against measles by month, 2020-2023

*The measles vaccination data for November and December 2022 is not yet available

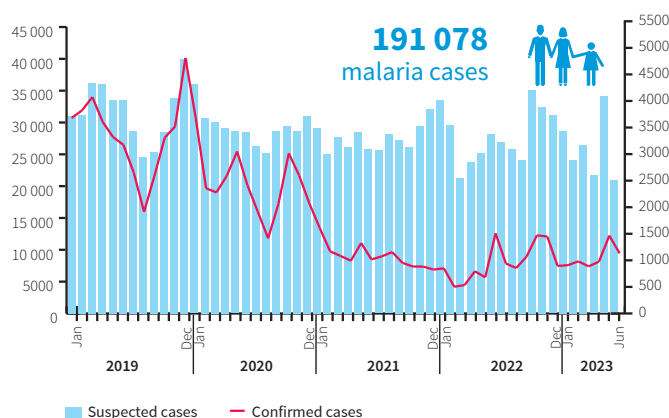**Week 1-35 of 2023 (2 January to July 2023 2023)**

191 078
malaria cases

Figure 6. Trends of malaria cases reported in drought-affected regions, 2020-2023

POLIO UPDATE

- A total of 282 cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) were reported in 2023, of whom 120 (43.5%) case were female and 162(56.5%) cases were male. Of the 282 AFP cases reported,267 (95%) cases had stool samples collected and analysed in the laboratory while 15 (5%) cases are pending laboratory diagnosis.
- In 2023 three circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) were isolated from AFP cases, compared to five cases isolated in 2022.

- A total of 153 environmental surveillance (ES) samples were collected since epidemiologic week 1 of 2023 of which 143 (94.0%) samples have laboratory results and 10(6%) are pending for processing.
- Out of the 143 ES samples with laboratory results in 2023, 4(3.0%) cVDPV2, 51(36%) of the samples isolated NPEV, 3(2%) Sabin like virus and the remaining 85(59%) samples tested negative.

Table 1: Cumulative number of acute diarrheal disease, suspected cholera, suspected measles, SARI, and suspected malaria cases in drought-affected regions of Somalia (epidemiological weeks 1 -Week 35 2023, 02 January to 04 September 2023)

Regions	Acute diarrhoeal disease[8]	Suspected Measles cases[9]	Suspected Malaria case[10]	SARI cases[11]	Suspected cholera cases[12]	cVDPV2[13]
AWDAL	0	11	8357	0	0	0
BAKOOL	365	605	5248	8341	66	0
BANADIR	3047	2536	17199	8980	2542	1
BARI	3481	50	12572	95	0	0
BAY	984	1807	19917	7852	980	1
GALBEED	0	14	6313	0	0	0
GALGADUD	1446	223	10857	32735	0	0
GEDO	9176	261	23094	11074	4059	0
HIRAN	610	476	8863	3385	1	0
KARKAR	1537	0	5130	428	0	0
LOWER JUBA	7115	1223	10674	7666	2659	0
LOWER SHABELLE	1875	524	14310	2151	1665	1
MIDDLE JUBA	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDDLE SHABELLE	471	818	10280	1466	795	0
MUDUG	4351	263	10811	5272	0	0
NUGAL	1772	60	6905	493	0	0
SOUTH MUDUG	929	238	0	1521	0	0
SAHIL	0	18	2474	0	0	0
SANAG	1098	0	6950	5	0	0
SOOL	5	1	3025	245	0	0
TOGDHER	0	76	8099	0	0	0
TOTAL	38 251	9 060	191 078	91 351	12 902	3

Note: Continuous data quality review has been conducted which may lead to variation of figures for new cases and cumulative cases of epidemic prone disease in each region.

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8   Source of data is as of February 2023(up to week 6-7) and DHIS-2 starting with week 8.
9   Source of data is fever and rash surveillance system for week 1-9 and DHIS-2 for week 10-29
10   Source of data is DHIS2 as of January 2023 and DHIS-2 as of March-June 2023
11   Source of data is EWARN as of February 2023 and DHIS2 as of March-July 2023
12   Source of data is suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoea surveillance system managed by the FMOH as of June 2023
13   Source of data is EPI/Polio Weekly update sitrep report 2023.

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