EPI watch

Epidemiological Bulletin

World Health Organization — Somalia

Epidemiological Bulletin For epidemic-prone diseases in Somalia for epidemiological Week 46-47 of 2023 (13-26 November 2023)

Current situation

Somalia is emerging from a risk of famine which was projected in 2022, following the five consecutive failed rainy seasons - a climatic event not seen in four decades. The famine has been averted through the collaborative efforts of national authorities, communities, humanitarian partners, and with better-than-expected Gu rainfall performance. Despite the scaled-up implementation of response activities, the situation remains critical. As of September 2023, nearly 3.7 million people – 22 per cent of the population - are acutely food insecure, a reduction from 6.6 million in April 2023. The number of people experiencing emergency food insecurity has reduced by 34% from 4.3 million March 2023 to 2.8 million as of September 2023. An estimated 1.5 million children under 5 face acute malnutrition, including 331 000 who are severely malnourished. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in Somalia, the dyer rains have intensified with heavy rains reported across Somalia affecting 2.4 million people, displacing 1.1 million, people and led to deaths of 110 people in addition to destruction of destruction of property and food crops in field particularly in in Puntland, Galmudug, Southwest, Hirshabelle and Jubaland states. Humanitarian partners are working closely with the Government, through the Somalia Disaster Management Agency at the federal level and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management at the state level to scale up implementation of humanitarian response activities.

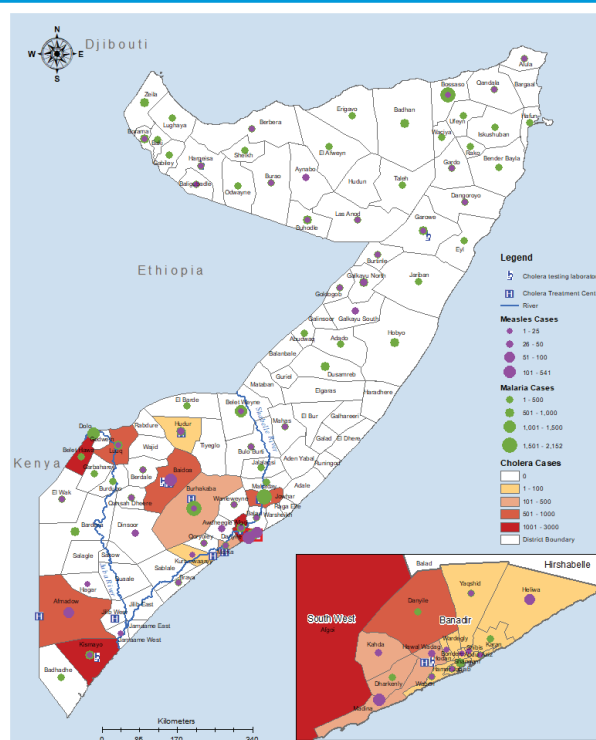### SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR DROUGHT-AFFECTED DISTRICTS

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

Nearly **3.7 million** people - **22 per cent** of the population - are experiencing acute food insecurity including **2.8 million** in emergency (IPC 3) and **919 000** in catastrophe (IPC 4). **1.5 million** children under 5 are facing acute malnutrition[2].

The El Nino that started October have so far affected **2.4 million** people, displaced **1.1 million** , **110** people died in addition to destruction of property and food crops in field particularly in Puntland, Galmudug, Southwest, Hirshabelle and Jubaland states[3].

Epidemiological weeks 46-47 of 2023 (13-26 Nov 2023)

865 suspected cholera cases

2196 acute diarrhoeal disease cases

455 suspected measles cases

3746 SARI cases

719 confirmed cases of malaria in October 2023

260 health facilities reporting in DHIS2

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

Reported cases of acute diarrhoeal disease, suspected measles, SARI and clinically diagnosed malaria cases in drought-affected region of Somalia, (epidemiological weeks 1 -Week 47 2023, 02 January to 26 November 2023)

Somalia is currently experiencing escalating floods caused by heavy Dyer rains that started in October 2023.The Federal Ministry of Health and WHO monitor the trends of epidemic-prone diseases in flood and drought affected districts using an Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Network (IDSR). 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.

1 Somalia: Drought response & famine prevention (15 February - 15 March 2023) - Somalia | ReliefWeb
2 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report -September 18, 2023
3 Somalia: 2023 Deyr Season Floods Situation Report No. 1 (As of 17 November 2023) - Somalia | ReliefWeb

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 and flood affected districts have increased 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 16 036 cases of suspected cholera and 43 deaths (Case Fatality Rate 0.3%) were reported from 25 drought and four flood-affected districts of which 8633 (53.7%) cases were children under 5, 8286 (51.8%) were women and 8078(48.9%) were severe cases. In 2023, The regions reporting most of the cases are Gedo (4526, Banadir (3073), and Lower Juba (2959), (see Table 1). A total of 2535 stool samples were collected and tested in WHO supported laboratories of which 296 (11.7%) samples tested positive. Out of the 296 samples tested positive, 241(99%) stool samples were tested positive for Vibrio cholerae 01 serotype Ogawa. In addition, 3030 samples were tested by Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) of which 1007 (33.2%) stool samples were tested positive. 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[4]

The number of new acute diarrhoeal disease cases reported through the District Health Information System (DHIS-2) decreased by two-fold compared to the same period 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, 47 298 cases of acute diarrhoeal disease were reported of which 32 505(68.7%) of the cases were from districts at risk of El Nino. The regions reporting most of the cases are Gedo (12 509), Lower Juba (7507) and Mudug (6913), (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 diarrheal diseases 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 841 cases of acute watery diarrhoea, collected from cases admitted in Banadir hospital, 221 (26.3%) have tested positive for Rota Virus.

INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE[5]

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, 114, 112 cases of SARI were reported, of which 90 401 (79.2%) of the cases were from districts affected by the current El Nino. The regions reporting
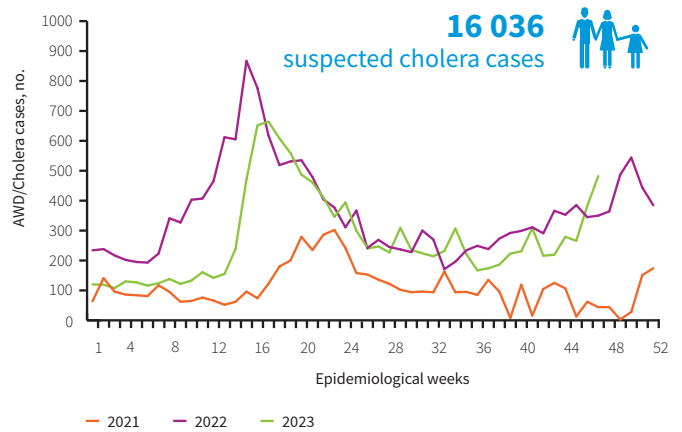
16 036 suspected cholera cases

Figure 1. Trends of suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoea cases reported in drought-affected regions/districts of Somalia, 2021–2023
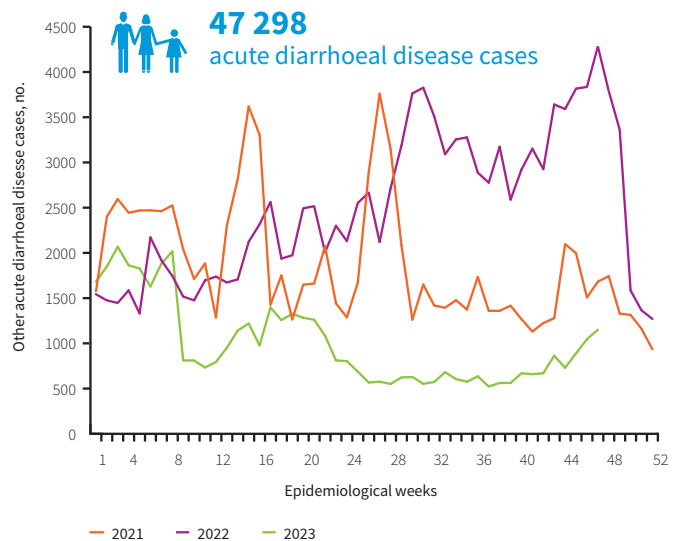
47 298 acute diarrhoeal disease cases

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

1114 112 SARI cases
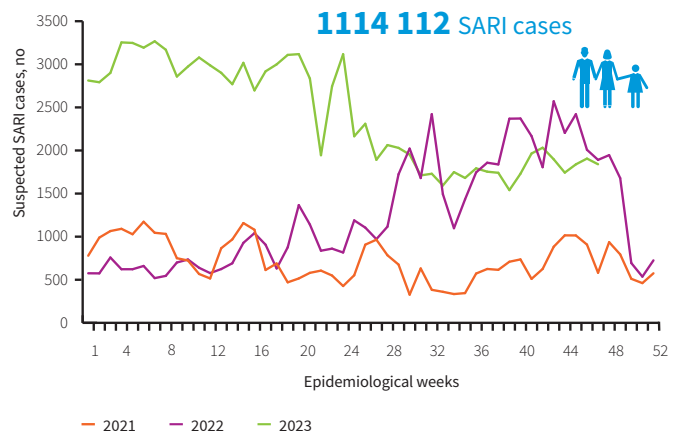
Figure 3. Trends of severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) reported from drought affected

4   source of data is DHIS-2.
5   Data source is DHIS-2

most of the cases are Galgadud (38 018), Gedo (15 269), and Banadir (11 575), (Table 1).

WHO, in collaboration with Center for Disease Control and Prevention of United States (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 3135 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, 3056 (97.5%) cases were tested at the National Public Health Laboratory of which 209 (6.0%) were tested positive for influenza; 155 (5.0%) were positive for influenza A (H1N1) pdm09, 2(0.0%) positive for influenza A(H3N2) while 13 (5.4%)) were positive for influenza B virus (Victoria Lineage). 5 (0.2%) cases were also positive for Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) while 13 (0.5%) 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 12 057 cases of measles of which 9767(81%) of the cases were from districts affected by the current El Nino were reported from week 1 to week 47 of 2023. The regions reporting most cases are Banadir (3319), Bay (2055), and Lower Juba (1645). Of the 2 594 blood samples collected from cases of fever and rash, 1483 (57.2%) were tested positive for measles specific Immunoglobulin M(IgM)

MEASLES VACCINE UPDATES

A total of 41314(73%) out of the targeted 56,482 children under one year received the first dose of measles-containing vaccine (MCV1) in drought-affected districts in September 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 73% 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 October 2023, a total of 270 695 cases of suspected malaria have been reported of which 10 892 (4.0%) have been confirmed positive by Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) and blood smear. However, the number of confirmed cases of Malaria decreased from 909 cases in January to 719 cases in October. Of the 10 892 confirmed cases, 2625 (24.1%) are children under 5. Regions reporting most of the suspected malaria cases in 2023 are Gedo (32 146), Bay (28 963) and Banadir (26 049) (Table 1).

Week 1-46 of 2023 (2 January to 26 November 2023)

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

Week 1-46 of 2023 (2 January to 26 November 2023)

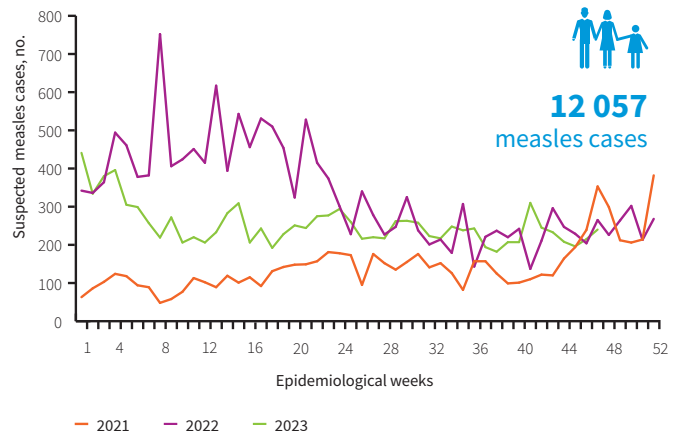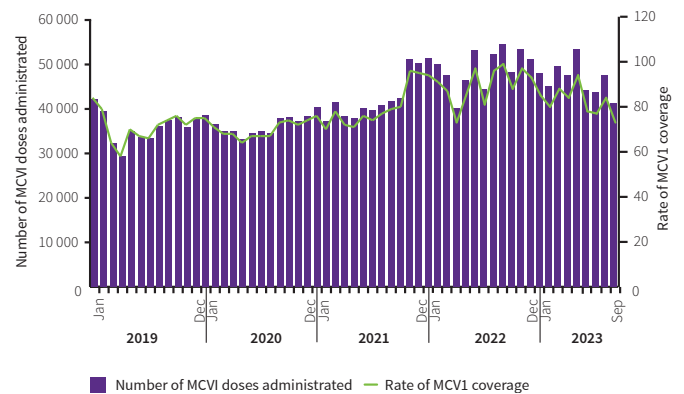Figure 5. Number of children under 1 vaccinated against measles by month, 2020-2023

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

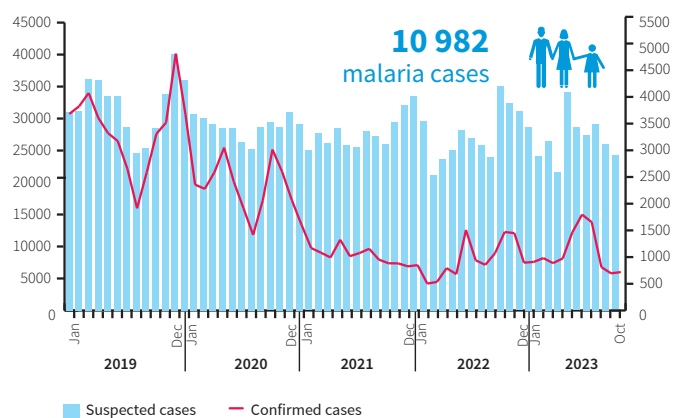**Week 1-46 of 2023 (2 January to 26 November 2023)**

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

POLIO UPDATE

- A total of 377 cases of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) were reported in 2023, of whom 171 (43.5%) cases were female and 206(56.5%) cases were male. Of the 377 AFP cases reported,364 (96%) cases had stool samples collected and analyzed in the laboratory while 13(4%) cases are pending laboratory diagnosis.
- In 2023, five circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) were isolated from AFP cases, compared to five cases isolated in 2022.

- 210 environmental surveillance (ES) samples have been collected as of week 47 of 2023. Of these, 198 (94%) samples have lab results, while 12(6%) are still awaiting processing.

Out of the 198 ES samples with Lab results in 2023, 7(4%) cVDPV2, 2(1%) PV2-nOPV2-negative, 70(35%) of the samples isolated NPEV, 7(3%) Sabin, like virus and the remaining 112(57%) 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 47 2023, 02 January to 26 November 2023)

Regions	Acute diarrhoeal disease[6]	Suspected Measles cases[7]	Suspected Malaria case[8]	SARI cases[9]	Suspected cholera cases[10]	cVDPV2[11]
AWDAL	0	11	11180	0	0	0
BAKOOL	415	781	7968	10 511	66	0
BANADIR	3748	3447	26049	11575	3073	1
BARI	3481	50	16049	95	0	0
BAY	1318	2084	28963	10056	1900	2
GALBEED	0	14	8887	0	0	0
GALGADUD	1972	333	15857	38018	0	1
GEDO	12509	299	32146	15269	4526	0
HIRAN	940	524	13170	4174	1	0
KARKAR	1537	0	7698	428	0	0
LOWER JUBA	7507	1737	14672	8833	2959	0
LOWER SHABELLE	2575	956	21935	3504	2393	1
MIDDLE JUBA	0	0	0	0	0	0
MIDDLE SHABELLE	573	1081	13708	1892	1118	0
MUDUG	6913	287	11028	7724	0	0
NUGAL	1772	81	9818	501	0	0
SOUTH MUDUG	929	279	4384	1521	0	0
SAHIL	0	18	2859	0	0	0
SANAG	1098	0	9794	5	0	0
SOOL	5	1	3851	245	0	0
TOGDHER	0	76	10386	0	0	0
TOTAL	**47 298**	**12 057**	**270 695**	**114 112**	**16 036**	**5**

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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6   Source of data DHIS-2
7   Source of data is fever and rash surveillance system for week 1-9 and DHIS-2 for week 10-29
8   Source of data is DHIS2 as of July 2023
9   Source of data is DHIS2 and EMFLU
10   Source of data is suspected cholera/acute watery diarrhoea surveillance system managed by the FMOH as of June 2023
11   Source of data is EPI/Polio Weekly update sitrep report 2023.

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