

December 2023

# Health Emergency Programme Update – Somalia



Child is screened for malnutrition in Baidoa. @ WHO Somalia / Ali Mustaf

## KEY HEALTH INDICATORS – DECEMBER 2023

<b>130</b>	43 (33.1%) active health cluster partners in 56 districts.
<b>7.8 million</b>	People in need of health care

## HEALTH NEEDS AND PROVISION

- 8.3 million people (over half the population of Somalia) need humanitarian assistance<sup>2</sup>.
- Nearly 3.7 million people – 22% of the population – are experiencing acute food insecurity including 2.8 million facing emergency (IPC 3) and 919 000 in catastrophe (IPC 5) levels of food insecurity. 1.5 million children are facing acute malnutrition<sup>3</sup>.
- Somalia experienced heavy rains in October which caused flash floods that affected 2.4 million people, displaced 1.2 million and killed 118 people. However, reports indicate that as of December 2023, over 400,000 people initially displaced have returned home because of receding floods<sup>4</sup>.
- Fewer than 1 consultation per person per year reported during the month (as compared to the OCHA standard of 1 new visit/person/year).

1 Defaulter is a child who is absent for two consecutive weightings.  
 2 <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-response-plan-february-2023>  
 3 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report -September 18, 2023  
 4 Somalia: 2023 Deyr Season Floods Situation Report No. 4 (As of 10 December 2023) - Somalia | ReliefWeb

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cholera outbreak was confirmed in Beletweyne and other flood affected districts of Hirshabelle state
- 3363 severely malnourished children with medical complications were admitted to 44 nutrition stabilization centres supported by WHO, of whom 2060 (61.3%) were cured, 43 (1.3%) were registered as defaulters<sup>1</sup>, while 37(1.1%) died.
- WHO donated 20 kits for the treatment of children suffering from Malnutrition with medical complications to 15 stabilization centre in Banadir region, Galmudug, Puntland, South West, Hirshabelle, Jubaland and Somaliland that are adequate to manage 750 children with SAM with medical complications
- 2635 cases of dengue fever were reported in Somaliland since October 2023 of which 734 were tested positive for dengue by rapid diagnostic test (RDT) kit. The most affected districts are Hargeisa, Boroma and Gebiley.
- A new cholera outbreak was confirmed in Beletweyne among displaced communities following flash flood in which 466 cases and 3 deaths (CFR 0.6%) were reported. Stool samples that were tested in the National Public Health laboratory were positive for *Vibrio Cholerae 0139 Ogawa*.
- WHO deployed integrated outreach teams that provided primary health care services to displaced communities, 32 236 people in Jubaland state, 33 523 in Southwest state and 24 277 in Banadir region.
- The fifth cohort of Field Epidemiology Training (FETP) fellows comprising of 28 frontline health workers were recruited and undergoing capacity building in disease surveillance and emergency response in Somalia.

## Coordination meetings

- WHO, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the logistics cluster convened a coordination meeting to assess the cholera situation in Hirshabelle state that was reported among displaced communities in Beletweyne. The partners identified the use of contaminated water from river Shabelle and lack of capacity for case management as the major gaps. The partners developed a response plan for cholera that focused on scaling up of implementation of WASH activities including providing safe water to displaced communities, construction of latrines and distribution of hygienic its, building capacity for frontline health workers to manage cholera cases using standard guidelines, prepositioning of medical supplies, educating communities with key messages for cholera prevention and establishing Oral Rehydration Points in most affected villages. The partners also agreed to support Ministry of Health (MoH) to apply for oral cholera vaccines (OCVs) from the International Coordinating Group (ICG) for Vaccine Provision.



Capacity building for implementation of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) ongoing. © WHO Somalia

- WHO convened coordination meetings with health cluster partners in Puntland, Jubaland and Hirshabelle focusing on the districts that are most affected by the floods due to heavy Dyer rains. During these meetings partners identified the locations of displaced populations and identified their immediate health needs which included emergency medical supplies for the treatment of water and vector borne diseases. The partners also developed surge plans for the deployment of multi skilled outreach teams that provided integrated primary health care services including immunization services, vitamin A supplementation and community sensitization campaigns for the prevention of water and vector borne diseases.

## Cholera response in drought-affected districts

The flash floods that affected 2.4 million people, displacing 1.2 million, destroyed latrines that led to contamination of water sources leading to cholera outbreaks in IDPs specifically in Hirshabelle state. In December 2023, 446 cholera cases and three deaths were reported from 17 flood affected districts mainly in Hirshabelle state. Stool samples collected and analyzed in the National Public Health Laboratory were tested positive for *Vibrio Cholerae* 1039 Ogawa.

To reduce the risk of new cholera cases, WHO has supported the Ministry of Health to implement the following activities:

- Convening area-based coordination meetings with WASH cluster and the cholera taskforce of the Ministry of Health, to identify response gaps and develop response plans.
- Developing a six-month cholera response plan highlighting priority intervention that will be implemented to control cholera outbreaks.
- Carrying out community sensitization on home-based water treatment and community management of water sources to prevent contamination, targeting 1.2 million IDPs in districts at risk of flooding during El Niño.
- Supporting district-based rapid response teams on the investigation and validation of 30 alerts of cholera, of which 27 were tested positive for *Vibrio cholerae* 0139 Ogawa.
- Convening cross-border coordination meetings with teams in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya to review the progress of cholera response activities as well as planning for reactive oral cholera vaccination campaigns in the three countries.
- Prepositioning information, education, and communication (IEC) materials to all states in preparation for El Niño response.
- Prepositioning medical supplies in flood-affected states that are adequate for the management of over 5000 cases.
- Conducted capacity assessment of the cholera treatment facilities and review response needs for each cholera treatment center (CTC).
- Conducting an assessment for the feasibility of implementing single dose reactive oral cholera vaccination campaign targeting 480 000 people displaced by floods who are reporting active cholera transmission.

## Response to suspected cases of diphtheria in Galmudug and Puntland state

- The state-based Ministry of Health in Galmudug and Puntland reported alerts of suspected diphtheria cases in Galkayo North district to the Federal Ministry of Health, WHO and health cluster partners. Since September 2023, 116 cases and 18 deaths (CFR 15.6%) have been reported in Galkayo. Most of the reported cases are children under 5 years with no history of vaccination. The suspected cases were recorded in standard line list by district-based rapid response team. There is an urgent need for additional diphtheria anti-toxin (DAT) to manage suspected cases of diphtheria. WHO is supporting the shipment of samples to the UK Health Security Agency for confirmation of suspected cases.
- The Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) team developed a plan to scale up vaccination campaigns targeting children under five years who have never been vaccinated in Galkayo, Gardo, Garowe and surrounding villages. So far 1128 children under 5 years have been vaccinated with pentavalent vaccine.

## Response to dengue fever outbreak in Somaliland

- WHO received alerts of a dengue fever outbreak from the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Development (MOHD) in October 2023. In response, the WHO office supported the MOHD technical teams to conduct field visits and validate alerts. The field teams listed 2635 cases in standard line list form, of which 734 were tested positive for dengue by rapid diagnostic test (RDT) kit. Hargeisa, Boroma and Gebiley were identified as the most affected districts and in December 2023, WHO shipped RDT kits that are adequate to test 20000 cases of dengue, distributed IEC materials for community sensitization and coordinated scaling up of mosquito vector surveillance with UNICEF to implement targeted interventions aimed at destroying breeding sites for mosquito vector.
- In addition, WHO built the capacity of 110 frontline health workers in Somaliland on timely detection, reporting, testing and standard clinical management of dengue fever. However, surveillance records show that the number of dengue fever cases are increasing in Somaliland and WHO will provide additional laboratory supplies to support laboratory confirmation of additional cases.

## Implementation of drought response activities in affected districts

WHO is collaborating with other UN agencies to scale up the provision of integrated primary health care services to drought-affected communities in districts in Galmudug, Jubaland, South West State, Hirshabelle and Banadir region. In Jubaland, WHO deployed 30 integrated outreach teams, who:

- Delivered integrated primary healthcare services to 32 236 people in drought-affected communities, of whom 14 269 (42.5%) were children under 5 years of age.
- Screened 10 084 children for malnutrition of which 2513 (24.9) were found to have severe acute malnutrition while 5563 (55.2%) had moderate malnutrition. Children with SAM were referred to stabilization canters for advanced treatment while those with MAM were sent to OTP for nutrition supplementation.
- Treated 5208 children under 5 years with acute diarrhoeal diseases using ORS while 3270 children aged 6 to 59 months were given vitamin A supplementation.
- Vaccinated 6064 children under 5 years with the first dose of pentavalent vaccine and 3799 with the first dose of measles containing vaccine (MCV1).
- Educated 28521 women of reproductive age on the recommended treatment for infants under 5 years while 2260 pregnant women received iron supplementation.
- In South West state, WHO deployed integrated response teams who provided 33 523 patients with primary health care services of whom 15 648 (46.7%) were children below the age of five years, vaccinated 13 659 children against vaccine preventable diseases, provided 1232 children aged 6-59 months with vitamin A while 1661 children received Albendazole deworming tablet.



Floods destroyed buildings including latrines contaminating water sources and leading to cholera outbreaks. © WHO Somalia / Abdirahman Mohamed

Additionally, WHO expanded service delivery in Kahda and Daynile districts in Banadir, having the highest concentration of IDPs. Integrated outreach teams delivered the following activities:

- Provided primary healthcare services to 24 277 displaced people suffering from drought-associated diseases, of whom 3527 (22.2%) were children under 5 years.
- Screened 9,748 children for malnutrition, of whom 670 (6.8%) had SAM and were referred to stabilization facilities for therapeutic nutrition while 2740 (28.1%) with MAM were referred to OTP for supplementary feeding.
- Provided 3406 children with vitamin A, dewormed 4674 children using albendazole tablets and treated 450 cases of AWD using ORS.
- Vaccinated 360 children with Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) as well as 1167 with the first dose of oral polio vaccine (OPV1), 1024 with second dose of Oral polio vaccina (OPV 2), 1184 with the first dose of pentavalent vaccine (DPT1), and 1019 with second dose of pentavalent vaccine (DPT2), and 1016 with the third dose of oral polio vaccine (OPV3) and 1017 with third dose of pentavalent vaccine (DPT3). 940 children received the first dose of inactive polio vaccine (IPV1) and 517 received the second dose (IPV2). 1046 children received the first dose of measles containing vaccine (MCV1) and 281 received the second dose (MCV2). 1892 pregnant women received tetanus toxoid vaccination.

## Capacity building for implementation of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR)

- WHO supported capacity building for training of trainers for 92 frontline health workers from Galmudug (22), and Jubaland states (70). The health workers were trained in timely detection and reporting of alerts using the IDSR mobile tracker, outbreak investigation and response, data collection, analysis and reporting including monitoring and evaluation of disease surveillance activities. After the training, the frontline health workers were given reference materials that will guide them during the implementation of IDSR strategy. Since the roll out of IDSR strategy a total of 884 health workers from 137 health facilities in Somalia have been trained on reporting health alerts using DHIS-2.

## Capacity building for Field Epidemiology Training Programme (FETP)

- The Federal Ministry of Health, with support from WHO and the Africa Field Epidemiology Network (AFNET), started building the capacity of frontline health workers on basic Field Epidemiology in October 2022. The purpose of the training is to strengthen timely detection and response to public health alerts reported among high-risk populations. In December, WHO supported the training of 28 health workers from technical units of ministry of health and state level in basic FETP. The trainees were trained in alert detection and reporting using IDSR, outbreak investigation and response, disease surveillance and response and data quality assessment. During the training each of the trainees was assigned a mentor who will support them in implementing specific tasks that will be conducted during their deployment. The trainees were deployed to support flood response activities in affected districts.

## Capacity building for cholera diagnosticians

- Laboratory Diagnosis for Cholera Control -training was conducted, including 10 participants from public health reference laboratories from the seven states of Somalia and the National Public Health laboratory in Mogadishu. The objective of this training was to equip laboratory diagnosticians with skills for the diagnosis of cholera and other enteric pathogens and provide training skills that will be used to train laboratory managers in high risk districts on cholera diagnosis.
- The training was conducted in AMREF Nairobi with support from technical officers from WHO, AMREF and MOH. The trainers were trained in practical methodologies for the isolation, identification, and antimicrobial susceptibility testing of *Vibrio cholerae* in stool specimens. Additional emphasis was placed on the identification and characterization of other relevant enteric pathogens, including *Shigella* and *Salmonella*. Following the training, WHO will facilitate the cascaded training of laboratory diagnosticians in cholera endemic districts.

## Capacity building for water surveillance in flood affected districts

- WHO supported the Ministry of Health to build capacity of 60 public health officers from Banadir (30) and Baidoa (30) on water quality surveillance and testing. The participants were trained on (i) introduction to water quality surveillance (ii) protecting water sources (iii) physical and chemical analysis of water (iv) safe water storage and (v) planning for water safer. After the training the health workers were supported with equipment and re-agents to conduct water quality assessment specifically in Daynile and other flood affected districts where cholera cases are reported.

## Nutrition update in drought-affected districts

- WHO, in collaboration with the nutrition cluster, supported 63 stabilization centres to provide care for children suffering from SAM with medical complications in drought-affected districts. In November 2023, 44(69.8%) stabilization centres submitted reports on time, including three in Banadir region, nine in Jubaland, four in Galmudug, three in Hirshabelle, 15 in Southwest, and ten in Puntland state.
- In November, 3363 children suffering from SAM with medical complications were admitted to stabilization facilities, of whom 2060 (61.3%) were cured, 43 (1.3%) were registered as defaulters, while 37 (1.1%) died. The districts that reported the highest number of SAM cases with medical complications were Baidoa (345) and Dolow (147).
- WHO donated 20 PED-SAM kits to 15 stabilization centre in Banadir region, Galmudug, Puntland, Southwest, Hirshabelle, Jubaland and Somaliland. These supplies will be used to treat an estimated 750 children with severe malnutrition and medical complications in flood affected districts of Somalia.
- WHO supported the Federal Ministry of Health to build capacity for frontline health worker trainers on the management of cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition with medical complications. The training course aimed at improving skills and capacity of 24 health care workers from 14 stabilization center from flood affected districts of Somalia. Participants were trained on case management of SAM with medical complications, preparation of the therapeutic milk and management of cholera in severely malnourished children in accordance with the WHO guidelines and technical recommendations.



Flooding continued to impact the daily life. © WHO Somalia / Abdirahman Mohamed

IPC guidelines in health facilities, coordination of IPC activities, medical waste management, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), risk assessment for IPC, safe injection practices, and monitoring and evaluation of IPC implementation.

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- <http://www.emro.who.int/somalia/information-resources/acute-watery-diarrhoeacholera-situation-reports.html>

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- <http://www.emro.who.int/countries/somalia/index.html>
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