



The United Nations declared that famine exists in two regions of southern Somalia: southern Bakool and Lower Shabelle. Across the country, nearly half of the Somali population - 3.7 million people - are now in crisis, of whom an estimated 2.8 million people are in the south.

"The situation will worsen further in the coming months due to poor harvests, malnutrition, unhygienic living conditions and infectious disease outbreaks, such as measles, acute watery diarrhoea and pneumonia," says Marthe Everard, WHO's Representative for Somalia. "In addition to buying food and supplying safe drinking-water and shelter, we need more resources to provide emergency health services to save the lives of thousands of Somalis."

Lack of safe drinking-water and overcrowding in refugee camps greatly increase the risk of acute watery diarrhoea and cholera outbreaks, as communities are forced to live in unhealthy living conditions and to use contaminated water sources.

Mass emergency vaccination campaigns are essential to avoid major outbreaks of polio and measles, especially in South and Central Somalia. Children under five are particularly vulnerable.

Consecutive droughts have affected the country in the last few years while the ongoing conflict has made it extremely difficult for agencies to operate and access communities in the south of the country.

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