



Mogadishu, 23 September 2020 – As part of continuous efforts to provide life-saving supplies to the most vulnerable Somalis, at the request of WHO, the European Union (EU) delegation to Somalia commissioned 2 special flights on 17 and 21 September to airlift emergency medical kits and supplies to Hirshabelle State. These supplies will be used to treat populations affected by flash floods in the state.

As soon as the Ministry of Health in Hirshabelle State noted an increase in the numbers of people contracting waterborne diseases, they alerted WHO to offer urgent support. The emergency supplies are being dispatched to the hardest-hit families, living around riverine areas in Balad, Beletweyne, Jalalaqsi, Jowhar and Mahaday.

“This is the fourth time this year that the EU delegation has shown immense and timely support to Somalia. Thanks to the swift action taken by them, and with guidance from the Ministry of Health in Hirshabelle, we have been able to support some of the worst-hit families,” said Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik, WHO Representative for Somalia. “We still have a long way to go to help prepare communities for disasters like this. Floods are recurrent along the Shabelle River, communities living in affected areas are at risk of being infected by waterborne diseases, like diarrhoea, and vector-borne diseases, in addition to COVID-19, which spreads easily where people live in confined areas.”

Both EU flights commissioned in the last week carried 7.2 tonnes and 29 cubic metres of emergency supplies from Mogadishu to Jowhar. The supplies include 51 Interagency Emergency Health (IEH) kits, each providing essential health care in emergency settings for up to 10 000 people over a 3-month period; 104 trauma kits allowing for 10 400 surgical interventions, to serve 5200 patients; 446 cholera kits capable of serving 44 600 patients, 32 surgical kits, each serving 100 patients; sample collection kits; tubes for sample collection and dengue testing kits; surgical instruments and one cholera treatment centre tent of 20 beds. Over 563 000 persons will benefit from these life-saving emergency medical supplies, which will stop further spread of waterborne diseases among communities living along the Shabelle River.

"Already vulnerable families in Beletweyne, Jalalaqsi, Jowhar, Mahaday and other communities along the Shabelle River are facing life and death situations as a result of flash floods, in addition to the challenges caused by COVID-19," the EU Ambassador to Somalia Nicolas Berlanga said. "The latest EU-commissioned flights are further evidence of the European Union's commitment to the people of Somalia and our belief that we are more effective when we join hands with other organizations such as WHO Somalia. Our cooperation has and will continue to save lives."

## Note to editors

This joint operation remains part of the bilateral coordination mechanism established between WHO Somalia and the Delegation of the EU to Somalia, which aims to strengthen operational response activities, including for COVID-19. On 3 May, EU flights also airlifted critical medical equipment and supplies from Mogadishu to Kismayo to support Jubaland State to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. Following this intervention, on 20 and 21 May, the EU airlifted life-saving medicine and other emergency hospital supplies to Jowhar, Kismayo and Baidoa □ areas which were also affected recently by floods caused by heavy rains. Two other flights were organized on 11–12 June to airlift life-saving medicine and other emergency hospital supplies to Beletweyne, as well as medical and laboratory supplies to Hargeisa and Garowe. In addition, the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) has provided US \$1.8 million to WHO's COVID-19 preparedness and response operations in Somalia. WHO and the EU delegation to Somalia will continue to collaborate in the future, in efforts to reach the most vulnerable populations.

## Related links

[WHO and EU unite to fight COVID-19 in Somalia](#)

[EU and WHO unite to deliver critical life-saving supplies to flood-affected areas in Somalia](#)

[European Union and WHO Somalia deliver more emergency hospital supplies](#)

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