

Somali Health Cluster Bulletin #19

Dehydrated child being treated in Bossasso/ Puntland
Photo: Merlin



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The Somali Health Cluster Bulletin aims to provide an overview of the health activities conducted by the health cluster partners active in Somalia.

The Health Cluster Bulletin is issued on a monthly basis; and available online at www.emro.who.int/somalia/healthcluster

Contributions are to be sent to cluster@nbo.emro.who.int

HIGHLIGHTS

- Rumors of Cholera outbreaks in Lower Shabelle and Lower Jubba
- Awareness activities focused on health education covering environmental hygiene
- Despite challenging security situation, 59 international staff are working in Somalia

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- The onset of the dry season has caused localized congestions at water points for nomadic communities, leading to higher risks of water borne diseases such as AWD.
- Tension and uncertainty marked the month of January when Ethiopian troops pulled out of Southern and Central parts of Somalia, resulting in restructuring of power.
- Conflict between fighting parties in Gedo and Bay regions in the beginning of January has caused security concerns also in Buuale and Sakow districts in Middle Jubba.
- Due to security concerns and hostile incidents, international staff of most humanitarian agencies had to be pulled out of different regions of Somalia. Currently, 27 international staff are active in Somaliland, 17 in Puntland, and 15 in South Central parts of the country.

HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Health Coordination & Capacity Building

- **Merlin** is coordinating the Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) in **Puntland**, with 43 reporting units. The task force for outbreak preparedness and response includes **WHO, UNICEF, MoH, SC UK, and SRCS**.

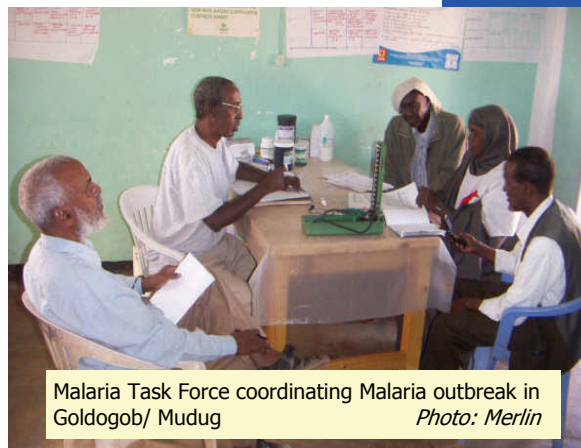
Training activities

- Between 12 and 14 January, **SRCS** conducted a workshop on disaster management and preparedness (AWD and cholera case management; detection of cholera cases according with international standard case definitions). 12 auxiliary nurses from different health care facilities in Kismaayo, Gududey and Jilib/ **Lower and Middle Jubba** participated.
- On 19 January, **AFREC** conducted a workshop in Afmadow MCH/ **Lower Jubba** for women, religious leaders and health staff. The event addressed the culturally sensitive topic of family planning and child spacing.
- Between 24 and 26 January, **Mercy USA** conducted health education for 78 participants from different community groups in Jilib district/ **Middle Jubba**, with focus on malaria prevention and early treatment.



Communicable Diseases & Environmental Health

- **Muslim Aid UK**, with support of WHO, has been continuing their Schistosomiasis programme in Jamaame district/ **Lower Jubba**, including massive health education. Between 10 and 12 January, 4 villages (namely Mashaqo, Masangurow, Moofi, and Manamoofi) were visited.
- The Malaria outbreak in Galdogob/ **Mudug** is under control and no new cases have been reported in January.
- **Muslim Aid UK** and local partners have conducted environmental hygiene activities in the first week of January in Jamaame district/ **Lower Jubba**. The interventions included the construction of two garbage pits. **Mercy USA** has been carrying out environmental hygiene activities in Jilib district/ **Middle Jubba**. In a meeting of both agencies with **WHO** on 25 January, information sharing and cooperation was agreed among all three partners.
- After 23 cases of Bloody Diarrhoea were reported in the third week of January, **Somali Aid Foundation** and **AFREC** conducted environmental hygiene activities in and around Hagar/ **Lower Jubba**, including the construction of garbage pits to dispose and burn waste, as well as purification of water catchments. The difficulty to measure the amount of water in such catchments has been identified as a major challenge in the correct chlorination dosage.



Surveillance of AWD/Cholera¹

- Rumours of cholera outbreaks have been reported from Wanla Weyne/ **Lower Shabelle** and Kismaayo/ **Lower Jubba**. Active case investigation and verification by WHO-led EWARS is ongoing.
- A total of 179 cases of AWD with no related death were reported between 3-30 January 2009 (epidemiological weeks 1-4) from Jilib (85), Jamaame (55) and Afmadow (39) districts in **Lower** and **Middle Jubba**. Cases in children under the age of 5 years constitute 77.1% of all reported cases.
- Of the 39 cases in Afmadow/ **Lower Jubba**, 12 cases were reported from Hagar. **WHO** provided 25 *Carry Blair* sets (transport media for cholera samples) and 25 Cholera rapid diagnostic kits (SMART) to partners on the ground.
- On 14 January, 30 cases of AWD were reported from Koban, 13 km West of Jamaame/ **Lower Jubba**. In their active case investigation, **Muslim Aid UK** and partners found that most patients came from the same family; and most likely the diarrhoea was caused by food or unpurified water. Extensive water chlorination and social mobilization activities were initiated. All suspected cases have been referred to local health facilities.
- On 18 January, 23 cases of Bloody Diarrhoea were reported from 4 villages around Hagar town/ **Lower Jubba**, namely Buulo-Dabadheer (11), Qalley (3), Qlalwilley (4), and Wallacis (5). Active case investigation and verification have been initiated by **Somali Aid Foundation** and **WHO** polio officer.

Water & Sanitation

- Throughout the month of January, **SRCS** and **Muslim Aid UK** have carried out water chlorination activities in Kismaayo and Jilib/ **Lower and Middle Jubba**, with focus on IDP populations. **AFREC** and **Somali Aid Foundation** are chlorinating shallow wells in Afmadow and Hagar/ **Lower Jubba** with focus on nomadic populations during the dry season.

¹ for detailed, epidemiological information, see *Monthly Morbidity and Mortality Bulletin* at www.emro.who.int/somalia

- In the first week of January, **Somali Aid Foundation** started water treatment in and around Hagar town/ **Lower Jubba**.
- **COOPI** has rehabilitated 10 shallow wells in the second week of January in Jamaame district/ **Lower Jubba**. In addition, 2 new wells were dug with the aim to reduce water scarcity during the dry season especially among agro-pastoral communities in the area.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD)

- **Muslim Aid UK** is continuing their EPI outreach programme in Jamaame district/ **Lower Jubba**. In the third week of January, 4 villages (namely Kamasuuma, Baarka, Sanguuni, Warkooy) were covered.
- In the year 2008, a massive outbreak of Measles has been reported from Togdheer/ Somaliland. A breakdown of cases² per district is shown in Figure 1 below.

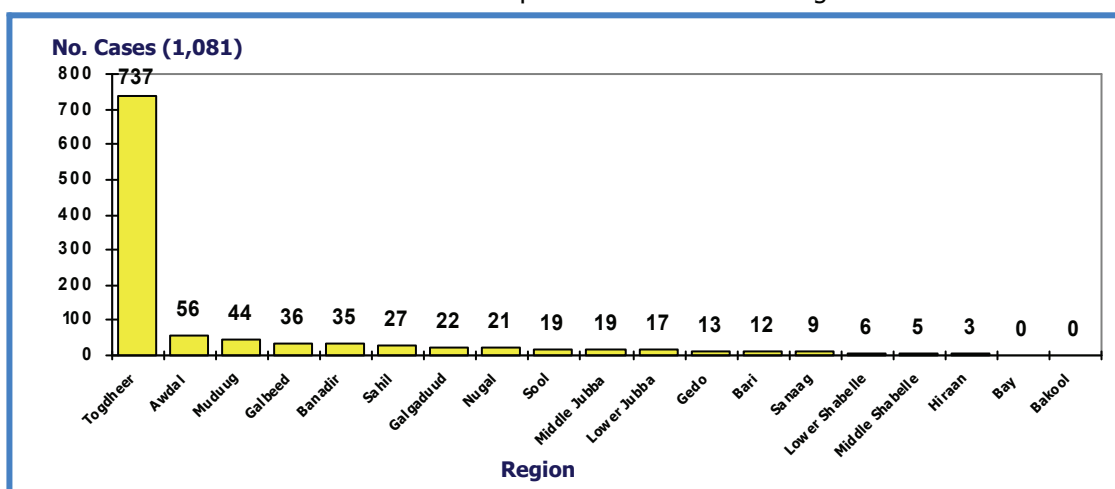


Figure 1: Number of reported Measles cases by Region, Somalia, 2008

Primary and Secondary Health Care

- **World Vision International** continues assistance to the people in Sakow/ **Middle Jubba** who were affected by the fire that destroyed extensive parts of the town in December last year. The interventions include post traumatic treatment in Sakow health center.
- Throughout the month of January, **Kismaayo Hospital** in **Lower Jubba** has encountered a high influx of patients. Due to limited bed capacity, priority is given to emergency surgical interventions. Admissions predominantly include road traffic accidents, gynecological and obstetric as well as urinary tract infections (UTI), and chest infections. Concerns have been raised about nosocomial infections. Training activities on aseptic techniques and hygiene measures should be considered.
- After confrontations between two militias in the outskirts of Doble town/ **Lower Jubba** in the second week of January, **AFREC** reported that all wounded cases were transferred to the Kenyan side of the border for treatment. As of 25 January, 90 new IDP families were reported, and medical assistance was given. Cases included scabies and malaria.
- **World Vision International** continues to assist villages in the South West of Buuale district/ **Middle Jubba** with medical outreach teams. In the second week of January, more than 70 cases were examined, including respiratory infections, malaria, *otitis media* (inflammation of the middle ear), and Schistosomiasis.

² based on data from AFP/Measles reporting sites collected by WHO polio officers as summarized in *Weekly AFP Surveillance Update, week 3, 2009*

Health Education & Public Awareness

- Between 3 and 5 January, **AFREC** conducted extensive health education on diarrhoeal diseases in and around Afmadow town/ **Lower Jubba**. This area was particularly affected by overcrowding at water points in December due to lack of rainfall.
- Since 18 January, **COOPI** has been conducting community mobilization in Jamaame district/ **Lower Jubba**, addressing instructions on the construction of ventilated pit latrines and garbage management.
- In response to high influx of nomadic communities due to water scarcity, **World Vision International** have initiated health education for AWD awareness in Buaale/ **Middle Jubba** in the second week of January. Information addressed in the campaign includes the use of health care services (i.e. health posts) for oral rehydration therapy, treatment of malaria, intestinal worms, scabies and minor wounds.
- In the second week of January, **Mercy USA** has conducted health education for CHWs, TBAs, and community and religious leaders in Jilib district/ **Middle Jubba**. Topics covered include Malaria (promotion of vector control and use of ITNs; early treatment seeking and referral) and AWD (promotion of environmental and personal hygiene; preparation of oral rehydration therapy before reaching health care facilities; improvement of health care seeking behavior, promotion of safe water storage and use)
- In the course of their continued HIV/AIDS awareness activities, **Mercy USA** has visited four villages (namely Sheikh-Nur, Ahmed-Yare, Xaramka, Yaaqle) in Jilib/ **Middle Jubba** between 4 and 6 January.