

Somali Health Cluster Bulletin #18



Unprotected well as a source of drinking water in Merka

Photo: WHO

December 2008

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

- More than 50,000 people displaced and 40 civilians killed in fighting in Galgaduud
- Response to malaria outbreak in Mudug challenged by restricted security
- The trend of the cholera outbreak in Merka is significantly decreasing

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- More than 40 civilians have reportedly been killed and over 50,000 people displaced due to massive fighting since 27 December 2008 in Dhusamareb and Guriceel/ **Galgaduud**. Inter-cluster coordination for joint response efforts is ongoing.
- Fighting between conflicting parties was reported in the second week of December from Afmadow district/ **Lower Jubba**. More than 20 wounded were admitted to Kismaayo hospital within one week. On 13 December, 12 civilians were killed at a water collection point in Kaba Kirig/ **Lower Shabelle** due to fighting of TFG/ Ethiopian forces and insurgents. On the same day, one ICRC staff was shot dead in Mogadishu, according to UNOCHA reports.
- The rains in **Middle and Lower Jubba** have subsided this month, so that some families who had been displaced due to the floods, mainly in Buale East and Sakow South, have started returning to their villages.
- On 21 December, a fire swept across Sakow town/ **Middle Jubba**, destroying homes of an estimated 750 households (more than 4,300 people). Local NGO **SDIO, UNICEF** and **WFP** immediately intervened with food aid and relief kits for the displaced.
- After **IMC** and **CARE** had to cease their activities in **Bay** and **Bakool** regions and on **Afgooye corridor**, several health facilities, OPTs and feeding centres benefiting approximately 30,000 people monthly have to be taken over by partners on the ground.

HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Health Coordination & Capacity Building

Training activities

- Between 8 and 12 December, **SRCS** conducted a first aid training for 30 volunteers from different community groups in Kismaayo/ **Lower Jubba**. The lessons covered different measures of emergency life support in conflict situations.
- After several children in a nutritional program in Jilib district/ **Middle Jubba** ceased attending the supplementary feeding, **Mercy USA** conducted health education and awareness events between 28 and 31 December. More than 120 mothers attended the sessions which addressed diseases related to malnutrition, and the impact of nutritional elements on child growth and development.

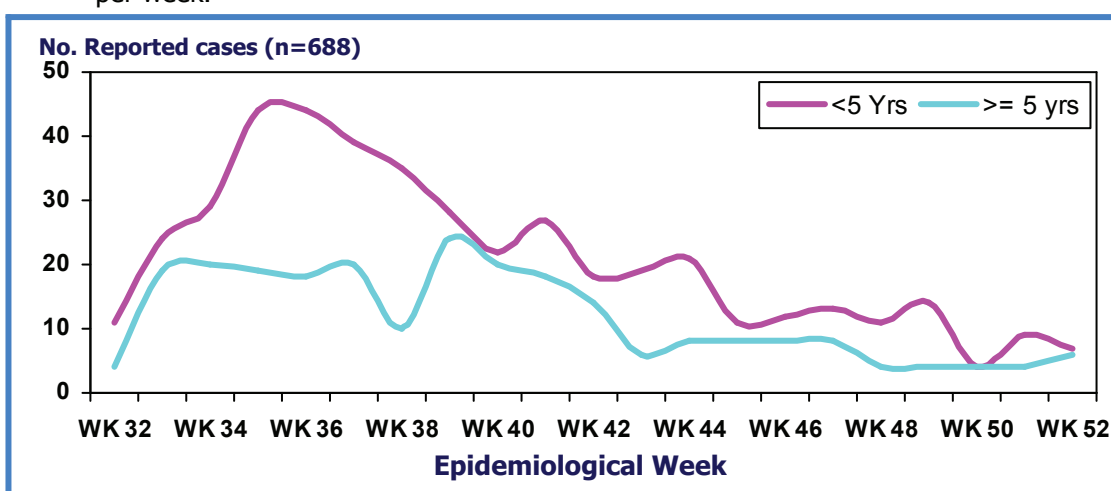


Communicable Diseases & Environmental Health

- A malaria outbreak in Galdogob/ **Mudug** since end of November has raised concerns of the **MoH** Puntland and partners. Gaps in response and lack of anti-malaria drugs in the entire region hinder effective outbreak control, while prevention is insufficient due to lack of supplies of bednets. **WHO**, **Merlin**, **SRCS** and **UNICEF** are jointly addressing the gaps and urging to improve preparedness with the provision of emergency stocks.
- In the first week of December, **AFREC** started an outreach campaign in Afmadow district/ **Lower Jubba** in response to malaria and respiratory infections.

Surveillance of AWD/Cholera¹

- Between 13 August and 31 December 2008, a total of 688 cases of suspected cholera, including 8 related-death (CFR: 1.16%) were reported from Merka hospital/ **Lower Shabelle**. Due to appropriate supplies and efficient case management, no death was reported since 17 October 2008. The case load has dropped to an average of 7 cases per week.



Weekly distribution of reported Cholera cases, Merka Hospital, Lower Shabelle Region, 13 August-31 December 2008

- In epidemiological weeks 48 to 51 (29 November - 26 December 2008), a total of 15,934 consultations and 28 deaths were reported through EWARS in **Lower Shabelle**. Of those, 22% (3,533) were due to respiratory infections, 8.2% (1,309) to diarrhoeal diseases, 3% (500) to injuries, 2% (311) to unexplained fever, 2% (277) to severe malnutrition, 2% (250) to Bilharzia, and 1% (175) cases of malaria. Thirty-nine percent (6,209) of all consultations and 25% (7/28) of deaths were reported in children under the age of 5 years. Although the number of AWD cases in December (141) decreased by 16% compared to November (168), the CFR increased from 1.19 to 2.13%.
- A total of 125 cases of AWD with no related death were reported between 29 November and 26 December 2008 (epidemiological weeks 48-51) from Jilib (78), Jamaame (15) and Afmadow (32) districts in **Lower** and **Middle Jubba**. Eighty-two percent (103/125) of the cases were children under the age of 5 years.



¹ For more detailed epidemiological information see Monthly Morbidity and Mortality Bulletin, available at www.emro.who.int/somalia

Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD)

- Between 8-13 December, **AFREC** conducted an EPI outreach campaign in Afmadow district/ **Lower Jubba** addressing gaps in the vaccination coverage of children under 5; while **Muslim Aid** is continuing their EPI program in Jamaame district/ **Lower Jubba**.
- Since 25 December, **UNICEF** in partnership with **WHO** have been carrying out Child Health Days (CHDs) in **W'Galbeed** and **Togdheer** regions targeting children under the age of 5 and women of child bearing age. The campaign, which will be completed in the first and second week of January 2009 respectively, includes immunization against measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, and polio; as well as vitamin A supplementation; nutritional assessments; de-worming activities; and distribution of water purification tablets.
- A total of 20 cases of Acute Jaundice Syndrome and 3 related deaths (CFR 10%) have been reported from Merka/ **Lower Shabelle** between 29 November and 26 December.
- This month, 246 suspected cases of Measles were reported by WHO polio sentinel sites in **Togdheer**, a decrease of 33% compared to November. Case verification is ongoing.

Water & Sanitation

- In the second week of December, **SRCS** chlorinated 35 shallow wells in Hagar/ **Lower Jubba** and 15 in Jilib district/ **Middle Jubba**; **Muslim Aid** is chlorinating wells in Kismaayo, and **AFREC** in Afmadow and Doble towns in **Lower Jubba**.

Primary and Secondary Health Care

Health Education & Public Awareness

- On 6 and 7 December, **Mercy USA** held an HIV awareness workshop in Jilib/ **Middle Jubba** for 70 participants of youth groups. In addition, promotional activities to encourage mothers to utilize feeding centres for their malnourished children.