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Somalia: Half the Population in Humanitarian Crisis Amid An Escalating Civil War

Somalia faces its worst humanitarian crisis in eighteen years amid an escalating civil war that threatens to push the country into chaos and lead to further deteriorations in the food security and nutrition status of the people. Results of a country-wide comprehensive inter-agency assessment, led by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit for Somalia (FAO/FSNAU), confirm that the **Humanitarian Crisis** in Somalia is widespread and severe, with half of the population or an estimated 3.76 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

“This signals a serious deterioration in the emergency food security and nutrition situation from earlier this year”, says Cindy Holleman, the Chief Technical Advisor of the Somalia FSNAU. “More worrying is that the escalating fighting and conflict is occurring in the same areas where we are now recording the greatest problems of food access and malnutrition. This will not only place additional burdens on the people already in crisis, but will also make it difficult for humanitarian relief to reach the vulnerable populations most in need of humanitarian and life saving interventions”. Most of the people in crisis or 75% of the 3.76 million people in need of assistance are concentrated in south and central Somalia – the areas where the fighting is greatest and which are most inaccessible to humanitarian operations. Given the context of an escalating civil war, FSNAU also issues an early warning for an even further deterioration in the humanitarian situation depending on the extent of the fighting in the coming weeks and months.

Emergency nutrition levels in several parts of the country have deteriorated further since January and now one in five children are acutely malnourished, while one in twenty are severely malnourished. Earlier this year the numbers were one in six children. These national rates of acute malnutrition are amongst the highest in the world. Currently, an estimated, 285,000 children under 5 years of age in Somalia are acutely malnourished, of which 70,000 are severely malnourished and are at an increased risk of death if they do not receive the appropriate specialist care. More than two thirds of these children are located in south and central Somalia.

The people currently in humanitarian crisis include 1.4 million rural people affected by a severe drought, 655,000 urban poor who continue to struggle with very high food and non-food prices, and more than 1.42 million internally displaced people (IDPs) who are fleeing from the fighting and conflict (see Map and Table on reverse side). The epicentre of the humanitarian crisis is in Mudug, Galgaduud, Hiran and Bakool regions of south and central Somalia, where there is a two and a half year ongoing drought. Livestock herds have been decimated and destitute pastoralists are gathering in main villages and towns in search of assistance. The depth of the crisis in these areas is severe with up to 75% of the total population in **Humanitarian Emergency**.

The number of internally displaced people (IDPs) has increased significantly since the January, from 1 million to now more than 1.42 million people, a forty percent increase in six months. Most of the new IDPs are fleeing conflict and violence and are concentrated in the Shabelle and central regions. Nutrition surveys confirm that IDP populations are highly vulnerable, as IDPs consistently record higher median rates of global acute malnutrition rates, 20% compared to the non IDP rates of 18%.

There is also an alarming deterioration in the food security and nutrition situation of the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in the north, caused by an emerging drought after 2-3 consecutive seasons of below normal rainfall. These areas are suffering from consecutive seasons of severe water shortages, stressed livestock migration, high livestock off-take and high debt levels. The situation is now deteriorating further, as indicated by increased malnutrition rates reaching the emergency level threshold of 15% in some areas. An estimated 255,000 people are identified in **Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis**, while another 25,000 are in **Humanitarian Emergency**. Unlike south and central Somalia, humanitarian access to these regions is good, therefore it is critical that these areas receive appropriate levels of emergency livelihood support and nutrition response, to prevent a further deterioration into **Humanitarian Emergency**.

For more information see website: www.fsnau.org, or email: info@fsnau.org

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Map 1: Somalia Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, July - December 2009

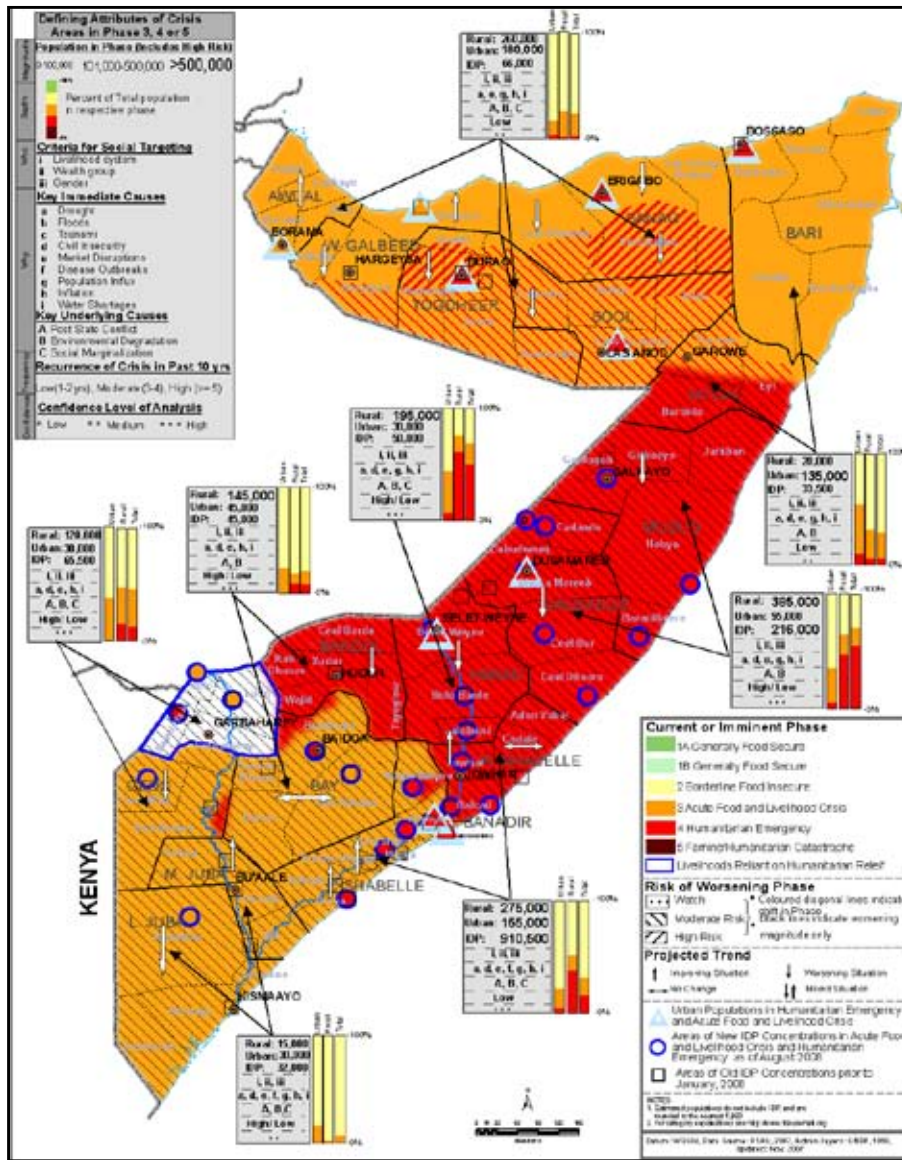


Table 1: Somalia Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, Population Numbers, July - December 2009

Region	UNDP 2005 Total Population	UNDP 2005 Urban Population	UNDP 2005 Rural Population	Urban in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (AFLC)	Rural in Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (AFLC)	Urban in Humanitarian Emergency (HE)	Rural in Humanitarian Emergency (HE)	Total in AFLC and HE as % of Total population
North								
Awdal	305,455	110,942	194,513	5,000	25,000	0	0	10
Woqooyi Galbeed	700,345	490,432	209,913	55,000	30,000	0	0	12
Togdheer	402,295	123,402	278,893	55,000	75,000	20,000	5,000	39
Sanaag	270,367	56,079	214,288	20,000	75,000	5,000	15,000	43
Sool	150,277	39,134	111,143	15,000	35,000	5,000	0	37
Bari	367,638	179,633	202,737	80,000	0	25,000	0	29
Nugaal	145,341	54,749	75,860	25,000	15,000	0	5,000	31
Sub-total	2,341,718	1,054,371	1,287,347	255,000	255,000	55,000	25,000	25
Central								
Mudug	350,099	94,405	255,694	30,000	40,000	0	110,000	51
Galgaduud	330,057	58,977	271,080	15,000	35,000	10,000	200,000	79
Sub-total	680,156	153,382	526,774	45,000	75,000	10,000	310,000	65
South								
Hiraan	329,811	69,113	260,698	25,000	35,000	5,000	160,000	68
Shabelle Dhexe (Middle)	514,901	95,831	419,070	25,000	60,000	0	160,000	48
Shabelle Hoose (Lower)	850,651	172,714	677,937	35,000	50,000	10,000	5,000	12
Bakool	310,627	61,438	249,189	25,000	65,000	0	70,000	52
Bay	620,562	126,813	493,749	20,000	5,000	0	5,000	5
Gedo	328,378	81,302	247,076	30,000	80,000	0	40,000	46
Juba Dhexe (Middle)	238,877	54,739	184,138	10,000	5,000	0	0	6
Juba Hoose (Lower)	385,790	124,682	261,108	20,000	10,000	0	0	8
Sub-total	3,579,597	786,632	2,792,965	190,000	310,000	15,000	440,000	27
Banadir	901,183	901,183	-	30,000	-	55,000	-	9
Grand Total	7,502,654	2,895,568	4,607,086	520,000	640,000	135,000	775,000	28
Assessed and Contingency Population in AFLC and HE				Number affected		% of Total population		Distribution of populations in crisis
Assessed Urban population in AFLC and HE				655,000		9		17%
Assessed Rural population in AFLC and HE				1,415,000		19		38%
Estimated number of new IDPs - updated 2nd Aug 2009 (UNHCR)				1,420,000		19		38%
Estimated number of protracted IDPs				275,000		4		7%
Estimated Rural, Urban and IDP population in crisis				3,765,000		50		100.0%