



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – SOMALIA
Situation Report #38 – 04 May, 2007

Main Developments

Following two weeks of extremely heavy fighting between TFG/Ethiopian troops and anti-TFG factions, Mogadishu has been calm since 27 April. According to UNHCR, about 800 IDPs have so far returned to the city. However, the overwhelming majority of those who fled Mogadishu in the past two to three months are not yet attempting to return, largely due to fear of renewed fighting.

After serious clan fighting in Kismayo over control of the city on 23 April which resulted in at least 11 deaths, tension and small clashes have continued in Kismayo and south of the city. It is feared that the two clans involved are preparing for more fighting, perhaps in the area between Jamame and Kismayo. Kismayo is host to an estimated 3,500 new IDPs from Mogadishu, as well as other vulnerable populations.

The seven-day weather forecast for the period up to 10 May predicts moderate rains for many parts of Somalia, while heavy rains are forecast for parts of the upper catchments in the Ethiopian highlands and in Lower Shabelle region. Observed river levels at Jowhar remained very high this week, reaching the bank-full level of 5m and leading to river bank breakages at Halgan and Marerey in Jowhar district. A moderate risk of flooding remains for the lower reaches of the Shabelle. Observed river levels at Luuq and Bardheere on the Juba river remained stable over the last week, although levels in the downstream reaches are expected to increase in the coming week due to rainfall. There is minimal risk of flooding along the Juba in the coming days.

Displacement

Given the cessation of conflict in Mogadishu, recently displaced IDPs are slowly beginning to return to the city. However, UNHCR and partners have recorded only about 800 returnees as of today, far lower than the numbers reported in the local media. Returns appear mainly to consist of the urban poor who are coming back to Mogadishu in an attempt to restore their livelihoods. There are reports of people arriving in the city – particularly Oromos – being harassed and arrested. Returns may be further discouraged by the fact that some public buildings formerly occupied by IDPs were destroyed in the fighting, as well as tension over the planned use of public buildings that were, until recently, occupied by IDPs.

Meanwhile, the latest figures from UNHCR estimate that 365,000 people have been displaced from Mogadishu between 1 February and 27 April. Around 84,000 are in Lower Shabelle; over 63,000 in Middle Shabelle; around 109,000 in Galgaduud; and 40,000 in Mudug. The majority of IDPs are women, children and the elderly, with those in the areas around Mogadishu still considered to be the most vulnerable.

Access and Response

Following a UNDSS security assessment, K50 was cleared for passengers and cargo, and flights resumed this week without incident. The movement of international staff is for the time being restricted to the airport but it is hoped that in the next week, security clearance will be gained for expanded movement.

Overland transport across the Somali/Kenyan border continued without incident this week, while overland transport within Somalia was hampered by *Gu* rains and insecurity. Roads in Gedo and Lower and Middle Juba are said to be affected by the rains, with roads in the Afmadow-Badhade area flooded to the extent that some areas are now cut off. Meanwhile, the tension and fighting in and around Kismayo caused transport delays this week and contractors were reportedly reluctant to operate in the affected areas, which included routes in Afmadow, Badhade, Kismayo and Jamame.

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An inter-agency assessment of the humanitarian situation in Galgadud region (25-29 April) has reported on IDPs and made general recommendations for humanitarian response. There are an estimated 109,000 IDPs in Galgadud. Water and sanitation were identified as major gaps, as was health. The need for hygiene education/awareness was seen as critical. NFIs have already been distributed by ICRC and further food and NFI distributions are planned. Agencies are now coordinating to plan water/sanitation and health response in Galgadud.

Otherwise, humanitarian response to IDPs displaced by the recent conflict is continuing. Priorities are i) water and sanitation, ii) shelter and non-food items, iii) food and iv) health services. Assistance that includes response to the AWD/cholera crisis is being prioritized for Afgoye, Merka and Galgadud. To date, agencies and partners have distributed the following:

Afgoye and surrounds (Lower Shabelle) – over 48,000 people have received shelter/NFIs; health partners have provided chlorine, cholera kits and medical supplies to health facilities and partners; 32,000 beneficiaries have received 320 mt of food; 30,000 people have benefited from water trucking.

Merka and surrounds (Lower Shabelle) – over 20,000 people have received shelter/NFIs; 7,500 have been reached by water trucking; chlorine, cholera kits and medical supplies have been provided to health facilities.

Jowhar, Balad and adjacent areas (Middle Shabelle) – 38,000 people have received NFIs; over 5,000 people in Aden Yabaal district and 2,400 in Adale have received similar supplies.

Galgadud/South Mudug – food for 60,000 people has been moved from Mogadishu for distribution, while roughly 66,000 people have received shelter/NFIs.

Dhobley (Lower Juba) – NFIs and cholera treatment supplies provided for around 2,000 people.

Mogadishu – most of the activities are focused on water trucking/chlorination activities; health facilities have been resupplied with essential drugs and kits; Cholera Treatment Centres are active.

Taking advantage of recent calm, UNICEF is planning to access its warehouses in Mogadishu and move supplies to its local partners. Both UNHCR and UNICEF had been unable to access supplies in warehouses in Mogadishu during the recent fighting.

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