



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – SOMALIA
Situation Report #40 – 25 May, 2007

Main Developments

Sporadic insecurity continued in Mogadishu, some involving remote-controlled and roadside bombs. On 20 May, the Mayor of Mogadishu survived what is thought to have been an assassination attempt when a hand grenade was thrown at his convoy in north Mogadishu. At least two civilians were reported killed in the attack and one man shot dead by the Mayor's bodyguards. On the same day, a roadside bomb exploded when a convoy of TFG troops was passing through Yaqshid district in north Mogadishu; three civilians were wounded. On 21 May, a land mine detonated as a convoy of Ethiopian troops was passing through Mogadishu.

An upsurge in piracy off the Somali coast is affecting WFP's ability to transport food assistance by sea. In the latest incident, a WFP-chartered vessel was attacked on 19 May after it had delivered 4,000 MTs of food to Merka. The hijacking attempt failed but a Somali guard was killed. The agency has not suspended sea transport of aid but is encountering serious difficulties in contracting ships to move food to Somalia. Meanwhile, recent WFP food distributions in and around Mogadishu have proceeded without incident.

Displacement and Returns

All reports of movement during the month of May have been of returns to Mogadishu. Information received indicates that approximately 90,000 people displaced by the recent conflict have so far gone back to the capital. However, the numbers may be higher and UNHCR is continuing to receive reports. The vast majority of those who have returned are coming from the areas around Mogadishu in Lower and Middle Shabelle. There is said to be growing pressure on the coping mechanisms of residents of Mogadishu due to, among other things, rising food prices. FAO/FSAU have reported that the supply and price of imported food commodities within the Mogadishu market catchment area is continuing to rise because of a slow-down of activities in Mogadishu resulting from insecurity, marine piracy, new port tariffs, and the disruption of informal trade and the casual labour market in the city. Increasing roadblocks are further restricting trade flow and contributing to rising transport costs.

Access and Response

Due to current safety risks posed by the condition of the runway at Wajid airstrip, UNCAS will begin emergency rehabilitation works in the coming days. The work is expected to last for 8 weeks; the runway should be fully operational again by the middle or end of July 2007. During that period, only Caravans will be able to operate to and from Wajid airstrip. UNCAS passengers travelling to Wajid on larger planes will have to transit via Baidoa. Meanwhile, UNCAS has temporarily suspending flight services to Buale and Galkayo due to security concerns.

WFP began a second round of food distribution on 24 May for 32,000 IDPs in Afgoye and is beginning distribution today for 9,000 IDPs in Qoryoley. The second rounds of distributions to IDPs have been completed in Mogadishu (26,000 pp) and Merka (30,000 pp), and the first round was has been completed in Brava (13,500 pp). WFP also began food distribution on 24 May to 13,000 IDPs in Baidoa.

NRC, in collaboration with CONCERN and LNGO Somali Youth for Peace and Democracy (SYPD), began distribution yesterday to 1,500 IDP families (9,000pp) in six sites in south Mogadishu. The distribution, which is proceeding with no major issues, is a pilot exercise, and lessons learned will enable partners to more effectively undertake distributions in the near future in Mogadishu. Smaller settlements that had so far

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received no assistance were targeted, and the majority of families benefiting were part of the long-term IDP population of Mogadishu who were unable to leave during the recent conflict.

While the first phase of response prioritised delivery of assistance to the most vulnerable IDPs near Mogadishu, as people begin to return to the city, response focus will shift to provision of basic social services. Partners are meeting to discuss methodologies for conducting distributions in Mogadishu in order to ensure harmonisation of humanitarian assistance among agencies planning or considering distributions in Mogadishu.

Following the recent Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocation of US\$2.7 million to UNICEF and UNHCR for projects benefiting IDPs, a CERF grant of US\$2.9 million has been allocated to WFP through the Rapid Response window for Air Support of Drought, Flood and Conflict Response. The project will cover emergency rehabilitation of Wajid airstrip, air transport of relief items, and cost-reduced passenger flights. These allocations are part of the US\$10 million recently set aside by the Emergency Relief Coordinator for Rapid Response capacity under the CERF.

Family Relief Kits (FRKs) for 654 families in Baidoa who were recently displaced from Mogadishu, were distributed on 21 May. The kits were provided by UNICEF and distributed by Somali community-based organization DMO, with the help of UNICEF and UNHCR. It was observed that there is a need to strengthen sanitation and hygiene programmes in the IDP sites, as well as nutrition interventions. Meanwhile, more than 6,000 UNICEF FRKs have reached Mogadishu from Mombasa and are now being transported to Merka. CARE will distribute the FRKs to IDPs in Merka and Brava in the coming days.

In Somaliland, a joint distribution of NFIs and food was carried out by UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP on 17 May for 60 families whose shelters were destroyed by recent heavy rains and wind. The families were living in the vicinity of Masallaha, near Hargeisa airport.

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