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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – SOMALIA
Situation Report #47 – 27 July, 2007

Main Developments

The humanitarian situation in Gedo and Bay regions is of serious concern with high malnutrition rates reported. In the final reports of assessments done in March and April, (FSAU and partners) indicated that in Qansadhere (Bay) the rates of acute global acute malnutrition (GAM) are 17.9%. In Gedo region, GAM rates range from 16.7% in the Agro-pastoral Population to 19.9% in the Pastoral Population. The nutrition assessments highlight the chronic nature of the crisis and according to FSAU, the situation is expected to be compounded by the predicted low harvest in both Bay and Gedo regions as well as in other parts of Somalia. Furthermore, the insecurity is placing an extra burden on populations through inflation on basic commodities as host communities are unable to cope with the influx of IDPs.

MSF also conducted a rapid health assessment in June around Afgoye (Lower Shabelle) where displaced people are gathered. The results indicated GAM rates of 21.5%. Among IDP families interviewed, six per cent eat only every other day and at the same time more than 60% of the families had no source of income. About 90% of the population had already run out of food or will soon find themselves with no food reserves in the coming days.

Civilians in Mogadishu continued to be caught in a series of security incidences in the reporting week. There were at least three cases of mortar shelling in various parts of the city and in total, seven people were reported killed and about 40 others injured during the week. A demonstration in Mogadishu by relatives of five women who were allegedly raped took place on 26 July. Meanwhile, as a result of the tensions and continued violence in Mogadishu, an estimated 6,000 people have moved out of the city to neighboring towns of Lower Shabelle where living conditions are desperate.

There have been continued grenade explosions in various parts of the city during the week as Bakara market reopened to business on 22 July. This followed negotiations between the business community and the government with the later agreeing to replace military forces with police to protect businesses.

On 25 July, heavy gun fire exchange was reported in Garowe (Puntland) when demonstrators allegedly accused a local money transfer company of printing excess Somali Shilling causing increased inflation of the Somali shilling against the dollar.

Returns and Displacements

UNHCR Population Movement Tracking reports indicated that nearly 18,000 people have fled ongoing insecurity and sporadic violence in Mogadishu in the month of July. The high costs of transportation, the increased number of roadblocks, insecurity and harassment along the roads might have hampered even more people from leaving Mogadishu. The number of those displaced from public buildings reportedly remains at 2,900.

UNHCR this week appealed for US\$48million to cater for the rising number of Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa region and people displaced in-country triggered by the ongoing conflict in Mogadishu. The programme will run till end of 2008 with additional protection and assistance benefiting newly arrived Somali refugees in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen and Djibouti and those internally displaced in Somalia.

OCHA SOMALIA

7th Floor, Kalson Towers, Crescent Street, off Parklands Road, P.O. Box 28832, 00200 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel No: (254-20) 3754150-5; Fax No: (254-20) 3754156

<http://ochaonline.un.org/somalia>

Access and Response

Flight delays and increased costs might be experienced by the Somalia humanitarian community as the Kenya Civil Aviation announced that all flights coming from Somalia must stop in Wajir (north eastern Kenya) for security clearance. The move followed the lifting of a seven month commercial flight ban by the Kenyan authorities into Somalia. Meanwhile, all UNCAS flights leaving Somalia will be routed through Wajid (Bakol) from 1 August for passenger and cargo screening which is seen as a necessary aviation security procedure.

Main transport delays during the reporting period were caused by restricted access along the transport routes in Middle and Lower Juba. Two damaged bridges between Jilib and Kamsuma as well as the broken bridges at Kamsuma and Jilib are causing movement delays. At Kamsuma alone a delay of up to 7 days during the off-and on-loading process is being experienced. Meanwhile, on 25 July, about 70 WFP trucks were obstructed by government troops in Jilib on their way from Kismayo to Buale. The convoy was later released following talks between WFP staff and the soldiers with no clear reasons given for the disruption.

Over the past week, WFP and CARE consignments have continued to cross the Kenya/Somalia border. In total, 136 trucks with 4,006mt of food have passed the border into Somalia. Some 2,219mt of food aid remaining will soon be loaded. CARE Somalia is now in the process of distributions. In Gedo a total of 28,611 households will benefit from 3,130 metric tons of mixed commodities (sorghum, lentils and corn soya blends). Luug district distributions were completed over the weekend (21/22 July). In Galgaduud, CARE also has ongoing distributions of 738 metric tons of mixed commodities to 13,173 households of local communities while ICRC has been covering IDP populations. In Hiran and Middle Shabelle, Emergency Food for Work initiative is ongoing though no food has been distributed yet. Both CARE and WFP are distributing food through medical partners to supplementary feeding centers in Hiran and to local TB centers.

In Buale, Sakow and Salagle (Middle Juba), WFP distributed 1,300 metric tons of mixed commodities (15 – 21 July) to 10,786 households. In Bardera (Gedo) a distribution of 1,159 metric tons of food targeting 9,374 households started on 22 July and is ongoing. WFP's Food for Work programmes as well as school feeding programmes are also ongoing in Bakool and Lower Shebelle covering 18 schools. The program also continues in Somaliland and Puntland targeting a total of 140 schools. Plans are underway to commence the program in Mogadishu.

Acute Water Diarrhea (AWD) cases have drastically reduced in Lower Juba regions with no new cases reported in the last three weeks. This follows sanitation interventions by UN agencies, INGOs and local NGOs working in the area.

For further information, contact:

Rita Maingi at +254 722 334 671 - maingir@un.org or

Petra Costerman Boodt +254 734 210 102 - boodt@un.org

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