



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – SOMALIA
Situation Report #43 – 22 June, 2007

Main Developments

Insecurity and violence in Mogadishu continued, with grenade attacks, assassinations and roadside bombs resulting in troop and civilian deaths, including children. The TFG has continued with house-to-house weapons searches and arrests, and movement within the city is said to be severely restricted and dangerous. The violence, which has escalated since the 13 June postponement of the National Reconciliation Conference, is restricting livelihood activities in the city and the ability of aid agencies to operate. The TFG's announcement on 19 June that it is offering amnesty to former members of the ICU (except those the government deems linked to terrorist groups) has of yet had no apparent effect on security in Mogadishu. In an effort to stem the violence, the TFG announced a 7pm curfew, effective today, 22 June.

An atmosphere of fear has intensified within the population of Mogadishu. Intimidation is obstructing the implementation of humanitarian activities. On 18 June, four staff members of a Somali NGO – including the Director – were arrested. Though the four were released on 20 June, the Director was re-arrested the following day and interrogated before being released again.

Unrest continued in other parts of South/Central, spreading last week to Baidoa, former seat of the TFG. Two grenade attacks in Baidoa – targeting a cinema (14 June) and a government-run bank (17 June) – resulted in six deaths, including one child, and several injured. A 9pm curfew has since been imposed on the town. Tensions are high in Kismayo as residents anticipate an outbreak of fighting between TFG troops and local militia who have been in control of the key port city. Recent clan fighting in Kismayo over a land dispute has already resulted in an estimated 52 deaths in Berhano settlement. Meanwhile, there have been reports from protection partners of arbitrary arrests by Kenyan police near the Kenyan border in Kulbiyo, Dobley and Amumua. This follows the discovery last week near Mandera of the bodies of two Kenyan policemen who disappeared 9 June while patrolling the border.

Returns and Displacement

As of 20 June, the Protection Movement Tracking (PMT) initiative is estimating that over 2,600 people have fled insecurity and violence in Mogadishu during the month of June, particularly from the Tawfik neighborhood and near the stadium. Meanwhile, nearly 117,000 IDPs are reported to have returned to Mogadishu as of 20 June (out of an estimated 400,000 who fled the insecurity between February and April). The vast majority of these returnees are coming from areas close to Mogadishu, namely Lower Shabelle (66,000, mostly from Afgoye and Merka) and Middle Shabelle (36,000, mostly from Balad and Jowhar). Movement back to the capital continues to be inhibited by various factors, including the deteriorating security situation and uncertainty over the government's future use of public buildings in which many Mogadishu IDPs had been living. Additionally, it has been reported that tensions in Kismayo due to the anticipated fighting between TFG forces and local militia are preventing IDPs currently in Dobley and Afmadow from returning to Mogadishu.

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Access and Response

The import and in-country movement of relief supplies within South/Central continues to be obstructed by numerous issues. In recent weeks, the closure of the Kenyan border by the Kenyan authorities has once again impacted on cross-border movement of supplies. Around 290 trucks carrying food (8,500 metric tons) and non-food commodities for around 140,000 beneficiaries in Gedo and Bay regions are presently stuck at the border. Meanwhile, regarding movement within Somalia, UN Agencies and NGOs are continuing to seek clarification from the TFG regarding tax exemption procedures and cargo clearance at entry points, particularly ports. Additionally, information collected from 238 roadblocks/checkpoints in South/Central indicates that humanitarian convoys are being delayed for 2-3 days on average. Passage fees are reported to range from \$20 to \$500 per truck at checkpoints and roadblocks.

The Government of Japan announced on 18 June that it is fully funding a US\$4 million UN programme to support IDPs through the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. The programme will be jointly implemented by five agencies (UNHCR, FAO, UNICEF, UNHABITAT and UNDP, in collaboration with Danish Refugee Council) and will target 11,000 people living in protracted displacement in Bossaso (Puntland). The two-year project will support prevention of physical violence and fire outbreaks in IDP settlements, investment in basic social services and infrastructure in existing settlements, and longer term resettlement and reintegration solutions for IDPs. All partners will work closely with Puntland and local authorities and surrounding communities.

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