

# IDPS

## (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE)



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

### OVERVIEW OF THE IDP SITUATION IN SOMALIA

Following the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, civilian populations became the target of serious violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law including extortion, looting of property, physical attacks, rape and other serious abuses. This environment coupled with the collapse of government services caused massive population movements. Over one million Somalis fled the country and became refugees mostly in neighboring countries, while displacement inside Somalia was the only option left for those who did not have the means to travel abroad. Since then, conflict related displacement within Somalia has continued and forced people to leave their lands- several times, particularly in the regions of Gedo, Sool/Sanaag, Galgadud and Bay/Bakool. Moreover, multi-displacements themselves have also resulted in situations of conflict fuelling tensions over resources as people seek out new areas to find safe shelter, far from their original homes and family roots.

**During 2005, one of the most complex humanitarian challenges in Somalia has been ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance to and the protection of an estimated 370,000-400,000 of those who remain internally displaced and extremely vulnerable, as a result of either conflict or natural disaster.** Access difficulties (due to civil unrest) limited these activities, particularly in south/central, where a large number of the most vulnerable population reside.

Consolidating a functional government and restoring peace and security especially in south/central currently controlled by warlords and freelance militias will take time. As long as insecurity prevails, IDPs face an uncertain future. However, assistance to IDPs in existing pockets of security is possible and there is a growing partnership between the local authorities and humanitarian community to seek solutions for the plight of displaced groups.

In addition to conflict, over the years, natural disasters such as drought and flooding have pushed people to move from their areas of origin in Somalia causing thousands of households to lose their livelihoods. At the end of 2004, the tsunami struck the coastal areas of north east Somalia which led to fishing communities losing their fishing boats, equipment as well as their fragile shelters and forcibly moved people temporarily inland. During early 2004, at the peak of the drought in parts of the northern regions, the Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) Somalia recorded unusual population movements towards urban centres, as many nomadic pastoralists struggled to survive after many seasons of inadequate rainfall.

Conflict and natural disasters are both events that encourage people to move to urban areas in the hope of finding access to basic social services and improved livelihood opportunities. However, IDPs often lack the necessary skills to access meaningful sources of income in these urban settings.

In early 2006 the UN and NGOs established a Protection Monitoring Network to monitor human rights abuses, population movements and initiate protection activities for the displaced and other vulnerable groups. The depletion of resources (water and pasture) in many areas has led many pastoralists and agro pastoralists to move either with their livestock to areas where water and food is available or to abandon their home area altogether. Livelihoods are increasingly becoming disrupted and stressed. Some local authorities are reporting an increase of primarily women and children on a daily basis at IDP/returnee settlements but tracking of movement can be difficult, particularly in areas where aid partners are not present due to insecurity.

The newly established Protection and Monitoring Network seeks to advocate with local and national authorities and community leaders to respect the rights of populations internally and internationally displaced as a consequence of the drought. The Protection and Monitoring Network also seeks to support fund-raising activities amongst donors for emergency drought relief including protection activities – in particular for the continuation of population tracking, protection monitoring, advocacy and protection response.

Over the last ten years and encouraged by stability in certain areas of the country such as Somaliland and Puntland, a large number of refugees originating from northern regions have returned (700,000 to Somaliland and 400,000 to Puntland), putting enormous pressure and stretching basic social services to their limits. The scarcity of reintegration opportunities, particularly in establishing livelihoods has led many returnees to join IDPs and the urban poor in their locations or settlements, under deplorable living conditions and with no safety or security. (An estimated 350,000 Somalis remain in exile and 250,000 of this number are still living in the region).

Often IDPs remain displaced long even after the violence that caused their original displacement has abated. This can be due to deadlocks in peace talks or difficulties in repossessing properties or land. **While remaining in situations of protracted displacement, many IDPs and other vulnerable populations face discrimination, restrictions on their freedom of movement and political rights, difficulties accessing basic social services as well as limited income earning opportunities. Unresolved displacement crises remain festering sources of instability.**

### KEY HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

#### **Protection**

IDPs continue to face discrimination; exploitation and physical violence among other abuses and many are often separated from their traditional support mechanisms, including their clan base. Others belong to weak or minority clans and have little recourse to systems of justice when violations of their human rights take place. To address this, the humanitarian rights community in collaboration with the authorities are focusing on community mobilization and empowering IDP communities.

While the Protection Monitoring Network was set up in early 2006 to inform interventions more accurately and allow for focused advocacy; regional protection working groups are also being established in parts of Somalia to ensure protection concerns are being addressed in a coordinated manner. However, while humanitarian action aims to alleviate or prevent abuse, the ultimate objective is to empower the authorities to discharge their international obligations to provide safety and stability to all citizens in Somalia, including IDPs.

### **Land Provision and Shelter**

IDP settlements are usually congested consisting of rudimentary shelters made of scavenged materials, plastic, cartons, scrap metal and branches; they lack adequate sanitary facilities and the incidence of communicable diseases is high. Also the spontaneously 'privatizing' of land by resident landowners, has resulted in a lack of state owned land, with which to provide shelter to IDPs (and other vulnerable populations). In addition IDPs face forced payment of rent without legal guarantees. As part of the IDP strategy, one option **to resolving the issues of IDPs in the future is the equitable integration of these populations into urban areas, through improved urban planning to reduce overcrowding; provide for the planning of basic services and the development of by-laws which provide rental and ownership rights to the IDPs (as well as to the wider community).** In the early 1990s, warlords fought in the south to establish their authority over Somalia's most fertile lands, especially between the Juba and Shabelle rivers. Since then, the ethnic composition of an area such as Juba Valley has changed; most recently there has been a conflict over this productive agricultural land by the *Habr Gedir*, *Absame* and *Galjeecel* clans. Such complicated dynamics have made the situation of land tenure and access to valuable agricultural resources very difficult to resolve - and have not been without cost to the 'legitimate' landowners. While some exploitative sharecropping arrangements exist between the current 'occupiers' and *Bantu* farmers, the latter have largely lost control of their land. This has resulted in a large migration of IDPs to urban areas in the south such as Kismayo and Mogadishu in search of safety and new livelihood and income opportunities. The great majority of IDPs in south/central urban areas have found shelter in public buildings and currently face evictions as buildings are increasingly required back to service the wider community. Advocacy and a plan of action are required to ensure that when evictions occur, a fair process is upheld and IDPs are not left without adequate shelter.

### **Income Generation**

Most IDPs survive through a mixture of casual work and begging and their income is barely sufficient for one meal a day, resulting in high malnutrition and mortality rates. Paradoxically, the largest IDP population (an estimated 250,000) live in Somalia's most dangerous city – Mogadishu, where they are often forced to flee militia clashes and are exploited or abused by gunmen who control their settlements. These 'gate keepers' extort aid rations or money from IDPs and force them to work or evict them when they cannot pay. **Poverty forces girls into exploitative work relationships and child labour is one of several survival mechanisms for many IDP families.**

### **Water and Sanitation**

Water and Sanitation is imperative - affecting health and quality of life. In the north of the country in Bosasso – a recent survey carried out in an IDP settlement indicated that 67% of IDPs had no access to clean water and 76% of households had no access to sanitation. In southern Somalia, the most recent assessments undertaken in Kismayo (during 2003) report that domestic use of contaminated water by IDPs was a major contributor to their poor health status - and IDPs living along the Juba valley who were unable to purchase clean water, used the river, greatly increasing the risk of contracting water-borne diseases but also being put at risk of crocodile attacks.

### **Health and Education**

IDPs are rarely able to access basic social services. There is a strong desire for education yet their access is related to the protective environment, as is their access to health facilities. Entrenched socio-ethnic divisions affect access to employment opportunities and income that, in turn, affects the degree of access (or reinforces the lack of access) to education and health facilities.

**Note : In the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) 2006, the three strategic goals aimed at meeting the needs of Somalia's most vulnerable populations and in particular the most vulnerable - internally displaced. There is a cross cutting (multi) sector, - Return and Integration, consisting of 5 projects - appealing for 20,197,974 US dollars, which seeks to support an enabling environment for the voluntary return/reintegration of refugee and IDPs; the resettlement/local integration of IDPs with a focus on the establishment of sustainable livelihoods/income generation and access to basic services; as well as identification of and advocacy for resolution in particular of protection needs of IDPs and vulnerable refugees. Also a CAP sector specifically on Protection consisting of 19 projects appealing for 16,109,101 US dollars.**

### **Fire Sweeps Through Settlements Housing IDP Populations**

The outbreak of fire that swept through an IDP settlement in Mogadishu during November 2005 continues to highlight IDP vulnerability. UNICEF, WFP and INGOs and LNGOs subsequently distributed food and non food items coordinated by OCHA. Earlier in 2005, 2,000 people were left homeless when fire gutted the Buul Eelaay settlement for IDPs and returnees, with a further five fires occurring around Bossaso town in the north of the country. In 2005, UN agencies, NGOs and Community Based Organizations have strengthened partnerships with Somali authorities in Hargeisa and Garowe to implement a comprehensive IDP strategy for improved services and resettlement. Part of the response includes ensuring fire breaks in settlements to reduce the risk of fires destroying shelters. Much less has been undertaken in southern Somalia, due largely to the continuing constraints of insecurity and limited access. However, there is increased optimism that the presence of the Transitional Federal Government will progressively facilitate the essential enabling environment for humanitarian services for IDPs (and other vulnerable communities) as well as longer-term resettlement work.

### **A Hopeful IDP Humanitarian Project**

In March 2005 the Japanese government pledged just under two million US dollars for IDPs and Returnees in Somalia through a UN-HABITAT programme (working with UNHCR, UNDP and INGOs) **designed to improve the living conditions, security of tenure and economic opportunities of IDPs and returnees urgently requiring assistance in Somaliland.** A total of 680 families are benefiting from the low-cost housing units including an estimated 2,720 children and 680 women. These households will also benefit from awareness raising and training in hygiene, sanitation and rainwater harvesting.

## **HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS WORKING ON IDP ISSUES AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

Activities relating to IDPs in Somalia are coordinated through the Protection and IDP Working Group based in Nairobi, which is co chaired, by OCHA and UNHCR and whose members consist of a broad range of UN agencies and INGOs. Protection and IDP Working Groups have also been established in Somaliland and Puntland with a third to be established soon in south/central. The working groups facilitate the collaborative approach to addressing IDP protection and assistance needs by including a range of UN agencies and other humanitarian actors and in the field these working groups also include local authorities. Through the working groups the UN has developed an IDP strategy that helps outline the immediate, medium and longer-term interventions related to IDPs and how the interventions should be undertaken and by which organizations. The first Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Somalia was held in Feb 2006, which identified seven clusters to plan and coordinate sectoral responses to humanitarian issues – protection is one of the clusters and the Protection and IDP Working Group fits into this new coordination structure. As mentioned before, in early 2006 the Protection and IDP Working group initiated the Protection Monitoring Network to monitor drought related movement, access to aid and other protection related issues. So far 15 NGOs in the affected regions have agreed to assist.

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