

MOGADISHU



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

OVERVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN ENVIRONMENT IN MOGADISHU

While the needs of Mogadishu's most vulnerable populations remain high, since the collapse of the government in 1991, ongoing civil disturbances and clan rivalries in the capital have not only interfered with humanitarian relief operations but also prevented any broad based economic development. A dozen factional leaders have divided the city into armed zones yet not one has legitimate authority in the area of their claim. New warlords are also continually emerging all of whom compete for the control of the city's sixteen districts. Targeted kidnappings and violence against Somali nationals and humanitarian workers continues. Recent assassinations include a BBC journalist (May 2005), the Somali peace activist Abdul Qadir Yahya (July 2005) and an attempt on the life of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister (November 2005).

The humanitarian operating environment in Mogadishu remains unpredictable and insecure, resulting in extremely limited access (classified by the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) as the optimal phase of insecurity at Phase V). Provision of aid is further complicated by the need to ensure equity among opposing clans.

However, despite this civil insecurity, Mogadishu (capital of Benadir region with an estimated population of 1.5-2 million people) remains the financial and commercial centre of south/central Somalia. Business has actually managed to thrive in one sector; Mogadishu leads the East African market in telecommunications, the Internet and a modern communications network, including local cellular telephone systems with international connections via satellite. **One of the reasons for this success is the absence of any form of government which has yielded free trade without taxes or regulatory expenditures, thus making business cheap. However, businesses have to hire heavily armed militias to provide security against freelance gunmen who roam the city.** Since control of resources in the city remain mostly in the hands of a few competing faction leaders, any revenues collected do not go towards any public services. This leaves thousands in the city to fend for themselves with no access to any kind of basic social services.

The main market in Mogadishu (Bakara) offers a broad range of goods from food to electronic gadgets and also arms. A report (2005) to the UN Security Council indicated a significant increase in arms transactions in the market (despite an arms embargo), which underscores the militant and potentially violent nature of the operational environment. In the absence of a formal banking sector, money exchange services are widely available in Mogadishu handling between US\$750 million to 1 billion in remittances from diaspora overseas (throughout the country) annually. This money is much more than what the country receives in aid; it triggers trade and averts a worse humanitarian crisis. The lack of government also means that the US dollar is the currency of choice – even Internally Displaced People (IDPs) beg in hard currency. The city also has several radio stations, two television broadcasters, a Somali Institute for Management and Administration and a university. In 2005, Mogadishu University was ranked among the top 100 African universities and placed 79th in Africa - preceding well-known old universities in academic institutions in the continent.

North and South Mogadishu are linked by road networks, most of which are in need of repair and reconstruction. Travel within the city is often hindered by militia-controlled roadblocks and checkpoints, at which the public and aid partners must pay to pass and goods are sometimes looted. Three airstrips function close to Mogadishu: Issiye, Dayniile and K50 (50 kilometers outside Mogadishu). For security reasons UN flights land at K50, while some INGOs use Issiye airstrip and the Red Cross also occasionally uses Dayniile. Towards the end of 2005, civil society has put increasing pressure on political authorities to improve security in the city. This did lead to some roadblocks being dismantled, however, the attempts were not entirely successful. No doubt in the future, greater involvement by civil society - in particular women's' groups - could lead to positive change in the city.

KEY HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

Restricted Access

Due to insecurity in Mogadishu, the scope of humanitarian relief operations is limited and international staff movement is highly restricted. All UN Missions to Mogadishu are also subject to approval. (November 2005). UN activities are carried out in Mogadishu by national staff.

Poor Protection Environment For IDPs

Around 250,000 IDPs live in Mogadishu. These have fled their area of origin due to conflict although very little humanitarian relief reaches them in the city due to lack of access as a result of civil unrest. IDPs have limited employment opportunities and most survive on casual work. The worst off resort to begging. IDPs typically live in shelters made from branches, plastic sheets or old bits of scrap metal with no toilets. During the rainy season, diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and dysentery spread very quickly. Most IDPs (and other urban poor) cannot afford to visit health facilities and die of diseases that could easily be prevented or cured. They have found refuge in abandoned schools, universities and government buildings in

Mogadishu without access to proper shelter, health, water and sanitation facilities, IDPs/urban poor remain extraordinarily vulnerable but are unlikely to return to their place of origin due to volatile insecurity and non-existent economic opportunities. IDPs are often from minority clans, or from weak and powerless clans thus benefit from limited clan protection. They also have little recourse to other systems of justice – whether through customary law (xeer), or religious law (sharia). IDPs often fall victim to harassment and extortion from self-proclaimed gatekeepers, known locally as 'black cats' who offer protection in return for money or large portions of their aid rations. "Black cats" are known to deny aid workers access to IDPs and divert resources targeted to IDPs, making humanitarian relief operations very difficult. Capacity building on protection and human rights will improve the protection environment.

Lack of Basic Social Services

A large part of Mogadishu's population lives in unacceptable conditions, lacking adequate shelter and sanitary facilities. The incidence of communicable diseases is high. Domestic use of contaminated water is a major contributor to their poor nutritional status. There is a common and strong desire for education amongst IDPs and other vulnerable groups in Mogadishu, yet access is related to the protective environment. 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.

Polio Outbreak In July 2005

Somalia had been free of polio since 2002. However, a new case of polio resurfaced and was confirmed in Mogadishu in July 2005. As of March 2006 there are now 194 cases confirmed nationwide, 159 of which are in Mogadishu. WHO and UNICEF have launched emergency immunization campaigns in Mogadishu to reach as many children under the age of five as possible.

Limited Income Generation Opportunities For IDPs and Urban Poor

Poor employment prospects have increased the economic hardship of those in need, particularly IDPs and urban destitute. Men are largely dependent on low paid and shift based port activities (other activities include working as market porter, the production of lime, quarrying, building construction, seasonal farming activities, and charcoal production); women rely upon low paid work as domestic servants, selling water, collection and sale of firewood, house-mudding, and seasonal farming activities; and, children on shoe shining, begging, and the collection of discarded *khat* leaves for re-sale.

Health Campaign Starts In Mogadishu To Curb New Polio Outbreak

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) jointly launched a three-day emergency polio immunization campaign in Mogadishu during September 2005. In 2006 with the continued spread of the virus, sub-National Immunization Days (NIDS) were conducted in the central and south zone in January 2006, achieving 93% coverage, followed by a round of NIDS in February that was synchronized with neighboring Ethiopia and Sudan. Due to the ongoing transmission, an additional seven rounds of NIDs are planned for 2006

Restoring Dignity Through Work in Mogadishu

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been involved in a project to clean up Mogadishu giving residents a feeling of worth and demonstrating there is an alternative to the cycles of violence so many people become swept up in. Some 600 of the city's poorest were hired in 2003, cutting across clan and gender lines, to remove mounds of rubbish littering Mogadishu's streets. Prior to the project there had been no garbage

Humanitarian Partners Working in Mogadishu and Coordination Mechanisms

Despite significant operational and security challenges, nine humanitarian UN agencies operate in Mogadishu:

WHO: Polio eradication; drug distribution to TB patients; sentinel surveillance of infectious and communicable diseases.

UNICEF: Water rehabilitation and well chlorination benefiting IDPs and residents; Mother and Child health care (MCH); polio eradication; child rights and protection for street children and demobilisation of armed youth; support to primary health care for children under five.

WFP: Feeding programmes to improve nutritional status aimed at hospital patients and TB centers; MCHs; Therapeutic and Supplementary Feeding for malnourished children. WFP also plans to launch school feeding.

UNESCO: Curriculum development; distribution of text books for elementary and secondary schools; overseeing grade eight and secondary school examinations.

FAO/FSAU: Food security analysis and Early Warning.

UNHCR: Reception of spontaneous return and income generation activities.

UNDP: Support to a resource center for civil society and support to Mogadishu University .

UNHABITAT: works through local NGOs on shelter.

OCHA: Facilitation of access; advocacy for protection, information and coordination.

INGOs operating in Mogadishu include: *ICRC (Health), ACF France (Health and Nutrition), MSF Spain (Health), Concern Worldwide (Food Security, HIV/AIDS, Advocacy, Education, Peace Building), DBG (Health, Food Security), Muslim Aid UK (Health), DAWA Al Islamiya (Health and Education), IAS (Health and Education), Ruudi UK (Education and Agricultural Development).*

LNGOs working with INGOs include Hijra Charity, Binadam Charity, Dr. Ismail Jumale Human rights organization, SSWC, FOPAG, Civil society associations of COGWO, INXA.

Two sectoral coordination mechanisms exist on health/nutrition and education chaired by WHO and UNESCO respectively.

Just before and throughout the two main rainy seasons (*Gu* and *Deyr*), a cholera task force meets on a needs basis, chaired by WHO.

OCHA coordinates a monthly inter-agency meeting in Mogadishu, UN agencies and INGOs meet regularly to share security information.

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