

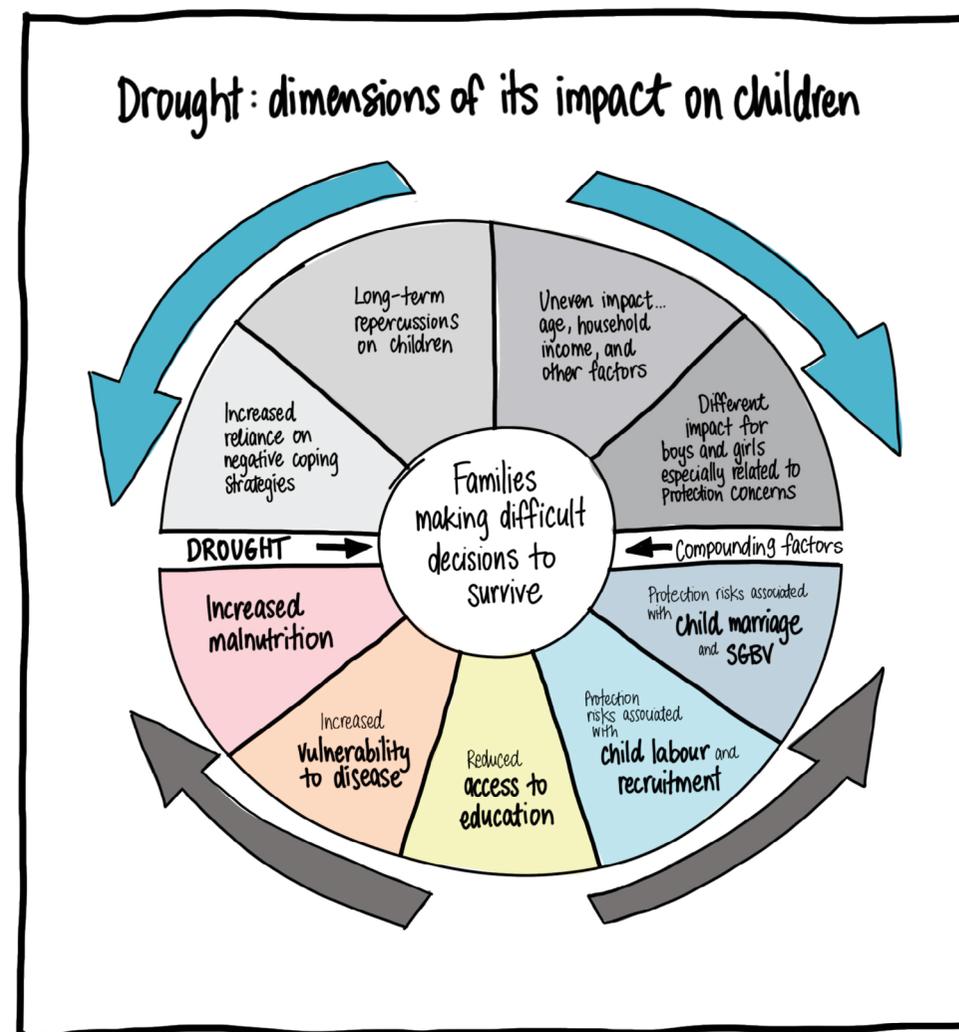
Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia are currently experiencing one of the worst droughts in 60 years. Since 2011, the region has experienced three severe droughts from 2011–2012, from 2016–2017, and the current one that began in 2020. Dry conditions are likely to continue in most areas, while some areas are receiving above-average rainfall, causing floods (ICPAC 22/02/2023; FloodList 27/03/2023). The current drought is driving significant levels not only of food insecurity but also of WASH, health, and nutrition needs for the affected population. Livelihoods have also been severely affected, with pastoralist and agropastoralist communities facing the biggest challenges. Boys and girls (under the age of 18) are among the most vulnerable to the effects of drought and constitute a considerable proportion of the populations of the three countries: around 46% in Ethiopia, over 44% in Kenya, and close to 54% in Somalia (UNICEF accessed 03/04/2023; UNICEF accessed 03/04/2023; UNICEF accessed 03/04/2023).

Each country is simultaneously grappling with a variety of issues that compound or are compounded by the current drought, eroding families' ability to cope with repeated shocks. Conflict, global economic inflation, the reduced availability of goods as a result of global crises, previous droughts and hazards, floods, and lasting COVID-19 effects have all aggravated the situation of the populations across the three countries. The result has been an increased reliance on negative coping mechanisms and strategies that often directly or indirectly affect children, especially when families are faced with difficult decisions in order to survive.

Although information gaps remain, it is evident that the drought is leading to worsened nutrition, increased vulnerability to diseases, reduced access to education, and increased protection concerns, including child labour and forced child recruitment, child/forced marriage, and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including female genital mutilation (FGM). Not all children in drought-affected areas will feel the impacts to the same degree. Children who are under five, IDPs, refugees or asylum seekers, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), children with disabilities or with family members with disabilities, and children who come from pastoralist or agropastoralist families are most likely to have the greatest needs.

The impacts on children are also gendered, with girls and boys experiencing the drought differently. Girls are typically more likely to be out of school and/or engage in domestic work, and they face particular protection risks, such as child/forced marriage and SGBV, including FGM. Boys are more likely to be engaged in child labour, such as herding cattle, and are at an increased risk of being recruited or used by armed groups. Data is lacking especially on protection concerns and does not provide a comprehensive picture of the situation, especially for boys. Many of the children currently affected by drought will have recently experienced the drought in 2016–2017 and in 2011–2012. The impact of repeated droughts on children in the

region leads to short-term impacts, such as increased malnutrition, and is likely to have long-lasting negative individual and societal impacts.



This report benefitted from support by the H2H Network's H2H Fund.



## About this report

**Aim:** the report aims to provide an overview of the key challenges children are facing given the drought in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

**Methodology:** the report is based on secondary data review, non-public sources, and seven key informant interviews with stakeholders at the national and regional levels.

**Limitations:** there are significant information gaps that may misrepresent the situation of children.

**Scope:** this report focuses only on drought-affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. While children are facing many issues related to the drought, this report only focuses on four main concerns: malnutrition, education, disease, and protection, including child labour and recruitment, child/forced marriage, and SGBV (including FGM).

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## INFORMATION GAPS

- Detailed granular data on children affected by the drought in different regions of each country is lacking, making it challenging to provide comparisons across the country. There is also a lack of comparable and granular data for drivers of drought and the impact on children in affected communities.
- There is a lack of publicly available information on children's needs among IDPs or in refugee sites in drought-affected areas or the needs of drought-displaced children.
- More information is required on the needs of children responsible for heading households, especially girls.
- There is a lack of information and assessments regarding the drought's impact on children's mental health. That said, the mental health impact of the drought is recorded in Ethiopia, and there is proof that the stress endured by parents/caregivers during a drought affects children as well (*Addis Standard 13/04/2023; KII 08/03/2023*).
- Overall, information on UASC is lacking. More information is needed on the drivers of intentional and unintentional family separations.
- There is a lack of information on the societal and longer-term impacts of the drought on children.
- Available information on protection issues, such as child/forced marriage, may be unreported. Cases of child/forced marriage and SGBV, including FGM, are underreported, and there is almost no information on SGBV impact on boys (*KII 21/03/2023*). There is no information on how the drought might impact the access to hygiene products for girls.
- There are reports that mention breast flattening/ironing in Kenya, but there is no data on this practice during drought and on the countries where it is prevalent (*Amahazion 27/03/2021; Plan International accessed 13/04/2023*).
- Sufficient data on protection risks, such as child labour (including debt bondage), serfdom, and forced child recruitment, is not available.
- Though there have been reports of trafficking along migration routes towards the Kenyan refugee camps and from Somalia, with women and girls said to be typically affected, there is a lack of granular data on the scope and scale of the issue for children and how it is aggravated by drought (*MPI 18/01/2023; The Guardian 27/04/2022*).
- The forced recruitment of children into armed conflict has been recorded across the Horn of Africa (HoA), but there is limited information on how the drought situation compounds its prevalence and/or impact.
- The number of school children affected by school closures or reducing their attendance is not publicly available for Ethiopia.
- Only a few assessments are available on the needs of children who have been affected not only by the drought but also by recent flash floods.

## DROUGHT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

### Drivers of drought

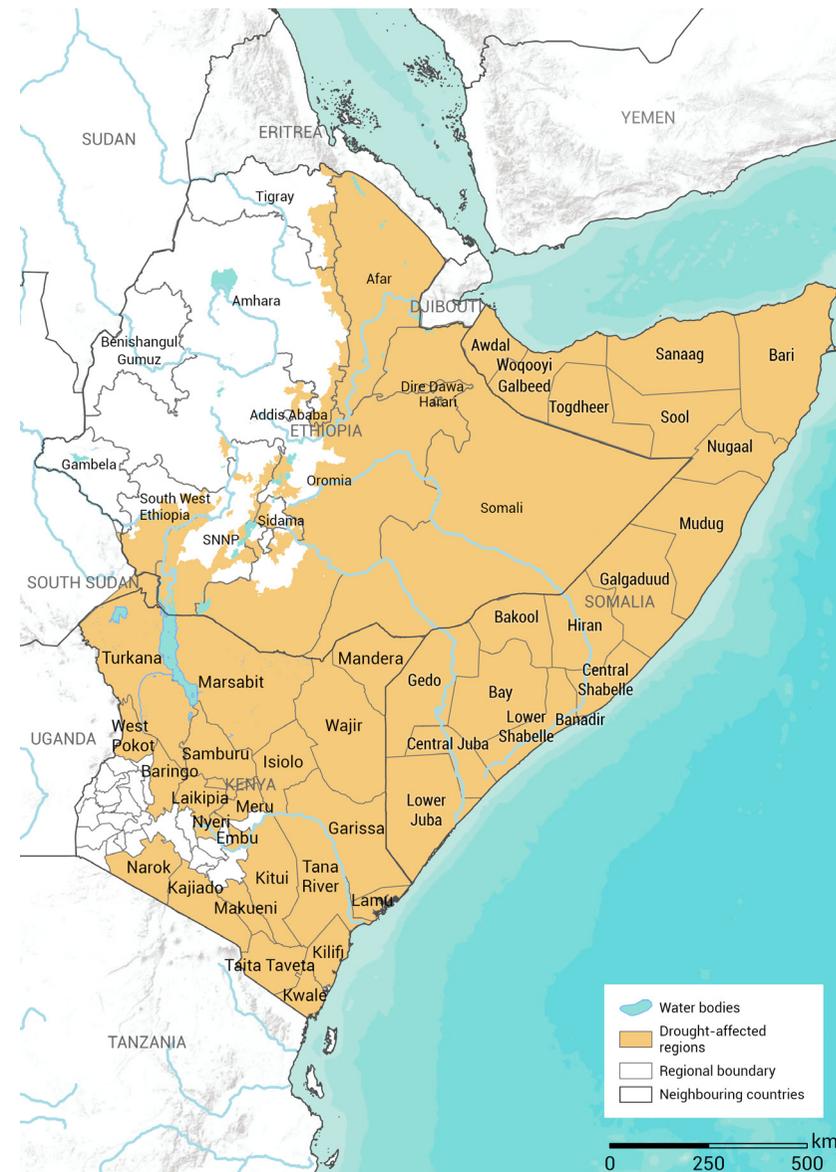
The HoA region is exposed to severe climatic shocks triggered by the El Niño-Southern Oscillation phenomenon and climate change. Climate change is amplifying a decline in East African rainfall, and these rainfall reductions are most prevalent during La Niña events (EC et al. 09/06/2022; IPCC 01/2014). Between 2019–2022, La Niña contributed to exceptional below-average rainfall in the region (USAID 11/02/2022). Increasing air temperatures because of climate change worsen droughts by increasing evaporation, reducing the amount of water available (EC et al. 09/06/2022). Since 1960, temperatures in the three countries have been steadily increasing by approximately 0.25° C per decade compared to pre-industrial times (1850–1900) (PIK 10/09/2022 and 02/2022; NEMA-Kenya 20/08/2014).

**The HoA experiences frequent periods of drought**, including the latest in 2016–2017 and prior to that in 2011–2012. These recent droughts affected the same locations, likely eroding some degree of individual and community coping capacities and minimising people's ability to respond to the current drought, including through repeated periods of displacement, food insecurity, malnutrition, lack of access to education, and loss of livelihoods. The 2016–2017 drought significantly affected the HoA region, overall affecting 16.1 million people (see Table 1). The 2011–2012 drought before that led to increased malnutrition, worsened food security, and disrupted education, especially for pastoralist families (STC 07/08/2012; GFDRR 2012).

**The impacts of the 2016–2017 drought continue to be felt**, as it takes pastoralist and farmer households at least five years to rebuild herds following a drought. Many farmers and pastoralists were not able to rebuild their herds prior to October 2020 and started the current drought with below-average herd sizes, affecting their livelihood opportunities (OCHA 29/11/2022; FEWS NET et al. 01/12/2021).

### Recent past droughts in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia

Figure 2. Map of drought-affected areas in the Horn of Africa



Source: ACAPS using OCHA accessed 24/04/2023 a and accessed 24/04/2023 b; NDMA 03/2023

Table 1. People in need of food assistance per year (in millions)

COUNTRY	2011	2016-2017	2022
Somalia	4	3.3	6.7
Kenya	3.8	2.6	4.4
Ethiopia	4.5	10.2	11.8
Total	12.3	16.1	22.9

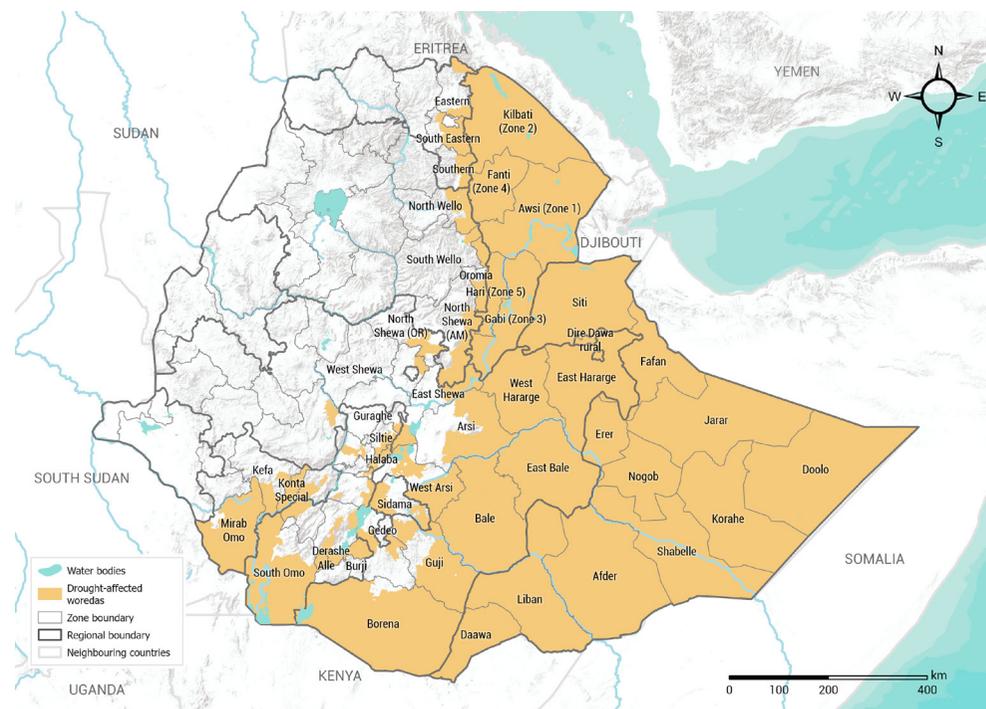
Source: WFP (24/02/2023)

### Current situation

Since October 2020, five consecutive failed rainy season have affected areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia (WFP 24/02/2023; OCHA 24/08/2022). The prolonged dry conditions across the region have resulted in the severe deterioration of available land and water, significantly affecting millions of people’s access to livelihoods, food, nutrition, safe drinking water, and other essential services (see Table 1).

**Ethiopia:** drought is affecting the southern and eastern areas of the country, including the regions of Afar, Amhara, Dire Dawa, Harari, Oromia, Sidama, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People’s Region (SNNP), South West Ethiopia People’s Region, and Tigray (see Figure 2). The most affected regions are Oromia, SNNP, and Somali (OCHA 10/03/2023). The areas of highest concern in terms of food insecurity include Borena zone in Oromia and Afder, Daawa, and Liban zones in Somali region (FEWS NET 01/2023).

Figure 3. Map of drought-affected areas of Ethiopia



Source: ACAPS using data from OCHA accessed 24/04/2023 a

**Kenya:** 22 out of 23 arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) counties (out of a total 47 counties in the country) are affected by a worsening drought situation (see Figure 4). As at February 2023, Turkana and Marsabit counties were identified to be in Emergency drought phase, the worst drought classification; nine counties were identified to be in Alarm phase; and 11 were in Alert phase (NDMA 03/2023). Food insecurity and malnutrition rates were severe (see Table 2), with seven counties predominantly relying on pastoralist livelihoods having the highest proportion of their populations facing acute food insecurity – i.e. Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse outcomes: Samburu (45%), Tana River (45%), Turkana (50%), Garissa (55%), Mandera (55%), Marsabit (55%), and Wajir (55%) (IPC 21/02/2023).

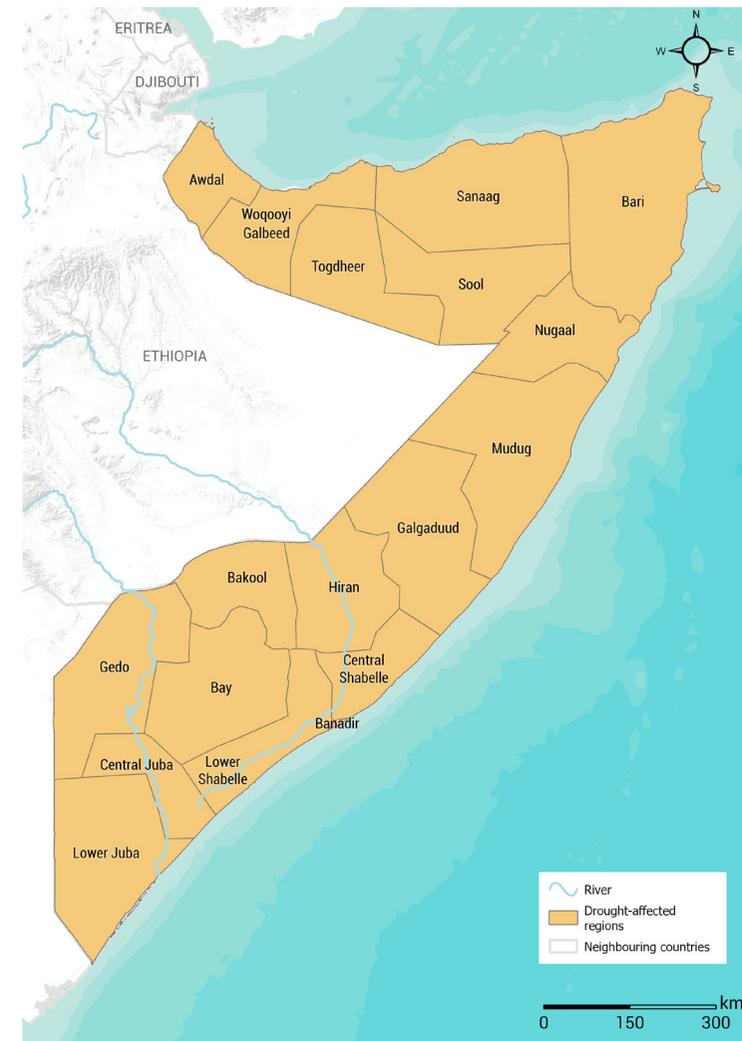
Figure 4. Map of drought-affected areas of Kenya



Source: ACAPS using NDMA 03/2023

**Somalia:** drought is affecting the entire country, with the majority of regions facing moderate to extreme drought severity (see Figure 5) (IPC 13/12/2022). Drought, conflict, and high food and water prices are affecting the ability of households to feed themselves, leading to the majority of the country facing acute food insecurity (see Table 2). A risk of famine still exists for agropastoralist households in Buurhakaba district and populations in IDP camps in Baidoa and Mogadishu (IPC 28/02/2023).

Figure 5. Map of drought-affected areas of Somalia



Source: ACAPS using data from OCHA accessed 24/04/2023 b



Table 2. Humanitarian situation in drought-affected areas

	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	SOMALIA	TOTAL
People affected	24.1 million	4.5 million*	7.8 million	36.4 million
Population unable to access sufficient water for drinking, cooking, and cleaning	8.2 million	5 million	6.4 million	19.6 million
Population currently facing IPC 3 or worse outcomes	N/A	4,389,779**	4,984,940***	N/A
Population projected to face IPC 3 or worse outcomes	N/A	5,438,215****	6,508,430****	N/A
Moderate acute malnutrition in children under five	Unavailable	727,648	1,279,070	N/A
Severe acute malnutrition in children under five	Unavailable	242,567	477,680	N/A

\*This figure is likely higher given the number of people who lack access to safe water.

\*\*Current situation in February 2023

\*\*\*Current situation between January–March 2023

\*\*\*\*Projection for March–June 2023

\*\*\*\*\*Projected for April–June 2023

No recent IPC assessment has been conducted in Ethiopia.

Sources: UNICEF (11/04/2023); IPC (28/02/2022 and 21/02/2023); IOM (01/2023); OCHA (21/09/2022)

### Impact on crops

A lack of adequate rainfall over a prolonged period, which results in drought, has led to significant crop failure in all three countries, as drought-related soil degradation affects crop productivity. A competition for resources also increases the water prices, making irrigation challenging for farmers. The majority of the drought-affected population engage in pastoralism and agropastoralism for their livelihoods, meaning they become unable to earn an income from the sale of their agricultural products and livestock at the local markets during drought conditions (UNSDG 10/05/2022). As crop failure has led to the decreased availability of food supplies in markets and the subsequent increase in prices, drought-affected people are experiencing reduced household purchasing power.

### Impact on livestock

Table 3. Livestock deaths

	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	SOMALIA	TOTAL
Livestock deaths	6.85 million*	2.6 million	3 million**	12.5 million

\*Since late 2021, with 67% occurring in Oromia

\*\*Between July 2021 and December 2022

Sources: NDMA (03/2023); OCHA (10/03/2023); IPC (13/12/2022)

Pasture and water shortages and an increase in diseases have led to low livestock birth rates, decreased milk production, poor body conditions, and increased livestock deaths (see Table 3). Cattle are dying in all three countries, as well as usually more-drought-resistant camel and goats – an indicator of the severity of the drought (NDMA 02/2023; Addis Standard 20/02/2023; STC 08/02/2022; UNICEF 21/01/2022; CARE 29/07/2011). Even in cases where livestock are not dying, their body conditions are significantly deteriorated, especially as they must travel further distances to access pasture and water (FEWS NET/FSNAU 15/017/2022). Livestock deaths and poor body conditions, which lead to reduced animal value in markets, affect the livelihoods of households depending on livestock (FAO 25/01/2023). The decreased supply of livestock is also leading to increased prices of milk, reducing access to an essential protein source for many children (WFP 27/03/2023; UNICEF 21/01/2022).

### Impact on displacement

**Cross-border and internal drought-induced displacement has been documented**, although numbers vary because of the different methodologies applied in data collection; varying geographic scope and timescales; and because distinctions between displacement as a result of drought and conflict are difficult to assess. Drought-affected people are forced to leave their homes and travel longer distances in search of clean water for their families and livestock because of water scarcity and a lack of water treatment supplies, which also result in temporary displacement (Africa Renewal 04/01/2023).

**The highest number of recorded drought-induced IDPs** are in Somalia, although exact figures are difficult to determine as movements are continuous, with people potentially registering at multiple IDP sites (KII 29/03/2023; IOM 01/2023 and 15/11/2022; OCHA 21/09/2022). Some IDPs have also been experiencing protracted displaced (over a year to five years) (IOM 27/12/2022 and 20/10/2022). In Ethiopia, the highest number of drought-related IDPs are located in Somali region (IOM 27/12/2022).

**Refugees and asylum seekers are being displaced into drought-affected areas**, where situations for the host population may already be critical. Kenya hosts the highest number of refugees and asylum seeker in drought-affected areas (see Table 4), the majority of whom originate from Somalia (UNHCR 31/01/2023). Turkana, which is in Emergency drought phase, hosts 254,962 people in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyi settlement (UNHCR accessed 18/04/2023). In Garissa, which is in Alert phase, at least 240,984 people are hosted in the Dadaab refugee complex, including over 125,690 children (UNHCR 24/03/2023 and 31/01/2023; UNHCR accessed 18/04/2023).

**Table 4. Drought-related displacement**

	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	SOMALIA	TOTAL
Total registered refugees and asylum seekers	890,309	588,724	34,872	1.51 million
Refugees and asylum seekers in drought-affected areas	345,539	488,590	35,119	869,248
Refugees and asylum seekers under 18 in drought-affected areas (Jan 2023)	Unavailable	258,705*	Unavailable	N/A
Drought-induced IDPs (Feb 2023)	534,000	408,000	1.4 million	2.34 million
Drought-related refugees hosted in neighbouring countries	Unavailable	Unavailable	446,669**	N/A

\*125,693 in Dadaab, 102,339 in Kakuma camp, and 30,673 in Kalobeyi settlement

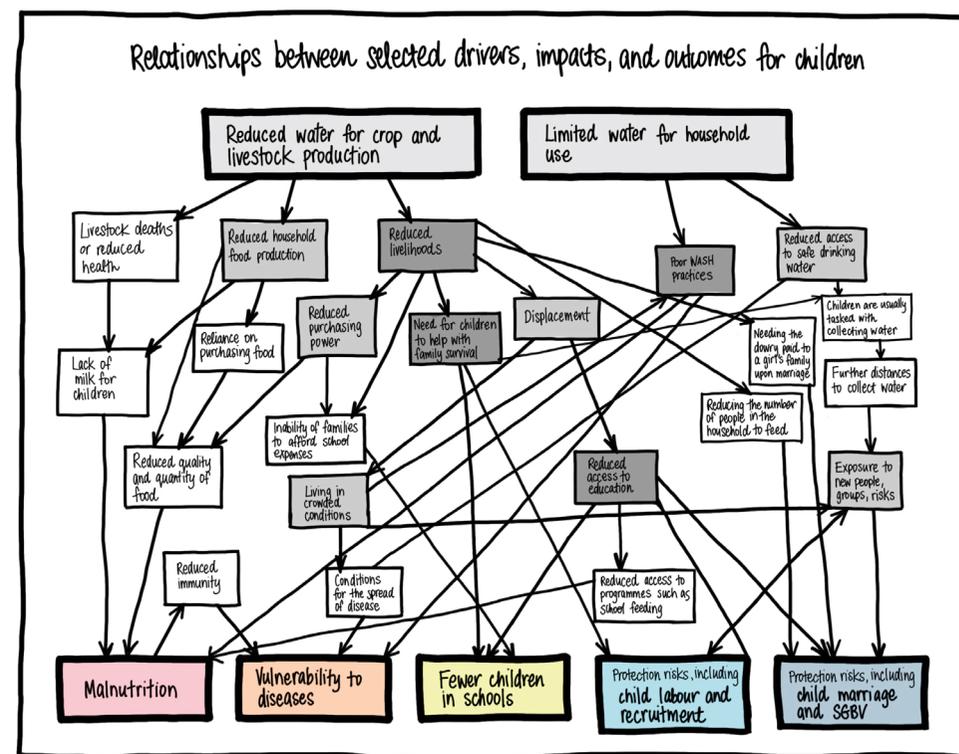
\*\*Calculated based on 65% of the 687,184 refugees hosted in neighbouring countries

Sources: UNHCR (24/03/2023, 28/03/2023, and 31/01/2023); IOM (22/02/2023); UNHCR (accessed 31/03/2023 a, accessed 31/03/2023 b, and accessed 31/03/2023 c)

## IMPACT OF DROUGHT ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION OF CHILDREN

**Children are among the most vulnerable to the current drought**, and millions live in drought-affected countries (see Table 5). Families have been driven to an increased reliance on negative coping mechanisms and strategies, which indirectly or directly affects children. When families are faced with difficult decisions in order to survive, they may be forced to leave their children, including at IDP camps, so they can search for work or pasture; reduce the mouths they need to feed by engaging their children in forced marriage; or rely on their children for financial support and essential household activities. Negative coping mechanisms and strategies involving children have long-term repercussions, especially as children often do not have the same agency as adults, making them vulnerable to the decisions taken by their caregivers.

**Figure 6. Interconnected drivers of drought and impacts on children**



**Drought-related drivers are aggravating the needs of children**, including increased malnutrition, vulnerability to diseases, and protection risks, including child labour and forced recruitment and child/forced marriage. The interplay of drivers and impacts that contribute to the deteriorating situation for children is complex; a driver of one outcome may be the result of another driver related to drought. Factors that have the most consequences for children include displacement, school closures, reduced livelihoods, reduced water for crops and livestock, poor WASH practices, living in crowded conditions, and an increased reliance on the high-priced food market – many of which result from the decisions taken by families in order to cope (see Figure 6 or the full-paged version in Annex 1 for an illustration of the interconnection of drivers and impacts).

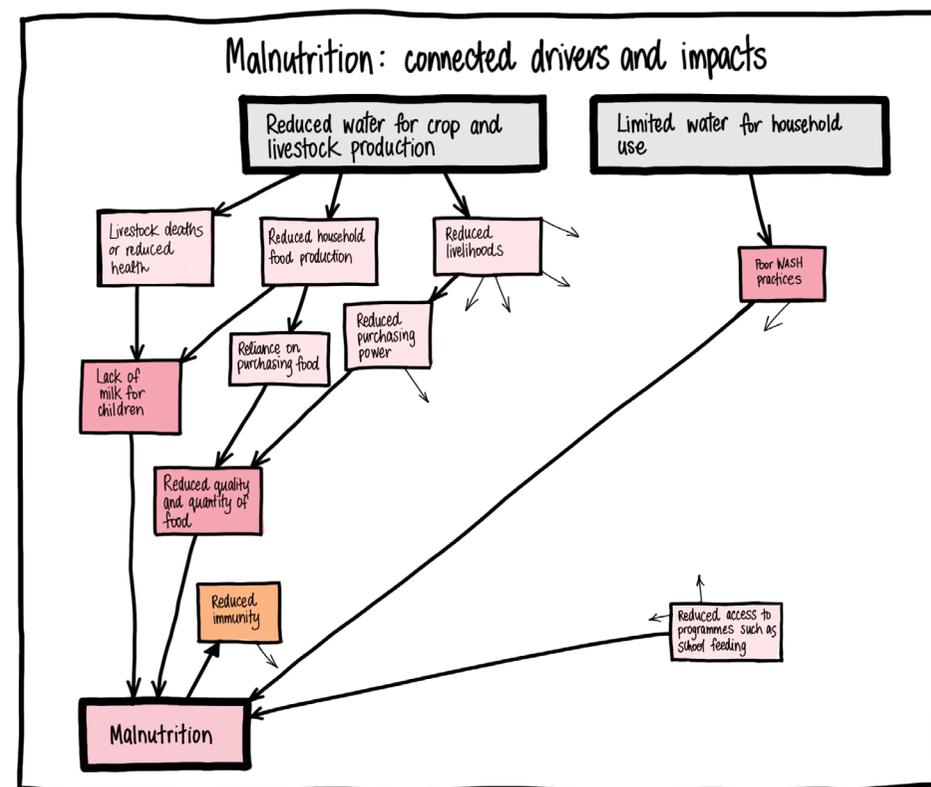
**The situation is particularly concerning for children who live in areas with high levels of food insecurity, are under five, come from lower-income families (especially those from agropastoralist or pastoralist communities), or are displaced**, whether internally or across borders. UASC likely have higher acute needs. As at March 2023, there were more than 1,500 UASC in Dadaab camp and 305 in Kakuma camp, both in the drought-affected county of Turkana (UNHCR 24/03/2023). The drivers of separation and whether it is unintentional or intentional are not clear, although there are reports of parents being forced to leave their children to search for food and water and not coming back for long periods of time. Other children are abandoned along roads or schools when parents could no longer provide for them (KII 08/03/2023; NYT 11/06/2022; ABC 02/02/2016). Children living with disabilities or those living with family members with disabilities are also expected to face higher needs.

**The impacts of the drought are gendered**, with girls and boys experiencing the crisis differently, especially in terms of protection and education. Based on available data, girls are more likely to face SGBV (including FGM) and child/forced marriage, as well as to drop out of school. Boys more likely experience hard physical labour, herding, or forced child recruitment by armed groups. That said, data is lacking and does not provide a comprehensive picture of the situation, especially for boys.

Table 5. Number of children per country

	TOTAL POPULATION OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE	TOTAL POPULATION OF CHILDREN UNDER 18	TOTAL POPULATION
Ethiopia (2022) (UNICEF accessed 03/04/2023)	18,526,000	58,273,000	126,527,000
Kenya (2022) (UNICEF accessed 03/04/2023)	7,035,000	24,428,000	55,101,000
Somalia (2022) (UNICEF accessed 03/04/2023)	3,357,000	9,758,000	18,143,000

**Malnutrition**





Malnutrition has multiple drivers related to the current drought that have significant consequences for children. Livestock die because of lack of water, which removes a vital source of nutrition, such as milk and protein, for children, both at home and in schools. The loss of livestock affects household incomes, but livestock is not the only productive asset impacted by a lack of water. Agricultural livelihoods are affected, as is food production households usually reserve for their own consumption. Ultimately, there is less money to spend on food, and households will resort to lower cost and less nutritious food, which increases malnutrition further. Reductions in livelihoods can also be a driver for displacement, and people often end up in refugee centres where families live in overcrowded conditions making safe WASH practices difficult to maintain putting children again at risk of developing or exacerbating malnutrition. Displacement also often reduces access to schools, and along with it, any school feeding programmes which may have supported children's diets.

### Malnutrition situation in Ethiopia

As at November 2022, 3.9 million children were severely malnourished as a result of the drought and other factors (WFP 17/11/2022). In the drought-affected woredas of Afar, Oromia, SNNP, and Somali, the malnutrition situation has deteriorated, especially for children under five. MAs at 10 March 2023, moderate acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition admissions continued to gradually increase across both Oromia and Somali regions, in part because of a deterioration in the food security situation (OCHA 10/03/2023; UNICEF 31/03/2023; ENCU accessed 03/04/2023). The most severely affected area has been Afder zone in Somali, which recorded 2,562 severely malnourished children from January–December 2022 (as per the latest data available), a 116% increase compared to the same period in 2021. In Oromia region, malnutrition rates increased by 24% in December 2022 (5,368 cases) compared to November 2022, and increased by 76% (15,642 cases) compared to December 2021. According to a recent assessment, as at March 2023, around 39% of children under five were experiencing chronic malnutrition countrywide, while 11% were acutely malnourished (GOE/UNICEF 03/2023).

### Malnutrition situation in Kenya

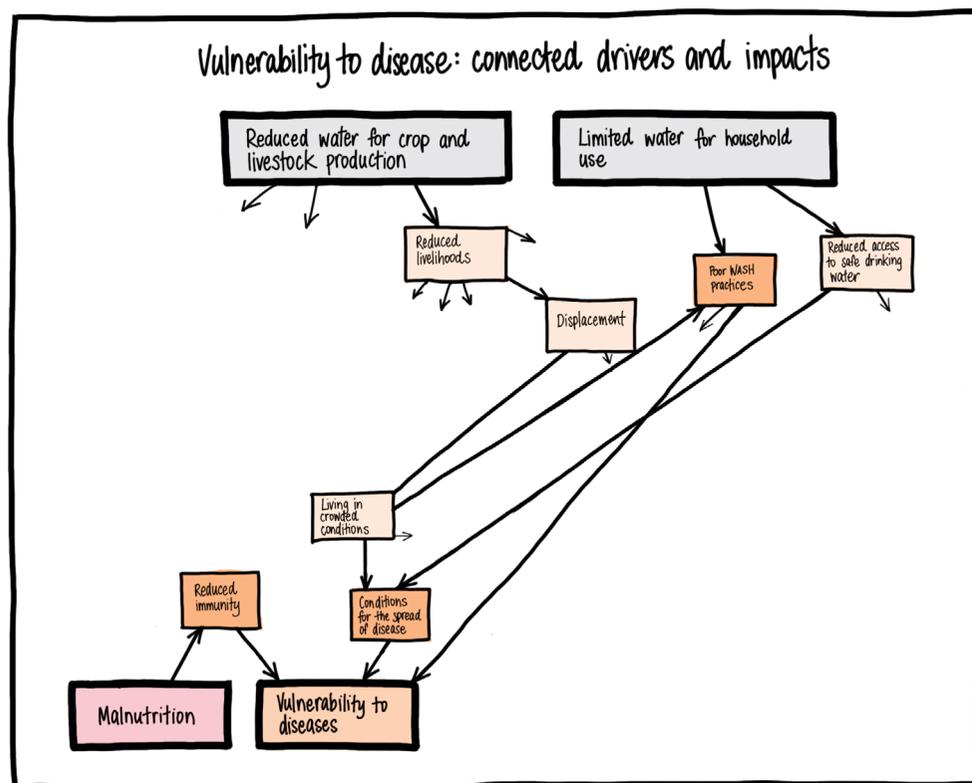
As at February 2023, over 970,210 children aged 6–59 months were experiencing malnutrition, including around 727,645 with moderate acute malnutrition and at least 242,564 with severe acute malnutrition (UNICEF 27/03/2023). The regions of Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, and Turkana are currently the most affected, with global acute malnutrition levels exceeding emergency thresholds. Critical malnutrition rates (global acute malnutrition levels greater than 30%) are likely in parts of Mandera, Marsabit, and Turkana (NDMA 02/2023).

### Malnutrition situation in Somalia

As at 10 February, more than 1.4 million children across Somalia were likely to be acutely malnourished, including almost 329,500 likely to be severely acutely malnourished (FSNAU 10/02/2022). That number is expected to increase throughout 2023, with 1.8 million children likely to experience acute malnutrition and at least 513,550 estimated to be severely malnourished until June 2023 (WHO 01/03/2023; IPC 28/02/2023). Currently, malnutrition prevention activities and services are inadequate, particularly for rural areas (IPC 02/12/2022). In 2022, 43,000 deaths resulted from the drought, half of which (21,500) were children under five years of age. Current conditions are expected to cause the death of 135 people per day between January–June 2023. Most deaths attributable to the drought occur in areas where the population is exposed to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food insecurity over protracted periods (FSNAU et al. 20/03/2023; The Guardian 21/03/2023).

Currently, as a result of drought, children are increasingly vulnerability to diseases. Limited access to safe water, poor WASH practices, and living in crowded conditions as a result of displacement, exposes children to conditions that promote the spread of disease while malnutrition, another outcome of the drought, reduces their immunity and physical capacity to fight off illness. This means they are more likely to contract the diseases they are exposed to and also more likely to suffer badly from them and find it harder to recover.

## Increased vulnerability to diseases



### Disease outbreak in Ethiopia

Multiple disease outbreaks, including cholera, measles, and suspected cases of meningitis and malaria, are occurring in the five drought-affected regions of the country. Measles is particularly concerning in the drought-affected areas, where 87% of detected cases are occurring. Oromia and Somali are facing a cholera outbreak, accounting for all 2,276 reported cases as at 23 March (OCHA 28/03/2023). The outbreak of the disease is a particularly concerning threat to the health of malnourished children, whose immune systems are compromised. Among the children admitted to the hospital for severe acute malnutrition, 10.5% are also confined for other serious medical concerns (WHO 16/02/2023). Children are more vulnerable to cholera and acute watery diarrhoea in the three countries, but in Ethiopia

in particular, two-thirds of cholera patients are children, with the highest death rates occurring among children under 14 (KII 08/03/2023; STC 02/02/2023).

### Disease outbreak in Kenya

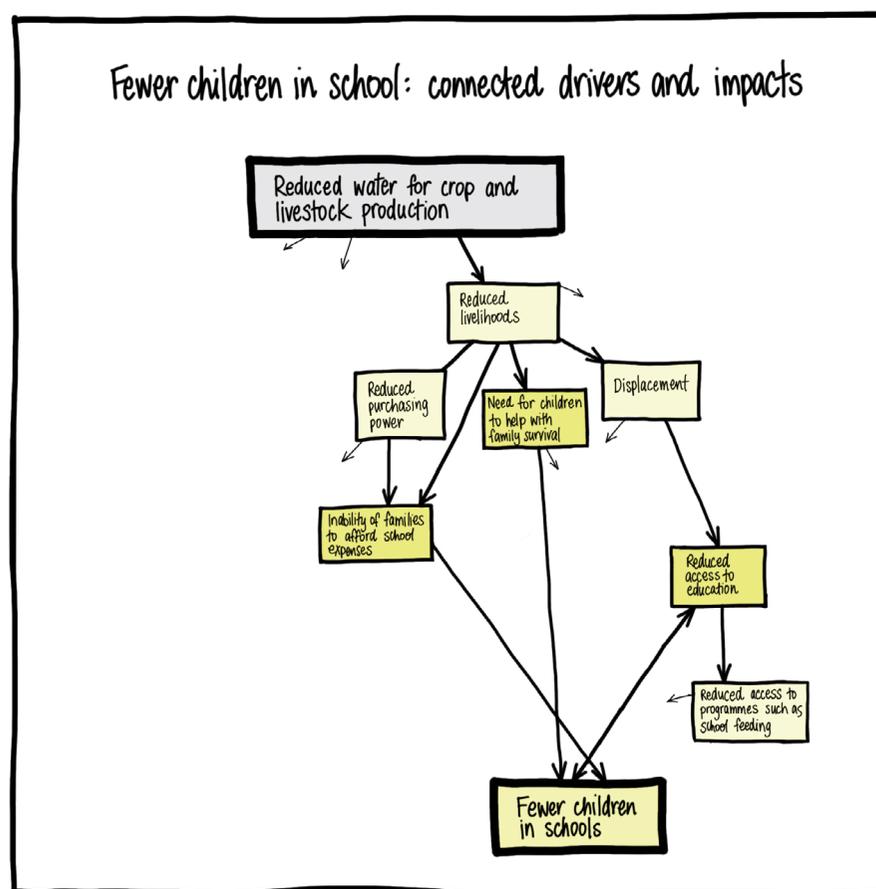
Cholera affects 17 out of 47 counties in the country. Between October 2022 and 14 February 2023, there were 4,821 confirmed cholera cases and 85 related deaths reported. The highest caseload is in the drought-affected counties, including Garissa (2,012) and Tana River (730). As at March 2023, active outbreaks were reported in the drought-affected counties of Mandera (155 cases), Kajiado (60), Wajir (44), Samburu (38), Garissa (9), and Marsabit (9) (UNICEF 11/04/2023 and 27/03/2023). In 2020, 85% of children in the country received only one measles rubella vaccine shot, lower than the 95% vaccine coverage targeted by WHO, and only 58% of children received both doses of the vaccines (UNICEF 25/06/2021; Nation 10/12/2022). One of the reasons for the low coverage of vaccination in some counties, such as Garissa, Mandera, Marsabit, Nairobi, Turkana, Wajir, and West Pokot, are reported to be a result of the fluid movement of the pastoralist population, including their children (Nation 10/12/2022). As at December 2022, Kakuma refugee camp reported 37 laboratory-confirmed cases of measles, which were likely caused by reduced immunisation coverage. In Dadaab refugee camp, 504 cumulative cases of cholera were reported as at 18 December (IRC 22/12/2022). Among the refugee population in Kenya, children are likely to have not received adequate vaccination in their host countries, such as in Somalia, where they face similar issues of low vaccination coverage, drought, and conflict (MSF 04/08/2022 and 14/07/2021). Sheltering in overcrowded conditions in the refugee camps, combined with their pre-existing poor nutrition statuses, puts children at a higher risk of contracting measles in the camps.

### Disease outbreak in Somalia

According to the health ministry, over 15,600 cases of cholera and 88 deaths were reported in 26 drought-affected districts of Somalia in 2022. As at January 2023, over 1.8 million children were at risk of getting cholera infections because of poor nutritional health and compromised immunity systems (WHO 22/01/2023). Even children far above the age of five have become increasingly at risk of contracting measles. The vaccination and treatment of measles have been challenging, as many IDPs and affected communities live in remote and hard-to-reach areas and many live in overcrowded camps, hindering the mitigation of the spread of the disease (MSF 04/08/2022). Pre-existing issues with health systems can also contribute to the vaccination and treatment of preventable diseases, such as in southern Lower Juba region, where small-scale measles outbreaks are frequent (MSF 14/07/2021).

During the drought, the reduction in livelihoods, particularly for pastoralist and agropastoralists who rely on livestock and crops, creates several drivers that make school attendance difficult. In some families children leave school so that they can contribute to income generation or household activities, such as fetching water, for some the main reason for leaving school is the inability to afford school related expenses, and for others who decide to displace, they are now too far away from the school the children once attended and may no longer have the same opportunities to access education in their new locations. For many households these drivers will be interconnected and the withdrawal of children from school will be have multiple dimensions.

## Reduced access to education



## Ethiopia

Education in drought-affected regions continues to be disrupted as a result of a lack of water, displacement, a lack of income, and the need for children to support their families, although the total number of children out of school or facing reduced attendance as a result of the drought is not publicly available. As at December 2022, at least 3.6 million children were out of school countrywide because of conflict, drought, and displacement (Education Cannot Wait 07/12/2022). As at February 2023, 379 schools across 71 woredas in Somali region were forced to close as a result of drought, resulting in more than 81,555 student dropouts (OCHA 10/03/2023; UNFPA 19/05/2022). As at 2 February, a lack of water affected 106,000 students in Shabelle zone, an area particularly affected by the drought (Education Cluster 09/03/2022; OCHA 02/02/2023). In Oromia, as at January 2023, the drought affected 4,000 schools (Education Cluster 01/2023).

## Kenya

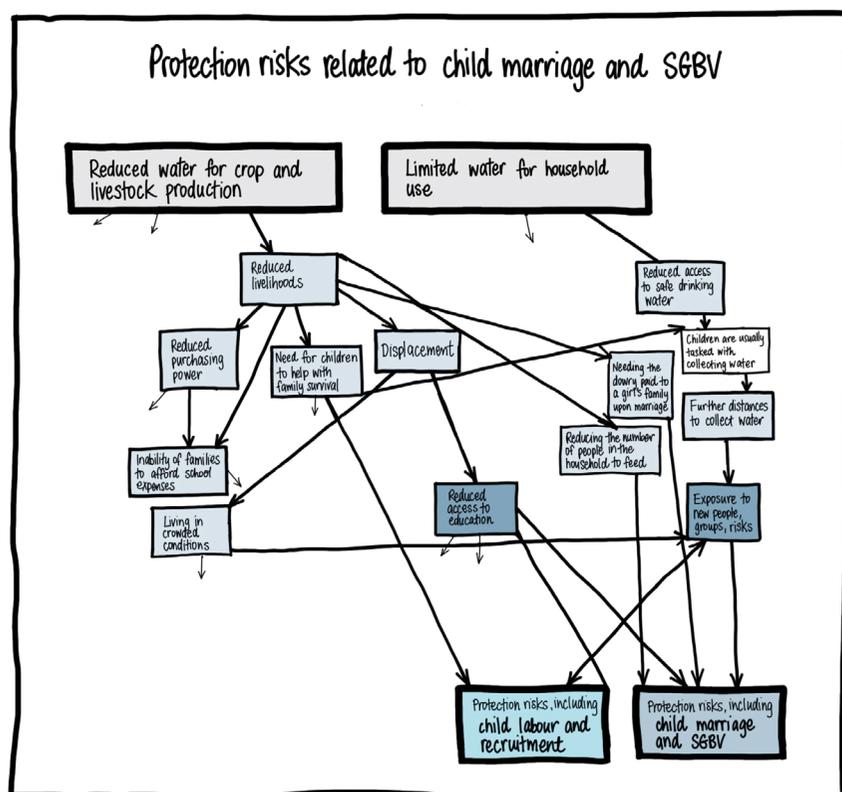
In 2023, 1.5 million children are estimated to be in need of education support in drought-affected areas (UNICEF 05/12/2022). As at December 2022, Mandera had the highest number of school dropouts (295,470 children aged 4–17 years old), followed by Garissa (289,410), Wajir (266,540), Turkana (253,640), and Marsabit (107,600) (STC 06/12/2022). Between September–October 2022, 99% of school dropouts were out of school because of the drought situation in their communities. Teachers have also reported reduced student attention span, as hunger would lead most to fall asleep (CARE 04/11/2022). According to an assessment conducted in Marsabit region in July 2022, the two main reasons for the decrease in school enrolment were the inability of a family to afford their child's school fees (33.0%) and school dropouts (26.6%). On the other hand, 60% of the participants said that their school's feeding programme encouraged pupils to regularly attend school given the challenges in accessing food at the household level (TDH 07/2022).

## Somalia

As at August 2022, the Somalia education cluster estimated 2.4 million school-aged children were facing drought-related challenges in accessing education, food, and protection services. Among the affected children, 1.7 million were out of school (UNICEF 2022; Education Cluster/UNICEF 24/07/2022). An estimated 720,000 children enrolled in schools in 2021–2022 were at risk of not returning to school for 2022–2023 because of the many factors caused by the drought, such as child labour, the lack of money to cover school fees, and water scarcity. This disproportionately affected girls, as families tended to prioritise education for boys when they could not afford school fees for all children (Protection Cluster/UNICEF 23/08/2022). As at May 2022, at least 250 schools were closed before the end of the academic year because of drought-related challenges across the country, and over 80 schools were closed in Jubaland

and Galmudug states alone (Education Cluster/UNICEF 24/07/2022; CARE 10/05/2022). Adolescent girls' attendance to school has decreased during the drought, as many are forced to marry earlier or have to fetch water or help with other household chores (KII 21/03/2023).

## Protection risks



There are multiple different and connected protection risks that have increased for children because of drought. The need for children to support their families leads to paid and unpaid child labour and even forced child recruitment in areas of insecurity. In the current drought, families are forced to make difficult decisions, such as finding ways to reduce mouths to feed, which includes child/forced marriage. At the same time, dowries associated with child/forced marriage can be seen as attractive ways to alleviate the economic pressure from reduced livelihood opportunities, while also being seen as a way to “protect” girls from other risks they may be increasingly exposed to such as strangers in new environments. Displacement to new areas and the longer distances needed to walk to fetch water removes children from settings and people they are familiar with and exposes them to new groups and individuals which can put them at risk of SGBV and child recruitment. Children who are no longer in school lose access to a space that often provides a safe environment that minimises exposure to protection risks.

## Increased child labour and forced child recruitment

### Ethiopia

The current drought is a contributing factor to child labour, although there are significant gaps in information on the current child labour situation in the country (ILO accessed 19/04/2023; UNFPA accessed 24/02/2023). Prior to the current drought, according to the 2015 Ethiopia National Child Labour Survey, nearly 16 million children aged 5–17 were engaged in child labour (UNICEF 2020; USDOL accessed 16/03/2023). The survey found that 41.5% of children aged 7–14 were working, and 30.8% were working and attending school (WB 16/02/2017).

### Kenya

Child labour rates are around 30% for children in the ASAL counties – the counties most affected by drought, including Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Turkana, and Wajir. In cases where the male members of the household leave with livestock in search for pasture and water, children are often forced to work and provide for the remaining family (KII 20/03/2023). Children in the ASAL counties may engage in sand harvesting, herding, street hawking, farming, drug peddling, and domestic work, such as fetching water and taking care of animals. Boys in particular are required to herd cattle (GoK 17/02/2023 and 22/09/2022; TDH 07/2022). In the refugee camps, boys and girls are engaged in pushing barrels; selling items in the town; working in hotels, restaurants, and factories; in some rural areas, burning/selling charcoal; and herding animals (KII 20/03/2023; KII 08/03/2023). A 2022 assessment in Moyale subcounty, Marsabit, found that the drought was also leading to the forced recruitment of children into militias, although the extent it was occurring across the country remained unclear. The 2022 assessment also revealed that 80% of the participants were involved in work with their family, and 40% were working in their communities (TDH 07/2022).



## Somalia

Drought-affected children are being subjected to labour and recruitment, posing a risk to their wellbeing (Protection Cluster/UNICEF 23/08/2022). As at 30 September, 82% of working children were street vendors, 88% worked in domestic labour (outside of their homes), 41% transported people or goods, 18% worked in factories, and 18% were engaging in sexual transactions (Protection Cluster/UNHCR 30/09/2022). Children in IDP camps in Baidoa and Mogadishu are being forced to beg on the street, shine shoes, or become maids to support their families (SNC 31/08/2022; RadioErgo 22/06/2022). Recruitment into armed groups is also a risk, especially as during the drought, interclan violence over resources has increased, likely also increasing the recruitment of children (OCHA 08/02/2023). Although the use of children by armed groups is not solely a result of drought, it is aggravated by the situation as children lose access to education and are often required to provide for themselves or their families. Older boys and girls, particularly those displaced, are continuously targeted for recruitment and use by armed forces and groups (Protection Cluster/UNHCR 30/09/2022). Between 2019–2021, over 2,800 children (2,752 boys and 100 girls) as young as ten years old were reported for recruitment and use by armed groups, including as bodyguards, cleaners, and in operational roles (UN SC 14/06/2022).

### Increase in child/forced marriage and SGBV, including FGM

## Ethiopia

**Child/forced marriage:** according to an IOM assessment, between January–April 2022 in surveyed displacement sites, the number of child/forced marriages increased significantly in comparison to the same period in 2021. In drought-affected areas, the increase reported was 264% in Somali, 69% in Oromia, and 38% in SNNP, with continued and gradual increases since the onset of the drought (OCHA 08/09/2022; The Guardian 30/04/2022). In Somali region, it is socially encouraged for girls to be married soon after their first menstruation (GAGE 24/08/2022). Even prior to the drought, Ethiopia recorded high rates of child/forced marriages countrywide, with 40% of girls being married before the age of 18 according to data from 2016 (GOE 2016). Drought is disproportionately exposing young women and girls to protection risks, including child/forced marriage and SGBV, including FGM, especially in Afar, Oromia, and Somali regions (Protection Cluster/UNFPA 06/10/2022).

**SGBV:** girls are often tasked to travel far to fetch water, and children, particularly in Oromia and SNNP regions, are being left alone in IDP sites while family members search for food or livelihood opportunities, exposing the children to SGBV risks (UNHCR 24/03/2023). In Somali and likely other regions, SGBV cases are underreported, as survivors fear retaliation from the perpetrator, as well as being negatively viewed and stigmatised socially (SDC 18/08/2022). **FGM** cases have increased during the drought, specifically rising by 27% in SNNP between

January–April 2022 in comparison to the same period in 2021 (UNICEF 28/06/2022). FGM is still widely practiced, and, according to an assessment in the country, 65% of girls and women aged 15–49 were reported to have undergone FGM. The regions with the highest rates of FGM are along the eastern border with Somalia, which are also affected by the drought (UNICEF et al. accessed 30/03/2023; UNFPA/UNICEF 06/02/2023). Although data is limited, the drought is leading to younger girls undergoing FGM ahead of child/forced marriage (UNICEF 28/06/2022).

## Kenya

**Child/forced marriage:** the drought has led to girls facing greater risks of child/forced marriage and SGBV, including FGM (IFRC 17/10/2022; TDH accessed 05/04/2023; UNICEF 28/06/2022). According to an assessment in 2022, at least 24% of the respondents in Moyale subcounty, Marsabit, were subjected to an early marriage. The assessment also indicated that during drought their teenage years, girls were forced into prostitution to earn money and provide for their families (TDH 07/2022).

**SGBV:** girls often sent to fetch water in remote places or left at home alone for long periods when their parents look for food and water are at risk of SGBV. In Garissa, there are reports of attempts and cases of rape, as well as other types of violence, of girls and boys (UNICEF 15/12/2022). Unfortunately, the cases are often underreported, because only few survivors agree to seek legal aid and report to the police, with most others fearing retaliation by perpetrators, other repercussions, and societal stigma (UNICEF 15/12/2022; UNFPA 17/10/2022). According to the national police report from January–December 2021, there were an estimated 8,000 cases of SGBV reported in Kenya (92% of the cases involving women and 8% men), with most of the survivors aged 15–17 years old (National Police Service accessed 06/04/2023). Although data on **FGM** is limited, anecdotal evidence shows that cases are on the rise in drought-affected areas (KII 21/03/2023). 14 of the 23 counties affected by drought in Kenya are FGM hotspots. In these regions, girls face greater risks of child/forced marriage and FGM, with prevalence rates of up to 98% compared to the national prevalence rate of 21% (Nation 29/08/2022; UNFPA 03/02/2022). According to data from the recently released Kenya Demographic and Health Survey for 2022, the prevalence of FGM was 15% in women between 15–49 years and 9% of girls between 15–19 years old (KNBS 01/2023).

## Somalia

**Child/forced marriage:** increasing instances of SGBV and child/forced marriage have been linked to the drought. According to latest government figures, 34% of Somali girls are married before the age of 18, while 16% are younger than 15 years (OCHA 08/02/2023). There is no updated data on the number of child/forced marriages, although young girls remain at high risk because of the drought (UNFPA 2021).



**SGBV:** sexual assault and violence have been increasingly reported in the country. According to a survey in Sanaag, Sool, and Togdheer regions in Somaliland, one-third of people (34%) believe that security risks to girls and women have increased as a result of the drought (Plan International 10/08/2022). Adolescent girls are more vulnerable to SGBV, as they are asked to fetch water in remote areas and/or forced to marry earlier, exposing them to the risk of FGM (KII 21/03/2023). Incidents of rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, and harassment have been on the rise, particularly among IDP communities displaced because of the drought and conflict. The total number of SGBV cases is uncertain because of prevalent underreporting, with women often fearing retaliation from perpetrators (Protection Cluster/UNHCR 30/09/2022).

**FGM** is widespread, with over 99% of girls in the country having undergone FGM, which paves the way for child/forced marriages (CARE 14/10/2022; UN Women 31/05/2022). While there is no data on the increase of FGM related to the drought, there is a linkage between a lack of access to education and FGM, meaning girls with reduced access to education as a result of the drought are at an increased risk of FGM (CARE 14/10/2022).

ANNEX 1 – FIGURE 6 INTERCONNECTED DRIVERS OF DROUGHT

