

SOMALIA

Flooding in Baidoa

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

Heavy rains that began on 4 October 2023 have resulted in flash floods across Baidoa district, in Bay region, Southwest state, Somalia. The floods had affected more than 122,000 people (20,347 families) as at 23 October (OCHA 23/10/2023 and 07/10/2023). The most affected regions are Baidoa city and the surrounding low-lying areas (WVI 09/10/2023). As at 24 October, the flooding had killed three people (two from their house collapsing on 11 October), injured one, and led to four people missing in Baidoa, while one person had died in Galmudug state (ECHO 24/10/2023; OCHA 23/10/2023). Banadir, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, and Jubaland states have been experiencing floods from heavy rainfall since early October (OCHA 23/10/2023).

Makeshift shelters hosting more than 92,000 IDPs across 178 displacement sites in Baidoa city have been inundated, meaning secondary displacement for IDPs who will require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs (OCHA 23/10/2023 and 07/10/2023). Displaced people have moved to higher ground and are sheltering in the vicinity of their settlements in low-lying areas (OCHA 07/10/2023). The majority of the displaced population in Baidoa were displaced by the impact of drought on their livelihoods and access to essential services (AA 12/10/2023; ACAPS 27/01/2023).

There is a critical need to relocate people whose shelters have been permanently destroyed and who remain in flood-prone areas (OCHA 23/10/2023). Other priority needs include shelter, NFIs, food, and WASH services.

Although northern Somalia is forecast to have less cumulative rainfall than the south, the region has also already experienced some pockets of flooding, affecting some villages and damaging two schools, some hospitals, and two mosques (IFRC 14/10/2023). Localised areas of Somaliland and Puntland have also been affected. The water levels in Juba and Shabelle Rivers are expected to increase, leading to a high risk of flash floods because of potential localised heavy rains over western Bakool, central Gedo, and Saakow district in Middle Juba region (FAO 23/10/2023).

Somalia has an INFORM climate change risk score of 8.8/10, with a 9.3/10 flood exposure score and 8.8/10 vulnerability and lack of coping capacity score (EC accessed 24/10/2023). These mean that the country is susceptible to flooding but does not have the means to sufficiently respond to the impact of the hazard.

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

Historical analysis shows that El Niño tends to affect the country the most between September–December, with a decline in January. This means that above-normal rainfall will likely keep occurring until the end of 2023, increasing humanitarian needs (IFRC 14/10/2023).

Further flooding can be expected across Somalia as the Deyr season continues till December. There is a 70–85% probability of above-normal rainfall in October across southern Somalia, including Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Hiran, Lower Juba and Middle Juba, and Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions, which will likely cause flash flooding (FAO 23/10/2023; IFRC 14/10/2023). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development Climate Prediction and Application Centre climate outlook for the 2023 Deyr season forecasts an exceptionally high likelihood of ten consecutive rainy days, with cumulative amounts of more than 150mm, which can cause flash flooding (IFRC 14/10/2023). Central, northeastern, and the Horn of Africa areas of Somalia have a 65–80% probability of above-average rainfall, while northern areas have a 55% probability, with 900,000 people at risk of being affected.

Roughly 1.2 million people living in riverine areas across Somalia are anticipated to be affected by flooding (IRC 11/10/2023). World Vision has identified 256 flood hotspots in Gedo and Hirshabelle regions (WVI 09/10/2023).



KEY PRIORITIES

122,000
AFFECTED PEOPLE

92,000
IDPS AFFECTED

High risk
OF DISEASE
OUTBREAK

8.8
INFORM CLIMATE
CHANGE RISK
SCORE

FUNDING AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

- Somalia Disaster Management Agency
- Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management
- Situation assessment by UN agencies (WHO, UNICEF, IOM)
- Initial response activities by several INGOs
- IFRC DREF

CRISIS IMPACTS

Shelter and NFIs

The flooding has inundated many residential homes and makeshift shelters for IDPs, although the number of damaged or destroyed shelters remained unconfirmed as at 23 October (OCHA 23/10/2023 and 07/10/2023). Although there have been reports of water receding in some areas, as at 7 October, many people were still unable to access their homes because of stagnant water (OCHA 07/10/2023). There is often a risk of shelter collapse when floodwaters recede, as shelter structures typically have wood as the primary structural material, which can be damaged from water exposure (UNHCR 2020).

Shelters are overcrowded, and there is a lack of capacity to cover IDP needs. There have been reports of IDPs begging in the streets of Baidoa city to meet their basic needs (Radio Ergo 17/10/2023). IDPs have also reported unusable mattresses because of water damage (AA 12/10/2023).

As at February 2023, there were at least 611 verified IDP sites in Baidoa city hosting 107,337 households or 649,465 individuals, and 59 IDP sites had been classified as at risk during floods (UNHCR accessed 24/10/2023; UNHCR 19/07/2023).

WASH

As at 7 October, 305 latrines had collapsed in Bay region (OCHA 07/10/2023). The risk of waterborne disease outbreaks and other health hazards can be expected to increase with the contamination of water sources and the prolonged exposure of people to stagnant water (OCHA 23/10/2023; AA 12/10/2023). Affected IDPs are particularly vulnerable, as they shelter in congested sites and lack access to adequate water and sanitation.

Food insecurity

Floodwaters have spoilt the food stocks that IDPs had stored in their makeshift shelters (AA 12/10/2023). With access constraints and funding shortfalls challenging the humanitarian response across IDP sites, the affected displaced people will likely not have enough food to sustain themselves.

A January 2023 IPC analysis identified that IDPs in Baidoa settlements were facing a risk of Famine (IPC Phase 5) food insecurity levels between April–June 2023. An April analysis update found that although the humanitarian response had mitigated the risk of Famine, acute food insecurity levels remained very high in these settlements (IPC 25/04/2023).

As at 25 September, 4.3 million people across Somalia were expected to face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity levels between October–December (IPC 18/09/2023). This is an increase from the 3.7 million people expected to face IPC 3 or worse levels between August–September 2023. The increase considers factors such as heavy rains and flooding because of El Niño and reduced humanitarian assistance because of funding shortfalls.

Livelihoods

The flooding has killed livestock in displacement sites, which IDPs relied on for income generation (AA 12/10/2023). The majority of the IDPs in Baidoa were displaced because of the loss of their livelihoods resulting from the drought leading them to search for opportunities, food, and water elsewhere. Losing their livelihoods again in the floods can significantly affect their mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, along with their purchasing power and ability to meet basic needs without humanitarian assistance.

An estimated 1.5 million hectares of productive land are at high risk of flooding in the country because of El Niño-related heavy rainfall (AA 12/10/2023). Above-average rainfall is also likely to delay and disrupt agricultural activities, destroy property and assets, and lead to further livestock deaths. Flood-related damage to roads is also likely to increase trade disruptions, driving food price increases in consumer markets (FEWS NET 08/2023).

Education and child protection

As at 7 October, at least eight learning facilities at displacement sites were flooded, affecting education provision for 6,000 displaced children (OCHA 07/10/2023).

During past floods, children faced heightened risks of explosive remnants of war, the destruction of their homes, drowning, displacement, family separation, engagement in hazardous labour, disease, death, and psychosocial distress as a result of the destruction of livelihoods and shelter, as well as weakened protection systems. There is little information on the current impact of the flooding on children, who are also at risk of malnutrition and contracting waterborne diseases (Protection Cluster 23/10/2023).

DRIVERS OF THE CRISIS

Rainy season and recent drought

The rains mark the start of the Deyr rainy season (typically from October–December) in Somalia. Because of El Niño, above-average rains are anticipated to result in an increased risk of flooding in the country (OCHA 07/10/2023; AA 12/10/2023). The expected above-average rainfall in East Africa in 2023 is attributed to two factors: El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Indian Ocean Dipole. ENSO is leading to abnormal sea surface temperature changes in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. These conditions are expected to persist until early 2024, causing heightened rainfall and posing the risk of severe weather events, including flash floods, riverine floods, mudslides, and landslides (IGAD 17/07/2023).

Somalia has experienced six consecutive failed rainy seasons since mid-2021 (The Guardian 17/05/2023; ACAPS 27/01/2023; Xinhua 08/10/2023). After prolonged drought, the ground becomes hard, unsaturated, and unable to absorb rainwater, meaning sudden heavy rainfall can cause flash flooding (IRC 14/09/2022).

COMPOUNDING/AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Previously displaced populations

Between January–May 2023, there were 408,000 people displaced by floods and another 312,000 by drought. Since mid-2021, over 1.4 million Somalis have been displaced by drought alone (The Guardian 17/05/2023; ACAPS 27/01/2023; Xinhua 08/10/2023).

As at December 2022, there were over 600,000 IDPs in Bay region, where Baidoa city was located. Conflict has been another constant trigger of displacement. In September 2022 alone, the military offensive in Galgaduud, Hiran, and Shabelle regions displaced at least 102,000 people. As at February 2023, over 400,000 people were estimated to be displaced by conflict in 2023 (OCHA 08/02/2023). After three decades of conflict in Somalia, four million people are estimated to have been displaced at least once (TNH 17/08/2023). There are over 2,400 IDP sites in Somalia, 85% of which are informal settlements on private land in precarious conditions, where people face high humanitarian needs. About 74% of these sites are in urban areas. IDPs generally have very few remaining assets, are part of limited community support networks, and face high competition for income-earning opportunities, resulting in a high level of needs (FEWS NET 08/2023).

Malnutrition

Multiseasonal drought has worsened the nutrition status of affected people. An estimated 1.5 million under-five children across Somalia are expected to be acutely malnourished between October–December 2023, including 331,000 children projected to be severely malnourished. From October–December 2023, acute malnutrition is expected to deteriorate from Serious (IPC AMN Phase 3) to Critical (IPC AMN Phase 4) levels among the IDPs in Baidoa, urban Belet Weyne, Garowe, and the riverine and agropastoral areas of Shabelle (IPC 18/09/2023). Infectious diseases also aggravate malnutrition; people with malnutrition are more susceptible to infection, and infections, in turn, can further contribute to malnutrition. Poor nutritional conditions, combined with the impact of flooding and a lack of access to adequate WASH services, can put people at a higher risk of severe symptoms of waterborne and vector-borne diseases.

Food insecurity

Pre-flooding, Baidoa city was already facing dire conditions and was considered the epicentre of a hunger crisis during the recent droughts between 2015–2023 (IRC 11/10/2023). As at March 2023, over 600,000 people were facing IPC 3 or worse levels in Bay region. 58% of IDP households in Baidoa reported moderate hunger, household food consumption was poor among 62% of IDPs in Baidoa IDPs, morbidity was at 31% in Baidoa, and 52% of IDPs in Baidoa used severe livelihood coping strategies to access food or money to buy food (IPC 25/04/2023).

Conflict and insecurity

Between 9 September and 13 October, there were 279 political violence events and 1,752 related fatalities reported in Somalia; the southern states, where Baidoa was located, were the most affected. Attacks have increased since August 2023 in Gedo region, neighbouring Baidoa, where Al-Shabaab has been targeting officials to gain territorial control and portray itself as a powerful entity capable of striking high-ranking government officials (ACLED 20/10/2023). The clashes and political violence registered in Baidoa city and neighbouring regions increase the humanitarian needs of people currently affected by floods and constrain the local government response and access of aid organisations.

Between 11–21 July 2023, Al-Shabaab imposed vehicular movement restrictions on roads to and from Baidoa city in retaliation to a government order to arrest anyone responding to a call to travel to Al-Shabaab-controlled areas (ECHO 13/07/2023; The Somali Digest 21/07/2023). The restrictions affected Baidoa's commercial and public transport operators, disrupted

economic activities, and led to a scarcity of food and fuel supplies and to subsequent price inflation. The constraints also challenged humanitarian movement, and responders were unable to assist IDPs in Baidoa with food distributions and other essential services.

Past floods

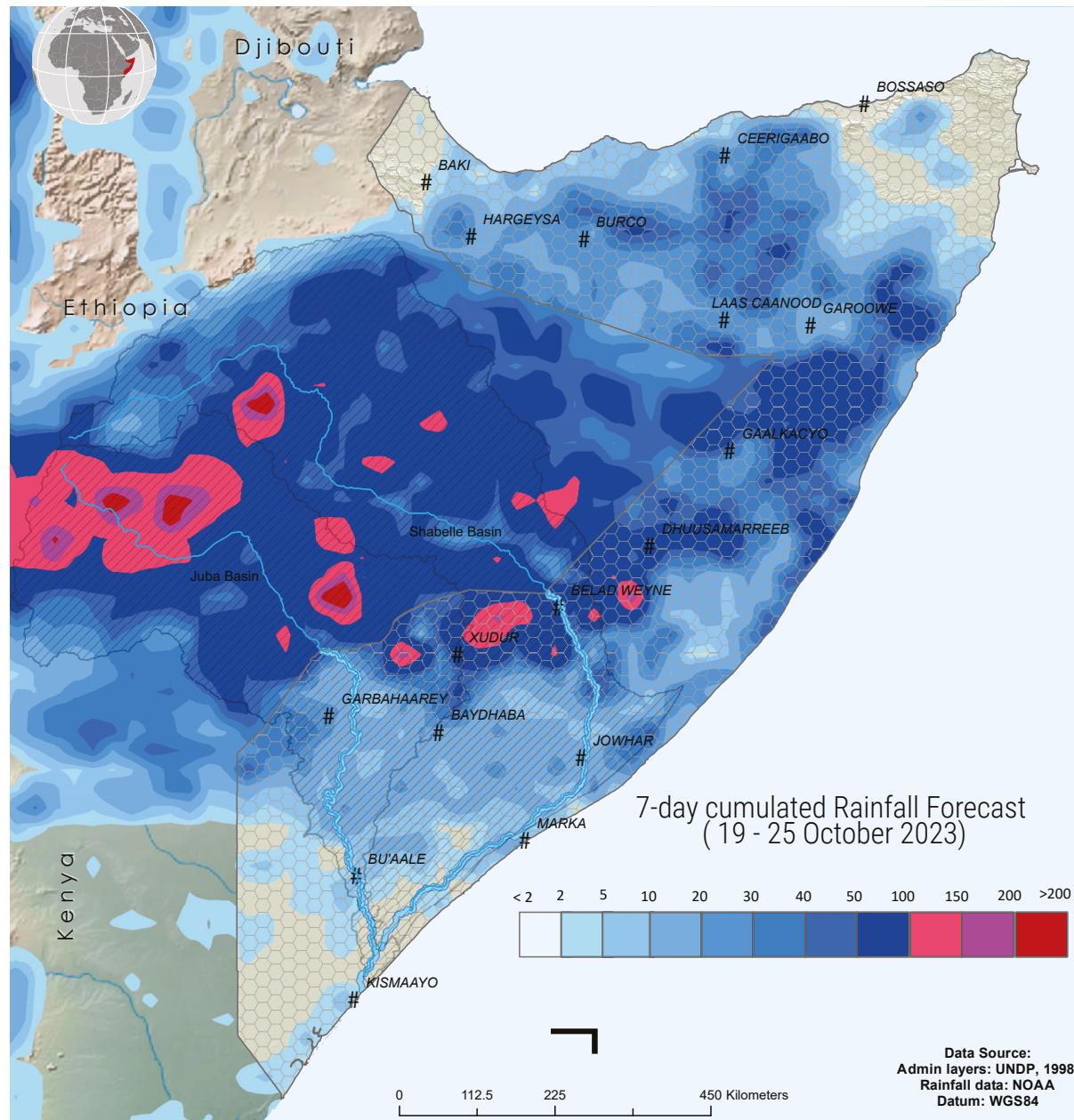
Flash floods had previously affected Baidoa in 2020, 2019, and 2014, most affecting IDPs living in fragile makeshift shelters that were not resistant to floods and other weather conditions (FAO accessed 24/10/2023; FloodList 12/11/2020; ACTED 29/10/2019; DRC 23/11/2014). The 2020 flooding affected at least 73,000 people across the country, including in Bakool, Banadir, Bay, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubaland, and Southwest regions, and most people were displaced towards Baidoa city (FAO accessed 24/10/2023; FloodList 12/11/2020).

Lower Juba and Middle Juba regions, lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions, Gedo region, Bay region, Bakool region, Hiran region has been forecast to experience 70–85% above-average rainfall (IFRC 14/10/2023). Flash floods had already made significant impacts on Belet Weyne city, the capital of Hiran region, in March–April 2023, affecting over 460,000 people and displacing more than 245,000 (STC 24/05/2023; The Guardian 17/05/2023; CNN 18/05/2023). The floods that occurred from the bursting of the banks of the Shabelle River inundated and destroyed homes, crops, and livestock and disrupted access to health services and education by temporarily closing down hospitals and schools (The Guardian 17/05/2023). Flooding from the forecast above-average rainfall during the 2023 Deyr season can aggravate the humanitarian needs that had resulted from the flooding earlier in the year, especially as people will not have had enough time to recover.

FUNDING AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

- The Somalia Disaster Management Agency and Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, with support from humanitarian responders, have been scaling up preparedness and response activities in areas considered at high risk of flooding in Southwest state (OCHA 23/10/2023 and 07/10/2023).
- FAO has stated that it requires USD 11.8 million to scale up flooding mitigation measures in Somalia. These measures include mapping flood-prone areas prior to an anticipated 'Super El Niño' (FAO 06/10/2023).
- As at 10 October, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had initiated their Disaster Response Emergency Fund for flooding in Somalia (IFRC 14/10/2023).
- An impact assessment verifying the severity of risks was undertaken by humanitarian workers between 15–20 October, the results of which were still being finalised as at 23 October (OCHA 23/10/2023).
- Only 32% of the USD 2.6 billion required for the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia was funded as at 31 July (OCHA 01/08/2023). Based on the funding levels, humanitarian activities can be expected to significantly decrease in 2023.
- Prior to the flooding, the humanitarian response in Somalia had been scaling down, with assistance reaching only around 25% of the population in Baidoa, Doolow, and Hudur settlements (FEWS NET 08/2023).

MAP 1. 2023 DEYR RAINFALL UPDATE AND SEVEN-DAY CUMULATED RAINFALL FORECAST (19-25 OCTOBER)



Source: WASH Cluster (19/10/2023)