

Briefing Note – 31 January 2017

# Somalia

## Drought



Need for international assistance	Not required	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major
Expected impact	Very low	Low	Moderate	Significant	Major

### Crisis overview

Somalia is currently experiencing a drought that started in 2015. The whole country is affected, with northeastern areas of Puntland and Somaliland the worst affected. Humanitarian conditions in the southcentral areas of Bay, Bakool, and Gedo have deteriorated rapidly since November, with poor rainfall affecting crops and livestock. Poor and rural households are atypically market dependent heading into the *Jilaal* lean season and many require humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs.

Affected areas	Resident pop.	People in need
Somalia	12,316,895	5,000,000
Bay	792,182	225,000
Bakool	367,226	145,000
Gedo	508,405	165,000

### Key findings

#### Anticipated scope and scale

In Bay, Bakool, and Gedo, pastoral and agropastoral areas have been affected by the ongoing drought. Conditions have deteriorated after consecutive seasons of poor rainfall. The *Jilaal* dry season is expected to deteriorate food security, with 1.375 million predicted to be food insecure across the country between February and May - an increase of 275,000 from October 2016. A poor *gu* rainfall from April to August is predicted, and a significant decline in food security and nutrition levels should be expected.

#### Priorities for humanitarian intervention

- **Food Security** is a concern for poor and rural populations, who are atypically market dependent. 3,000 people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 120,000 in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) from August-December 2016. Livestock and crop failure has limited income for this population.
- **WASH** facilities are poor, and water sources are inadequate, with indications that the situation will continue to deteriorate. 2,236 cases of cholera have been recorded between 1-22 January across Somalia with a case fatality rate of 1.4%.
- **Health** is of concern as a cholera outbreak affects Bay, Bakool, and Gedo. General acute malnutrition rates of between 16.5% and 21.8% affected all assessed populations in July 2016, with conditions deteriorating further since then.

#### Humanitarian constraints

Widespread insecurity in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo disrupts delivery of humanitarian assistance.

#### Limitations

Up to date nutrition and food security numbers for concerned regions are missing. This gap is especially pertinent as the drought has rapidly deteriorated conditions in recent months.

## Crisis impact

The current drought was declared in Somalia on 10 August 2015 and 5 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance in the country (OCHA 09/2016). Since the start of the drought, the 2016 *gu* rains ended in early May instead of late June, the July–September *xagaa* season was unseasonably hot, and the *deyr* rains from October–December were less than 50% of usual levels (SWALIM/FSNAU 15/11/2016; FEWSNET 17/01/2017). Although the drought affects the whole country, northeastern areas of Puntland and Somaliland are the worst affected. However, rapid deterioration has seen areas of south central Somalia, including Bay, Bakool, and Gedo become areas of concern (FAO 25/01/2017).

In agropastoral areas of Bay, Bakool, and Gedo, poor harvests for those growing crops as well as poor vegetation and water levels have led to the region being considered one of the worst-hit areas by drought in Somalia. Ten people have reportedly died of starvation in Gedo in January, as the drought continued to worsen (Shabelle News 15/01/2017; Shabelle News 30/01/2017). In these areas, tens of thousands of poor and rural households require humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs (FEWSNET 17/01/2017).

The UN has issued a pre-famine alert as the dry *jilaal* season from January–March is likely to be followed by poor *gu* rains across the country (ECHO 18/01/2017).

**Food:** Widespread crop failure has been experienced in agropastoral areas which cover most of Bay and Bakool, as well as eastern Gedo. The *deyr* 2016/17 cereal production was 60–70% below the five-year average, with further deterioration since then (FEWSNET 17/01/2017; FSNAU 29/12/2016). Poor *deyr* rains between October and December 2016 were insufficient to replenish animal feed and water sources, resulting in high livestock losses in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions. Animals that have survived are weak, more susceptible to disease, less productive, and therefore less valuable (FAO 16/01/2017).

Wages have declined as the poor rainfall has meant limited agricultural activities have taken place (FSNAU 29/12/2016) while cereal prices have increased. For pastoralists, livestock deaths and poor livestock conditions have meant limited spending capacity (FAO 16/01/2017). Prices of key cereals have increased since July 2016 due to poor harvests and a lack of availability. In November 2016, Sorghum prices were 28% higher than in November 2015, while cattle prices decreased 18% in the same time period. Goat prices fell between 11–29% between July and November. (FSNAU 11/2016; FSNAU 29/12/2016).

From August–December 2016, a combined 3,000 people were in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), 120,000 in Crisis (IPC Phase 3), and 412,000 were estimated to be in Stressed (IPC Phase 2) food security levels in Gedo, Bay, and Bakool, (FSNAU 19/10/2016). Further Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food security levels are expected in areas of southcentral Somalia in early to mid 2017 as cereal stocks are predicted to run out in February, leaving

poor families dependent on market purchases to meet basic needs. Markets continue to be operate despite disruptions due to insecurity in Bakool (FSNAU 29/12/2016; FEWSNET 25/01/2017). The 2017 *Gu* rains are forecast to be below average, leading to further crop failure and livestock deterioration, resulting in further food insecurity in August (FEWSNET 25/01/2017).

**WASH:** Water quality was identified as a major problem in Gedo in an assessment conducted in October. Water salinity problems were recorded across the region (SWALIM/FAO 10/2016). The Juba river, which runs through Gedo is currently below normal levels due to poor seasonal rains between October and December in Ethiopia and deliberate breakage of embankments by agriculturalists to divert water to their lands in Ethiopia (FAO 25/01/2017).

Many people in the Bay and Bakool region are having difficulties accessing clean drinking water (WHO 18/01/2017; Somalia WASH Cluster 28/09/2016). 30 people died in Bay as of 30 January after consuming contaminated water in Masubiyow village, 15km from Baidoa. Another 25 were admitted to Baidoa hospital (Radio Dalsan 30/01/2017).

Water shortages due to the effects of drought increase water prices (OCHA 04/11/2016). Buurhakaba, Bay region, is one of the most severely affected areas, where a drum of water costs USD 5 up from USD 2 just three months ago (Norwegian Refugee Council 22/12/2016).

Gedo region is served by small, seasonal, open water sources (ECHO 07/08/2014). Less than 20% of the population has access to improved water sources (WHO 04/11/2016). Frequent bombing has destroyed water points (UNSC 31/10/2016).

**Health:** Cholera cases have increased in Somalia due to the impact of drought on water supplies across the country. 2,236 cases of cholera have been reported in Somalia from 1–22 January, with 32 deaths and a corresponding case fatality rate (CFR) of 1.4%. Case numbers are increasing and spreading to other locations. Insecurity and accessibility are hindering response programs (WHO 25/01/2017). In Bakool there was an increase in cholera cases recorded in December, and also some in Gedo (Somali Health Cluster 15/01/2017). At least 150 people were affected by the cholera outbreak in Baidoa, Bay region (AMISOM 04/01/2017).

Acute malnutrition has worsened in many parts of Somalia due to the prolonged drought (Radio Ergo 11/01/2017; World Vision 19/01/2017). Nutrition levels have been deteriorating since 2015 due to the compounding effect of the drought. 300 children were admitted into Luuq hospital due to severe malnutrition in Gedo in the three months up to January (Radio Ergo 11/01/2017).

Global acute malnutrition (GAM) levels when last assessed in July were above the Critical threshold (10%) in all areas assessed in Gedo, Bay, and Bakool. Roughly 500 children

were assessed in each of the different areas across the regions. These include the North Gedo Pastoral (GAM 17.2% with SAM 3.2%) and North Gedo Riverine (GAM 16.5% with SAM 2.5%) zones, which cover Belet-Hawa, Garbahaarey, and Luuq. GAM levels in Bay agropastoral areas were at 18.1% (SAM 4.1%) and Bakool Pastoral areas at 19.1% (SAM 5.0%). Nutrition rates are projected to further decline, as yearly deterioration occurs between February and May due to the lean season (FSNAU 19/10/2016; FEWSNET 31/10/2016).

**Shelter/NFI:** Distress migration out of rural areas of Bay towards IDP settlements in Baidoa, Beledweyne in Hiiraan region and Mogadishu has been reported (FEWSNET 17/01/2017; Radio Ergo 17/10/2016). These settlements lack the capacity to accommodate the new arrivals. Open borders between Ethiopia and Kenya means displacement into these countries is likely to take place (WHO 04/11/2016). In September 2016, 4,000 families from Bay and Bakool moved to Baidoa (Radio Ergo 14/09/2016). The UN reported an increasing rate of displacement in January 2017, which is expected to continue in the coming months.

### Vulnerable groups affected

**IDP populations** numbered 138,000 in July 2016 in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo. This population suffers from high rates of food insecurity and malnutrition (UNHCR 18/08/2016; FSNAU 19/10/2016). Those experiencing Emergency (IPC Phase 4) security levels in the regions are all in IDP camps. In Baidoa, GAM was at 18.% when last assessed in July 2016, with SAM at 4.3%. Doolow IDPs in Gedo had one of the highest rates of GAM and SAM at 21.8% and 4.9% respectively (FSNAU 19/10/2016).

**Poor households** will be severely affected by ongoing food price increases (FSNAU 19/10/2016). Poor households in these areas had little to no harvests, typically their main source of food for consumption and income from sales. In addition, poor households have few livestock and are especially reliant on wage labour, an income source that has declined during severe drought. (FEWSNET 17/01/2017).

**Returnees from Dadaab** face similar conditions to the IDP population in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo. They continue to be returned to Bay, Baidoa, and Gedo despite limitation on institutional capacity, both governmental and non-governmental to receive this population. 4,300 were returned to Baidoa in 2016 up to December 16 (Somalia WASH Cluster 28/09/2016; UNHCR 16/12/2017).

### Humanitarian and operational constraints

Al Shabaab occupies significant territory in Gedo, Bay, and Bakool regions, including key roads and towns. Fighting has been constant throughout 2016 between Al Shabaab and AMISOM forces, making most areas inaccessible to humanitarian operations (NGO Safety Program 26/02/2016). This limited access for humanitarian actors in these regions

has led to some agencies scaling down operations. Flights into Doolow and Baidoa deliver humanitarian supplies (Somalia Logistics Cluster 15/12/2016; Somalia Logistics Cluster 16/01/2017)

Al Shabaab and other armed actors have also created roadblocks for humanitarian actors, including on the important Mogadishu-Baidoa-Doolow road, charging up to USD 4,000 for access, limiting the movement of goods and people (UNSC 31/10/2016; OCHA 26/10/2016). Some areas are only accessible by plane, which increases operational and transportation costs (OCHA 26/10/2016; Somalia Logistics Cluster 31/05/2016). The withdrawal of AMISOM troops in late November 2016 in Bakool further disrupted humanitarian activities due to less security (FSNAU 29/12/2016).

Repeated engagement and withdrawal of Al Shabaab and defence forces from towns and villages has created uncertainty for humanitarian actors and has politicised access: it is either granted or denied depending on local negotiations and the armed actors present. Al Shabaab banned humanitarian agencies in El Wak in west Gedo, when they took over in October 2015 (UNSC 31/10/2016).

There are unexploded bombs in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo; a result of continuing bombing against Al Shabaab in the region (UNSC 31/10/2016).

## Aggravating factors

### Scale of drought

Drought, which started in 2015, is widespread across Somalia, with approximately 5 million people in need. Worst-hit areas are Puntland and Somaliland, where drought conditions are extreme. However, deterioration of conditions is most rapid in south central Somalia, including Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions (FAO 25/01/2017). The scale of the drought means that response in some regions could be overlooked (UNICEF 31/10/2016).

Somalia has also been affected by consecutive droughts, including the 2011-2012 famine, and the 2014 drought which affected 70% of the population (Raxenreeb 21/10/2016). Consecutive years of poor *deyr* rainfall has diminished emergency supplies and vegetation (ActionAid 15/03/2016).

### Lack of health and WASH infrastructure

In Somalia, 1.8 million people do not have access to health facilities (OCHA 04/11/2016).

The public health system is ineffective in Gedo region, and there is a strong reliance on international aid, which is inadequate (WHO 04/11/2016).

In Gedo, there is high to very high WASH vulnerability levels. In Bakool and Bay vulnerability levels are medium to high (OCHA 28/11/2016). A lack of water, combined with

high water prices, increase the risk of consuming unsafe water, potentially triggering water-borne diseases (SWALIM/FSNAU 15/11/2016).

Baidoa hospital lacks capacity to deal with large scale outbreaks, such as the current cholera outbreak in the area (AMISOM 04/01/2017). In Bay, two cholera treatment centres have reported a severe shortage of essential drugs to treat patients (Somali Health Cluster 15/01/2017).

### Presidential elections

Presidential elections are scheduled for 8 February. While these are not expected to lead to insecurity in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions, the focus on the electoral process that has seen repeated delays has taken national and local focus away from the effects of the drought.

### Political stability and security

Al Shabaab controls most of Bay, Bakool, and Gedo regions, and violent incidents are frequent (Shabelle News 30/01/2017). In Bakool two civilians were killed by violent incident involving Al Shabaab on 24 January (Somali National News Agency 24/01/2017). Two soldiers were killed by a landmine in Burhakabo, Bay region on 23 January (Somali Live Update 23/01/2017). Clashes were recorded between Al Shabaab and Kenyan Forces near El Wak, Gedo on 20 January (Live from Mogadishu 20/01/2017). Several soldiers were killed in an ambush attack in Bakool on 19 January (Shabelle News 19/01/2017). 3 Kenya Defence Forces were killed and 11 were wounded in fighting in Gedo on 15 January (Somalia Live Update 15/01/2017).

These incidents have caused trade disruptions, such as in the Huddur and Wajid districts of Bakool, leading to price increases (FSNAU 29/12/2016).

## Response capacity

### Local and national response capacity

The government of Somalia, along with other partners, developed an El Niño contingency plan for preparedness and immediate response in March (FAO 15/03/2016). However, to date it is not clear whether the committee and response mechanisms agreed have led to any action. The President of Somalia appealed on 13 November and 19 January for international assistance as well as further remittances from the Somali diaspora community to assist in this current drought emergency (Africa Times 14/11/2016; VOA 19/01/2017).

### International response capacity

The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan amounts to USD 864 million to provide assistance to 3.9 million people. In late 2016, the European Commission provided an additional EUR 10 million to cover drought-related needs. (ECHO 16/01/2017). In late January, the UK planned to allocate USD 12 million to help victims of drought. (Radio Alsan 28/01/2017). FAO has launched a USD 26 million plan to respond to the drought (01/2017). A conference might be held in June in the UK to offer support to Somalia (VOA 29/01/2017).

In Somalia, in November, the food security cluster reached an average of 45% of targeted beneficiaries. (Food security cluster 05/01/2017; Food Security Cluster 10/2016)

In Bay region, food assistance is provided by 19 agencies, nutrition by nine, WASH by 25, and health by 15. In Bakool, food assistance is provided by 15 agencies, nutrition by nine, WASH by 16, and health by 13. In Gedo, food assistance is provided by 19 agencies, nutrition by 12, WASH by 21, and health by 15. North Gedo and Baidoa in Bay have on average more than 25 partners, whereas south Gedo, south Bay and Bakool have less coverage. (OCHA 16/11/2016).

### Population coping mechanisms

There are reports of a reduction of meals consumed per day, increases in remittances from diaspora and urban areas, and migration by heads of households to look for work in towns (IFRC 30/12/2016). Coping mechanisms are becoming exhausted due to weakness of service assistance over the last months (OCHA 28/11/2016). In Gedo region, people are reported begging on the side of the road for water. (Radio Ergo 25/11/2016).

## Information gaps and needs

Up to date nutrition and food security numbers for concerned regions are missing. This gap is especially pertinent as the situation has deteriorated in recent months.

Specific needs of people in these regions are unclear.

## Lessons learned

During the drought in 2011, aid deliveries from the Middle East, Turkey, and Islamic Relief Agencies were permitted due to their religious links (Rift Valley Institute 19/10/2016). Flexibility in delivery of aid is necessary in areas of Al Shabaab influence to ensure it is delivered to areas largely considered inaccessible.

Cash transfers were an effective response during the 2011 drought. This allowed people to support kin and wider community and distribute aid among themselves where access was limited (Rift Valley Institute 19/10/2016).

Awareness of quality and safety of water is limited (ActionAid 15/03/2016).

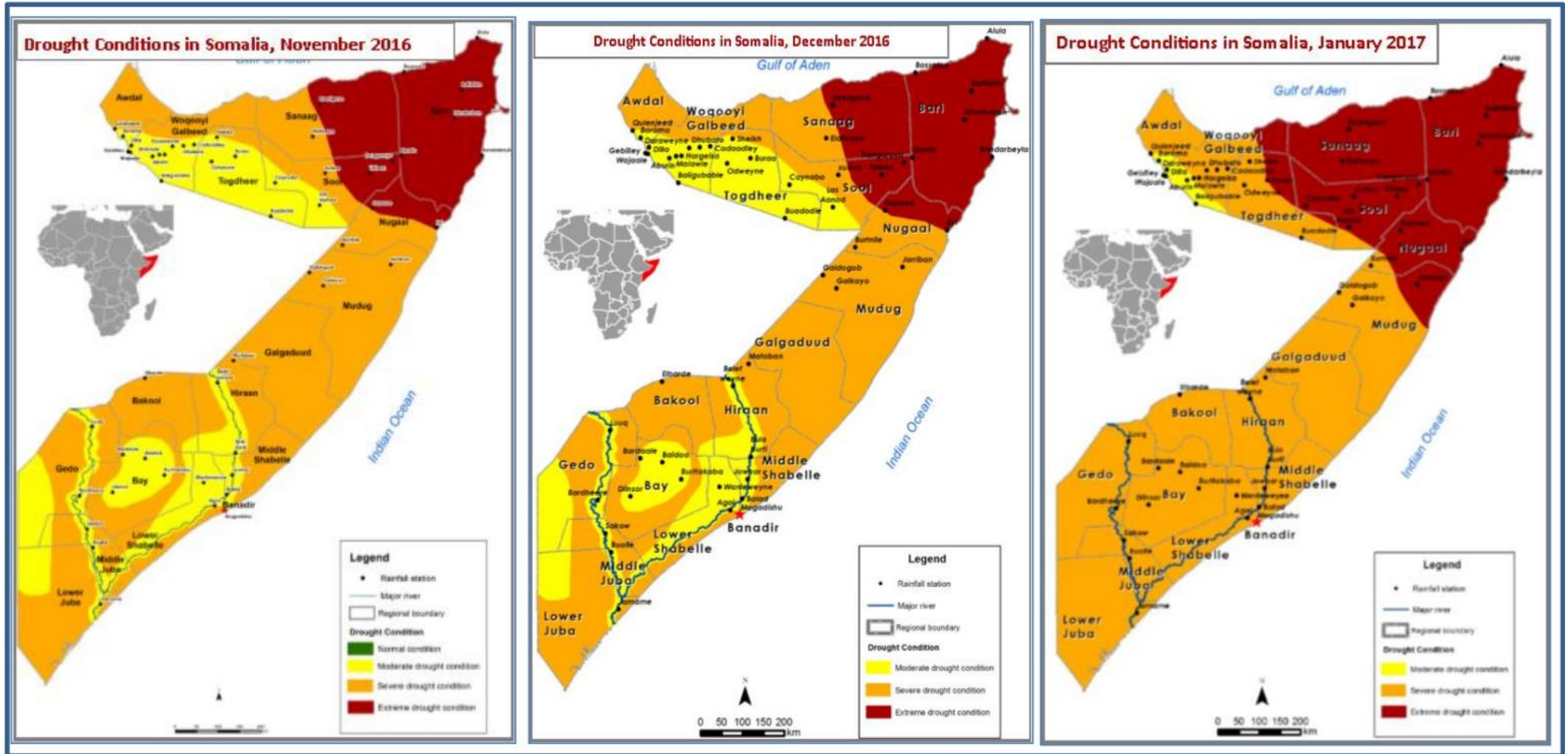
During the 2011 Famine, excess mortality increased sharply between April and May, when a late start to the *Gu* followed a failed *Deyr* season. (FEWSNET 17/01/2017).

## Key characteristics

Key indicators	Somalia	Bay region	Bakool region	Gedo region
Total population	12,316,895 (2014)	792,182 (2014)	367,226 (2014)	508,405 (2014)
% population in rural areas	<b>60%</b>	58.5% (2013)	36.5% (2013)	35% (2013)
Gender and age distribution of population	<b>50.7% male, 49.3% female (2013)</b>	50.6% male, 49.4% female (2013)	53.3% male, 46.7% female (2013)	47.7% male, 52.3% female (2013)
State capital	<b>Mogadishu</b>	Baidoa	Xuddur	Garbahaarreey
WASH figures	<b>Sanitation facility access (2011)</b> Improved: - urban: 52% of population - rural: 6.3% of population - total: 23.6% of population Unimproved - urban: 48% of population - rural: 93.7% of population - total: 76.4% of population		<b>Drinking water source (2011)</b> Improved - urban: 69.6% of population - rural: 8.8% of population - total: 31.7% of population Unimproved - urban: 30.4% of population - rural: 91.2% of population - total: 68.3% of population	
Health figures		Under five mortality rate: 137 per 1,000 live births (2015) Maternal mortality rate: 732 deaths for 100,000 live births (2015) Infant mortality rate: 85 deaths per 1,000 live births (2015)		
Food security	1,096,000 in IPC 3, 43,000 in IPC 4 (Aug-Dec 2016)	60,000 people in IPC 3, 1,000 in IPC 4 (Aug-Dec 2016)	51,000 people in IPC 3 (Aug-Dec 2016)	9000 people in IPC 3, 2000 in IPC 4 (Aug-Dec 2016)
Nutrition levels	307,750 children under 5 acutely malnourished, amongst which 55,780 severely malnourished (December 2015)**	Baidoa IDPs: 18% GAM 4.3% SAM Bay Agropastoral population: 18.1% GAM 4.1% SAM	Bakool pastoral population 19.1% GAM 5% SAM	North Gedo pastoral population 17.2% GAM, 3.2% SAM
Literacy rates	Total population: 37.8%, Male: 49.7%, Female: 25.8% (2011)			

Sources: Geohive, UNFPA 2013, FSNAU 19/10/2016, UNICEF 2015, World Bank data 2015, Index Mundi Somalia

Map



Source: (FAO 25/01/2017).