



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – Somalia

Situation Report # 40 – 10 October, 2008

Key Overall Developments

Humanitarian space in South/Central Somalia shrunk even further during the week: two UN personnel were injured in a roadside explosion in Marka which killed the driver of the vehicle, a prominent elder who also worked for an NGO in Belet Weyne was assassinated and the operations of two aid organizations were suspended.

On 6 October, two UN Office for Project Services personnel were injured in an explosion 4km outside Marka town, Lower Shabelle region. The driver of the rented vehicle they were traveling died on the way to hospital. Pending a full and thorough investigation of the incident, the UN temporarily relocated some of its staff from Marka. On 7 October, an elder who worked for the International Medical Corps (IMC), was shot by unknown assailants in Belet Weyne, Hiraan region a day after he publicly defended the work of international NGOs in the area. During the week, CARE and IMC suspended activities in South/Central regions following a statement issued on 3 October by Al Shabaab calling for the two organizations to cease operations in areas under its control. At a time when around 3.2 million Somalis are in need of urgent assistance, crucial nutrition and health activities in four districts of Bakool and Bay regions, including health facilities (treating around 23,000 patients monthly), supplementary feeding centers (benefiting 650 children) and several outpatient therapeutic programmes (benefiting 3,600 children) have ground to a halt. The suspension of CARE's activities including food delivery, water and sanitation projects, will affect at least one million people.

Fifty-two NGOs working in Somalia issued a statement on 6 October, on the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the country amidst 'severely limited access' and stating that currently, "South and Central Somalia is almost entirely off limits to international staff of aid agencies." The NGOs called upon all parties to the conflict to allow aid agencies unhindered access to Somalis who are in desperate need of emergency assistance. In a statement released on 7 October, on the Marka incident, the acting UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia Graham Farmer said, "The primary concern of the United Nations right now is the safety and security of the staff on the ground. Once we have a clear understanding of exactly what happened and why, we can focus on preventing any interruption of life-saving assistance."

The Transitional Federal Government issued a statement on 6 October calling for the unconditional release of two medical workers abducted in Ethiopia's Somali region on 22 September who were then brought to Somalia's central region. The kidnapping of the two staff members of Doctors of the World brings to 23 the total number of aid workers abducted since January, with 12 still in captivity.

The UN Security Council on 7 October unanimously adopted a resolution urging States to deploy naval vessels and military aircraft to actively join the fight against rampant piracy off the coast of Somalia. Resolution 1838 urges States with naval vessels and military aircraft operating on the high seas and airspace off the Somali coast "to use the necessary means, in conformity with international law ... for the repression of acts of piracy". More than 60 ships have been captured since January.

The number of Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) cases in Bossaso, Puntland, rose to 188 during the week with two related deaths reported. AWD is rampant in Somalia at the onset of the rain seasons (*Deyr* from September to December and *Gu* from mid-April to mid-June) due to contamination of water reservoirs.

Response and gaps

On 8 October, Save the Children-UK donated 250 bottles of Dextrose (50ml) and 80 bottles of saline (500ml) for the management of AWD patients at the Cholera Treatment Centre at the Bossaso hospital.

Due to a shortfall of around 2,000 metric tons of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) out of the planned 4,000 metric tons for October distributions, WFP has prioritized full rations for a group of 213,560 beneficiaries under the supplementary feeding and Mother and Child Health programmes. Another 90,000 beneficiaries under the School Feeding Programme will receive half ration of the commodity. Some 1.6 million beneficiaries in general food distribution will not receive CSB in October due to the shortage caused by pipeline break of non-cereals.

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