



KENYA Situation Report #4 – MANDERA CRISIS – November 24th, 2008

This situation report is based on information received from the Government, UN Agencies and other humanitarian partners in the field.

Highlights

- *The Government intensifies its security operation along the Somalia border in an effort to rescue the 2 Italian catholic nuns abducted in Elwak last week*
- *Thousands flee Elwak town fearing battles between Kenyan army and Somali militias*
- *Twelve die of diarrhoeal disease*

SITUATION OVERVIEW

1. On 16th October 2008 violence re-started between the Murule and Garre in Mandera town triggered by need for space for 920 families displaced by flash floods. A security operation was then set up to intervene following a request by the area members of parliament when the conflict took a cross-border dimension with one clan getting support from Al-Shabaab militants from Somalia.
2. The situation has slightly improved especially around Mandera town. Religious and Clan elders continue with efforts to engage civil societies and the District Peace Committee to support traditional peace initiatives in the region, including cross-border efforts to build trust and facilitate reconciliation of affected communities. A government budget has been established to support these efforts, but there is a current shortfall of Ksh.1.2 million.
3. However, some elders from the Mandera Peace Committee have advised that for durable peace to be achieved, initiatives should begin in Nairobi as most of the clan leaders suspected to fuel the conflict are based in Nairobi's Eastleigh estate. This effort should supplement the district level interventions.
4. The Kenyan Government has warned Al-Shabaab insurgents to return the two Italian nuns abducted in Mandera last week or face military action. Speaking at a press conference on November 18th, the Internal Security Minister George Saitoti issued the stern warning, saying that should they fail to release the nuns, Kenya would strike their bases. He further stated that Kenya as a sovereign nation would not sit back and watch as foreigners violate the laws of its land.
5. Al-Shabaab, a militia group with reported base in Somalia's Gedo region, recently threatened to wage war against Kenya for training Somalia's police. It has also been alleged that the militia has sworn to hijack at least 50 vehicles from the Kenya side. As a result, several international aid agencies have restricted staff movements placing strain on programme implementation and the delivery of relief.
6. The Kenyan Military has scaled up its patrol activities along the Kenya-Somalia border following the official closure of the border to cross-border aid deliveries last weekend. This is impacting on the humanitarian situation in Somalia where there are more than 1.3 million IDPs and where recent flooding has also been reported.
7. Kenya Red Cross reports that the majority of local residents have fled Elwak town to other centers within greater Mandera or across into neighbouring Wajir district in fear of the military

operation. Currently, at least 244 households displaced are camping in Fincharo, 660 in Shimbir Fatuma and 350 in Takaba. In addition, 75 households have crossed into Wajir while 236 are in Kotulo (on the border of Wajir and Mandera districts). According to PACT Kenya, some of the displaced families have settled on Ethiopian side of Suftu and on the outskirts of Wajir. Needs assessments are yet to be done.

8. Access to health care in Elwak has declined since many health workers have also fled the area. Reports by KRC indicate that out of the usual number of 18 health workers present at Elwak District Hospital, only 5 are remaining; other assessments report a complete lack of health workers. KRC has thus scaled up its health activities to assist with the treatment of emergency cases by conducting mobile clinics.
9. On November 17th, the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation issued a situation update on the suspected diarrhea outbreak in the Mandera districts. In Mandera East, 645 cases have been reported with 10 deaths. In Mandera Central, 30 cases have been attended to while in Mandera West, 371 cases have been treated with 2 deaths. Meanwhile existing health facilities are being requested to enhance surveillance since there is also an outbreak of Acute Watery Diarrhoea in Ethiopia that could impact on communities in Kenyan.
10. The total area affected by flooding along the Daua River now stands at 120 square kilometres supporting approximately 1,200 families whose livelihood and food security is at risk. There are fears of possible flooding in Mandera town if heavy rains continue in the Ethiopian highlands.
11. As people continue to grapple with the consequences of the inter-klan conflict and exactions by the Al Shabaab militia, a corresponding decline in cross border trade is forcing food and commodity prices much higher.. The people of Mandera and Elwak mainly rely on goods from the Somali side of the border; trade activities have now been limited due to displacement and closure of the border.

12. The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation at the national level has dispatched additional drugs and rehydration fluids to be used in case management. Health education information on water treatment, sanitation and good hygiene practices is being passed on through various partners. Furthermore, a national disease surveillance team consisting of 5 people has travelled to the district to support in investigation and response efforts.
13. Reports by WFP indicate that through their implementing lead agency COCOOP distribution of food assistance through their regular program of EMOP is still ongoing. Other reports point to food distribution delays due to flooded roads and continued insecurity.
14. KRC is establishing mobile clinic services to supplement areas lacking medical personnel. In addition, they have scaled up their activities on health education, water purification and construction of communal pit latrines.

OUTSTANDING NEEDS

15. No proper humanitarian assessment has been undertaken since October 14th. Nevertheless, the following gaps were identified in Mandera:
 - a). Humanitarian needs
 - Food delivery to households affected by both floods and conflict i.e. for a period of 1 month (100% ration sizes= 15kg/person)
 - Assistance with reconstruction of destroyed houses and toilets
 - NFIs – shelter, blankets, mosquito nets, kitchen sets etc for affected households.
 - Training of volunteers on public health, management of HIV/Aids cases, disease surveillance etc
 - Post-rape and post HIV exposure prophylaxis (PEP) kits.
 - b). Security needs
 - Increased community collaboration in all disarmament and security efforts.
 - Security briefings and bulletins for aid agencies working in the region

RESPONSE

Contact details		
In case of emergency only: Desk officer (New York): Press contact (Geneva): Press contact (New York):	Tel. +41 22 917 20 10 Mr. Alfred Nabeta Ms. Elisabeth Byrs Ms. Stephanie Bunker	Tel. +1 917 367 2649 Tel. +41 22 917 2653 Tel. +1 917 367 5126

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- Trauma counselling
- Dissemination of information on protection of civilian.
- Support to local peace building initiatives (financial, training on capacity and logistic)

COORDINATION

16.Coordination in Mandera District is spearheaded by the District Steering Group (DSG) with the KRCS as the lead agency for response and rescue efforts for populations affected by floods.

17.At national level OCHA is communicating with humanitarian agencies and partners and will continue to monitor and update on the situation. OCHA has assigned an officer to be based in Mandera, who will support inter-agency coordination.

CONTACT

For more details and updates, please contact:

Jeanine Cooper, Head of Office OCHA Kenya,
 Telephone: +254207625155. Email:
jeanine.cooper@undp.org, cooper1@un.org

Contact details		
In case of emergency only:	Tel. +41 22 917 20 10	
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