

MAIN ISSUES DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

The security situation throughout South/Central Somalia remains unchanged with heavy fighting during the reporting period particularly in Mogadishu, resulting in significant displacement and civilian deaths.

- Approximately 26,000 people were displaced in August 2009 throughout Somalia, out of which roughly 19,000 people were displaced due to insecurity in Mogadishu¹.
- The number of war-wounded was high with 392 admitted to the main surgical hospitals in Mogadishu in August 2009², bringing the total number of war wounded admitted to these two facilities this year to 3,258. The true scale of civilian loss is not known due to the lack of official records and the lack of access to key areas of conflict.

KEY CONSTRAINTS ON ACCESS

OCHA - Somalia and its partners monitor the following categories of access issues³:

1. Military operations and ongoing activities impeding humanitarian interventions

The security situation in and around Mogadishu deteriorated significantly since May 2009. During Ramadan, clashes between TFG/AMISOM forces and insurgents intensified. For example:

- 08 August, fighting between TFG/AMISOM forces and insurgents, occurred at Villa Somalia, Bakara market, Wardhiigleey, Howl-Wadaag district, Mogadishu, with seven mortar rounds fired at Bakara market resulting in the death of nine people and more than 15 others wounded.
- 20 August, fighting between TFG/AMISOM forces and insurgents took place in Debda and Trebunka, Hodan district, Mogadishu, and resulted in the death of nine people and 20 others wounded.
- 21 August, fighting between TFG/AMISOM forces and insurgents occurred in Trebunka, Km4, Taleh, Hodan district, Mogadishu. As a result, more than 11 people were killed and 25 injured.

It is difficult to provide a comprehensive picture on the impact of the ongoing hostilities on humanitarian response, although the continued violence in Mogadishu hinders the implementation of projects. However, on a positive note during the month:

- 08 August, five additional sites where wet feeding is provided were re-opened following their closure on 29 July. This brings the total number of operational sites to 15 out of the total 16. Only one site in Abdul-Aziz district remains closed, resulting roughly in 5,000 beneficiaries not having access to a daily meal.

2. Impediments and restrictions to agencies

- Early August, a NFI kits distribution scheduled by an INGO to benefit 5,000 beneficiaries in Balad corridor, Middle Shebelle region was cancelled due to a taxation request by the local administration. The INGO then distributed those NFI kits at a different location.

¹ UNHCR sources.

² Medina and Keysane Hospitals in Mogadishu, 01 August – 04 September 2009.

³ The figures quoted are collected from various sources and represent OCHA's most reliable estimates. However, under-reporting and validation of events are chronic challenges; therefore, these figures should be considered indicative.

- 28 August, the Hisbul Islam administration in Afmadow town, Lower Juba region ordered an INGO to cancel contracts for hired vehicles and replace them with new ones. Following discussions with the administration, it was agreed that the instruction would apply to future contracts rather than current contracts. The INGO was able to continue to operate.

3. Restrictions or delays in movement of goods

Limited restrictions on the transport of humanitarian goods occurred in August, as most check points are limited to the entrance/exit of main towns, with the exception of Mogadishu where there are check points within the city.

4. Incidents involving humanitarian workers and assets

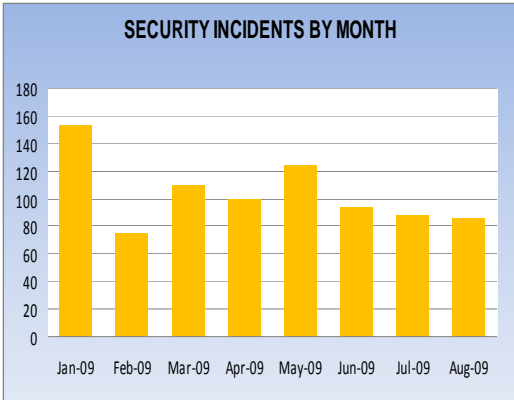
No aid worker was killed during the reporting period. Eight aid workers have been killed since the beginning of the year.

No abductions of humanitarian staff occurred during the reporting period. Four INGO international staff, and two pilots abducted in November 2008, were released on 11 August. However, 13 aid workers are still being held in Somalia. Most of these aid workers have been in captivity since 2008.

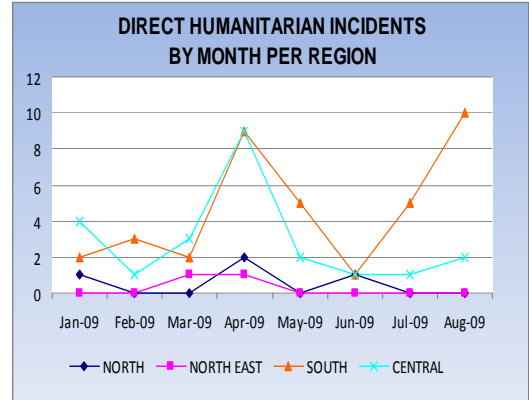
Approximately 86 security incidents occurred in August. Out of these, 12 incidents directly targeting humanitarian workers and assets were reported. For example:

- 03 August, the compounds of several NGOs in Jamaame town, Lower Juba region, were entered by Al Shabaab forces, and office equipment and emergency supplies were taken. Five INGOs closed and suspended their activities in Jamaame district. The suspensions affected the health, water, sanitation, education, food, livelihoods and agriculture sectors, resulting in approximately 130,000 individuals not having access to humanitarian assistance.
- 11 August, Al Shabaab forces entered NGO compounds in Jilib town, Middle Juba region, and vehicles and equipment were taken to unspecified locations. This resulted in the suspension of the NGOs' activities, mainly in the health sectors, including MCH, OPD and TB programs. Consequently, over 110,000 people do not have access to humanitarian assistance.
- 16 August, the UN compound in Waajid town, Bakool region was attacked by Al Shabaab forces. During gunfire exchange, three Al Shabaab militants were killed by the security guards. Following the incident, all international staff were relocated. The UN strongly condemned the attack.
- 19 August, equipment from the UNICEF compound in Jowhar town, Middle Shabelle region was looted by the local population with the support of Al Shabaab forces. Since 19 May the compound is occupied by Al Shabaab forces and remains inaccessible to UNICEF staff.

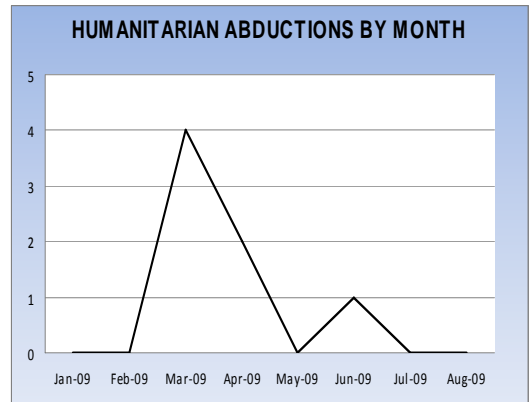
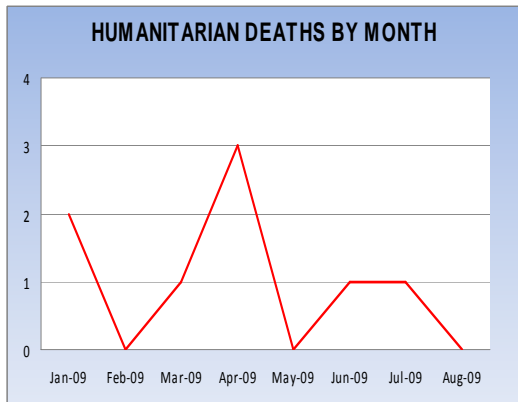
In August, UNICEF announced that it would postpone the dispatch of hundreds of tons of life-saving nutritional supplies for the prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition for over 85,000 children in South/Central due to increased hostility towards aid organizations.



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5. Attitude toward the humanitarian community

Statements towards the international community or aid workers were recorded during the reporting period.

- 10 August, the Al Shabaab authority in Bu'aale town warned Al Shabaab forces responsible for closing the NGO offices in Jamaame and Jilib towns not to raid NGO offices under their jurisdiction.
- 10 August, the Al Shabaab spokesman for the Juba regions stated that all UN agencies and humanitarian organizations should leave Somalia. This follows the recent closure of five NGO offices in Jamaame and Jilib towns by the Al Shabaab.
- 24 August, the Al Shabaab administration sent an official letter to the concerned UN agency to apologize for the attack on the UN compound that occurred on 16 August in Waajid town, Bakool region, and reassured that local authorities would prevent similar incidents from occurring in future. The letter also invited the UN agency to resume normal operations and return international staff to the compound as soon as possible.

6. Targeting civil society and media

⁴ NSP, July 2009. Examples of incidents included in the graphic are: improvised explosive device attacks, kidnapping, assassination and piracy.

⁵ NSP, July 2009. Examples of incidents included in the graphic are: robbery, intimidation, assassination and abductions.

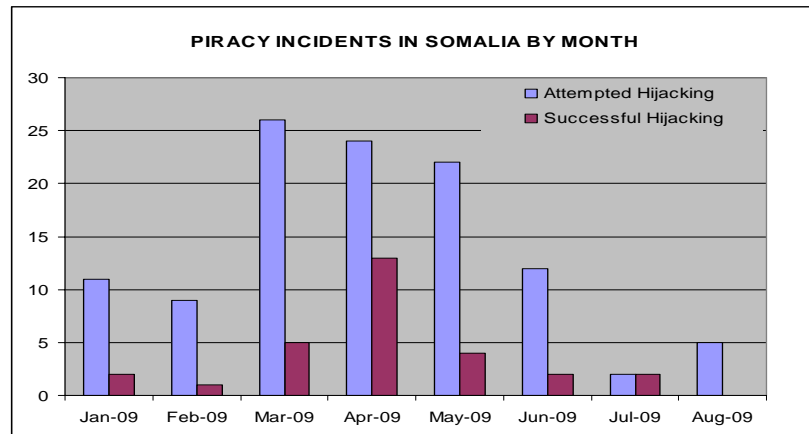
⁶ Three INGO international staff members were abducted in Mandera, Kenya in July 2009 and then taken to Somalia.

Since the beginning of the year several incidents involving civil society and the media have occurred, such as deliberate attacks, assassinations, and the arbitrary arrest of journalists.

Six Somali journalists have been killed this year alone. Two foreign journalists are still being held in Somalia since 2008⁷.

7. Piracy

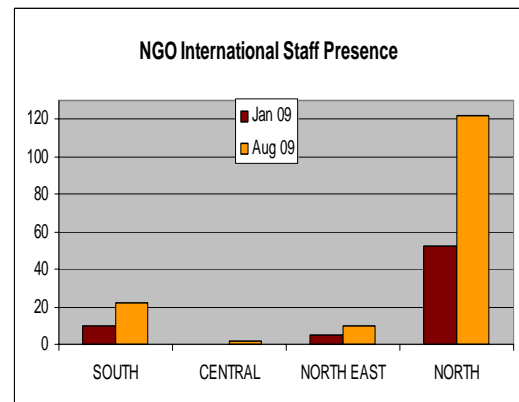
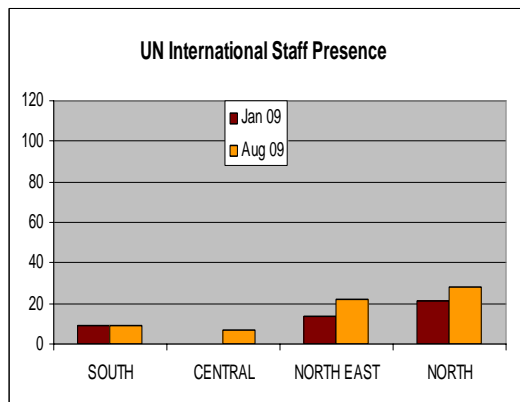
Piracy attacks continued during the reporting period. However, out of the total of five reported pirate attacks none resulted in a vessel being hijacked in August 2009⁸. This is the first month without a reported vessel hijacking since June 2008.



A primary reason for the low level of activities by pirates, or failure to capture a single vessel, are the high surface winds from the South West Monsoon currently present in the Indian Ocean and much of the Gulf of Aden. High winds have continued into the first week of September. It is anticipated, that the end of the Monsoon season could lead to a sharp rise in pirate attacks during the fourth quarter of 2009.

HUMANITARIAN STAFF PRESENCE IN SOMALIA

The following is a geographic breakdown of UN and NGO international staff presence in Somalia in August.



An increase in NGO and UN international staff presence was noted from January to August 2009,

⁷ SPAS NGO, 23 August 2008.

⁸ www.unosat.org.

increasing respectively from 67 to 156 and from 44 to 156 throughout Somalia. However, while international presence has increased, the bulk of staff are located in the North and North East.

ACCESS MAP

To generate the Access Map, eight coefficients are analyzed to determine the degree of difficulty faced by humanitarian agencies working in Somalia. The analysis provided is to the district level, and reflects the barriers, if any, imposed on humanitarian agencies. It is not a reflection of the physical presence of humanitarian partners, or the volume of humanitarian assistance provided in each district.

Mogadishu: The level of access in the capital remains at its lowest since the beginning of the armed confrontation between insurgents and TFG forces in May 2009. No significant changes were observed in August 2009 as compared to previous months.

South: The access conditions in the South drastically deteriorated in August 2009 in almost all regions. The most dramatic changes were recorded in Bakool Region due to the attack on the UN compound and subsequent evacuation of UN and INGO staff, and potential offensive from the Ethiopian border, in Gedo region due to the offensive of pro-TFG militias in Luuq and Bulo Xawa districts, and in the Juba regions due to the looting of various NGO compounds in Jamaame and Jilib towns and subsequent suspension of humanitarian operations, as well as increased tensions in and around Kismayo town.

Central: A slight deterioration in access was noted in Hiraan region due to renewed fighting between Al-Shabaab and TFG forces in and around Belet Weyne town. The situation remains relatively stable in terms of access in Galgaduud region.

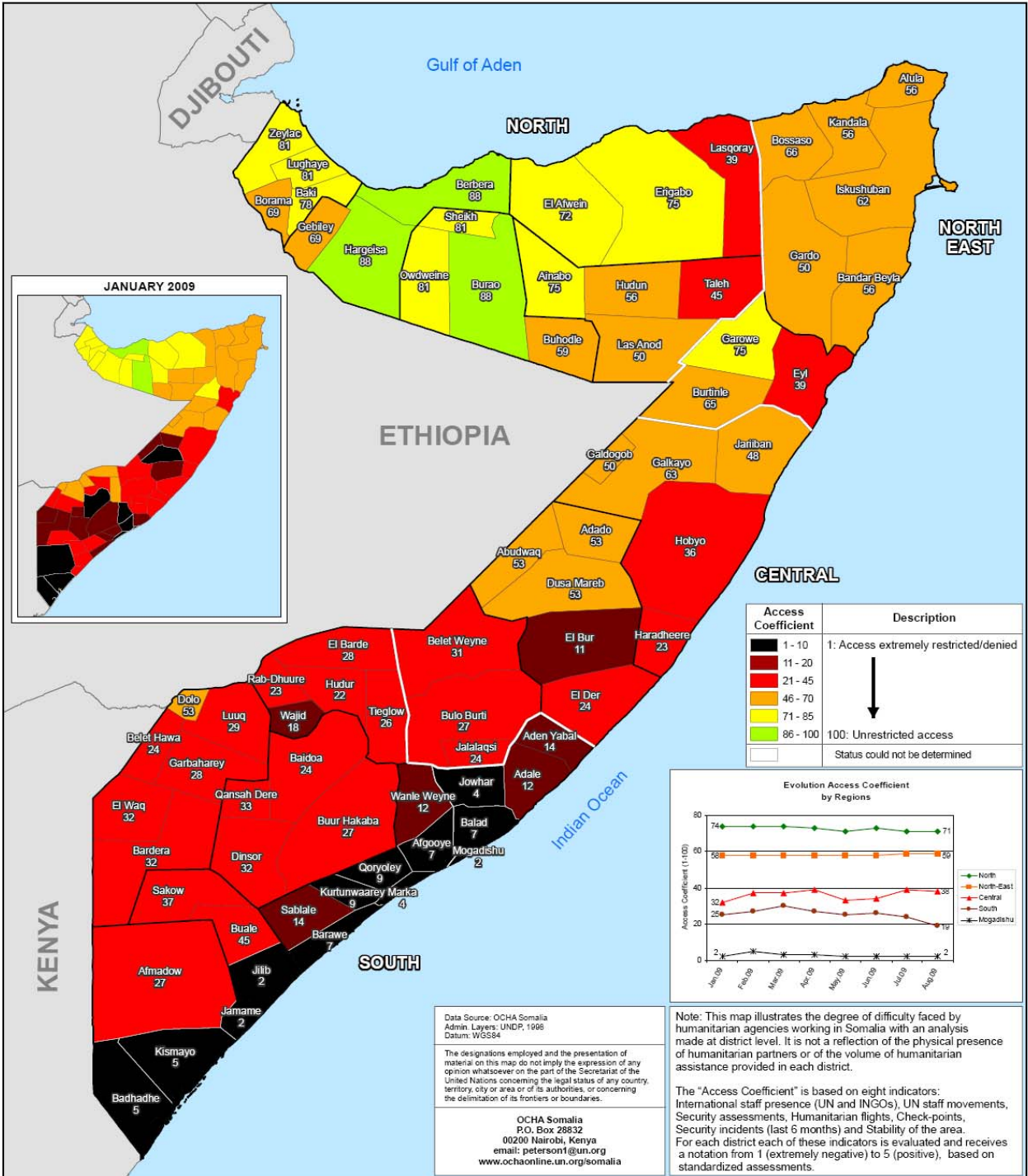
North-East: The situation continues to remain calm, although some security incidents occurred in Galkayo town, Mudug region. Overall no significant changes in terms of humanitarian access were noted.

North: The situation remains stable with the exception of Hargeysa and Erigabo towns, respectively Wogooyi Galbeed and Sanaag regions where violence took place as a result of decisions concerning the presidential election. Clan clashes also occurred in Borama and Gebiley districts, respectively Adwal and Wogooyi Galbeed regions. No major impact on humanitarian operations was noted.



United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN ACCESS MAP AUGUST 2009



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