

# PUNTLAND



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SOMALIA

## OVERVIEW OF HUMANITARIAN ENVIRONMENT IN PUNTLAND

Puntland is situated in the north east of Somalia, with the administrative capital Garowe located in the center of the region. Other major towns include Bossaso, the commercial capital and main port, Galkayo and Gardho. In 1998, political leaders declared Puntland an autonomous region which in future they hope will be part of a federal united Somalia.

While generally, humanitarian access throughout Puntland is unhindered, there still exists an unresolved boundary dispute with Somaliland over the western regions of Sool and Sanag which results in sporadic clashes; the most recent occurring in mid-April 2007. In rural areas of Puntland, inter and intra-clan clashes and banditry persist, yet the main hindrance to humanitarian access remains poor road infrastructure.

In the past, conflict, drought and migration of people paralyzed most of the region's infrastructures and economic resources. While a prevailing stability provides respite from conflict and hope for a better future, the situation in Puntland remains critical – financial resources are limited, food security remains a concern despite some livelihood recovery, and the vulnerable population is growing.

Attracted by Puntland's relative stability, in recent years the number of people spontaneously moving to the area - fleeing the south for security, drought and economic reasons – has risen. Moving to major towns of Bossaso, Galkayo, Garowe and Gardho, these IDPs and returnees have put additional strain on the area's limited resources. Economic migrants and asylum seekers from Ethiopia transiting through Puntland have also been on the increase. These new arrivals negatively impact on the standard of living of the host communities, who are obliged to assist (with whatever support they can provide) through the extensive Somali family network.

In response to the increase in illegal migration from Puntland to Yemen, the Puntland authorities issued a Presidential Decree in September 2006 prohibiting human smuggling. Within days of the issuance of the Decree, 1,370 Ethiopians were rounded up in Bossaso and handed over to Ethiopian authorities in Galaadi. Reportedly, several of the Ethiopians died or committed suicide while being driven in open trucks to the border. Despite the Decree, smuggling persists.

To strengthen rule of law, in December 2005, the Armo Police Training Academy was opened in Puntland, not far from Bossaso. In April 2006, the first cadre of police cadets (some of whom also from South/Central) graduated from the Academy. In April 2007, a Training of Trainers was completed to ensure high quality trainers for police cadets. Training emphasized community policing, international human rights, HIV and AIDS awareness and non-violent disarmament. The Legal Aid Centre established in Garowe is now operating in Galkayo and Bossaso to provide access to justice for disadvantaged groups, while almost all active judiciary personnel have now been trained in legal analysis and international human rights. The first group of 272 former security forces were selected and demobilized in 2006 with reintegration commencing in April 2007.

## KEY HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

The most pressing humanitarian issues in Puntland include lack of basic services (education, health, water and sanitation), poor road infrastructure, improving food security and livelihoods (with more support to fisheries), protection and IDP issues, shelter and HIV/AIDS.

**Livelihoods:** According to the FAO Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) post-Deyr (2006/2007) Survey, drought affected areas of Puntland have experienced gradual, but significant recovery over the last four seasons. Pastoral areas previously in Humanitarian Emergency (*Gu '03 to Gu '4*) and then downgraded to Acute Food and Livelihood Crisis (*Deyr 04/05 to Gu '06*) are now identified as recovered, albeit still Chronically Food Insecure. Mechanisms need to be developed to deal with the humanitarian implications surrounding the frequent droughts, and response planning extended into all areas of Puntland. To encourage economic diversification and to allow Somalis to benefit from their coastal waters, fishing sector assessments are now complete for Puntland. The Somali coastline - the longest in Africa - has so far been exploited by artisan fishermen with little large-scale commercial activity taking place to benefit local communities. In fact, it is largely foreigner companies that profit from the Somali coastline. It is estimated that approximately US\$100 million is lost to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities, resources that could go a long way towards improving the livelihoods of Somalis. There is increasing need for the humanitarian community to continue to support the recovery of pastoral livelihoods in the region in the form of debt relief, restocking and the creation of alternative livelihoods for people that burn wood to make charcoal. This industry has a detrimental impact on the environment, involving the cutting down of trees - and further degradation will impact the sustainability of the pastoralist livelihood in future.

**IDPs:** As of 2006, it was estimated that Puntland hosted up to 70,000 IDPs, with Bossaso alone hosting about 28,140 people. IDPs live in congested settlements often with returnees and other urban poor. Conditions in the settlements are varied including contaminated water and no sanitation facilities, lack of access to basic social services, rampant disease, and regular outbreaks of fire/arson. An active inter-agency IDP working group - consisting of UN agencies, international NGOs and local partners - is working with the Puntland authorities for the provision of humanitarian assistance to IDPs, while also looking at the implementation of longer term responses which focus on IDP reintegration. Humanitarian partners are taking all actions possible toward the attainment of durable solutions for IDPs. The

implementation of a Joint UN IDP Strategy for Somalia ensures a linkage between the overall improvements of the IDP situation with durable solutions. The strategy seeks to enhance protection of IDPs, returnees and other vulnerable groups; improve their current living conditions and to promote and foster durable solutions in the settlements. Meanwhile, since mid-2006 when fighting started in Mogadishu (initially between forces of the Islamic Courts Union and the TFG, and in early 2007, between TFG/Ethiopian and anti-TFG factions), more Somalis from South Central have been arriving in Puntland. Some settle in with relatives, but most move into existing IDP sites relying on either relief assistance or support from the IDP communities.

**Human Smuggling:** In an effort to curb human smuggling, in mid-2006, with UNHCR support, Puntland's Ministry of Interior instated its Refugee Affairs Committee (RAC) and together with UNHCR arrived at joint procedures to ensure that the latter's Refugee Status Determination (RSD) services could be initiated. Following the issuance of the Presidential Decree in September 2006 and the arrests of both Ethiopians and Somalis from South/Central, a decision was made to open a temporary 'transit and processing center' in October for Ethiopian migrants in Bossaso. In the center, humanitarian assistance was provided as well as counselling to identify potential asylum seekers, individuals who wished to return home, or anyone with special needs (unaccompanied minors, trafficked individuals). In November 2006, over 200 Ethiopians were returned to Ethiopia with assistance from IOM and DRC, while Puntland's RAC began registering and referring asylum seekers to UNHCR for RSD services. The temporary centre was officially closed with the RAC continuing to register asylum seekers for ongoing referral to UNHCR.

While efforts continue to curb smuggling, challenges persist. As mentioned above, Somalis from southern regions continue to arrive in Puntland; some in the hope of crossing to Yemen. On 23 March, some 300 people from South/Central were taken in for questioning by the local authorities on account of 'security concerns'. Shortly thereafter, 169 were released but on 28 March the remaining 131 – all men between the age of 18 and 35 - were transferred to Galkayo where they are being detained. UNHCR is following up with the Puntland authorities to gain access to the group to ensure their legal rights and protection.

**Gender:** The voices of women are frequently not heard as they are not usually in decision-making positions within society. On the coast and following the tsunami in December 2004, women specifically requested the humanitarian community to provide them with fishing boats as they wanted to set up fishing businesses. Women are not always allowed to do what might benefit the immediate community.

**Education:** Access to education is limited. According to UNICEF an estimated 200,000 children (6 -14 years) in Puntland are out of school. A UNICEF back to school campaign initiative has so far registered 57,000 out-of-school children (53.5% boys, and 43.5% girls). Mass illiteracy and lack of access to schools means children are more likely to end up in militias or working as child laborers. Provision of education for youth, IDPs and ex-militia is an urgent undertaking. UNESCO/PEER is implementing an enterprise/institution-based training (EBT/IBT) aimed at providing labour and life skills to demobilized militia, youth, vulnerable groups and IDPs. UNESCO/PEER is now exploring ways and means to expand this activity to cater for other vulnerable groups such as women. Puntland suffers from a paucity of teachers. Since January 2007, UNESCO/PEER has been piloting a project in Garowe and Bossaso which seeks to increase the number (and quality) of teachers through the innovative use of Information and Communication Technologies for teacher training. This intervention targets teachers in urban as well as rural areas.

**HIV/AIDS:** The prevalence rate in Puntland is estimated 1.0%. The Puntland AIDS Commission established in September 2005 has been playing a key role in the review and selection of proposals for the Global Fund for AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). The first phase of a GFATM programme that started in May 2006 is expected to end in May 2007 with 44% of funding channeled through Somali organizations. The second phase will last three years (June 2007-June 2009). The open call for proposals started in April through to May 2007.

**Access and Poor Infrastructure:** Lack of access as a result of poor infrastructure, particularly roads, is inhibiting social/economic/political development in Puntland. There is an urgent need to construct roads and communication facilities so rural areas do not remain cut off from the rest of Somalia and the outside world. The remote north eastern coastal areas of the region had never received any form of humanitarian assistance before the tsunami struck in late 2004.

**Urbanization and the Urban Poor:** Puntland is facing rapid urbanization, which is creating another vulnerable group – the urban poor. This group includes destitute pastoralists, economic migrants and people who are unable to make ends meet due lack of livelihood opportunities. Private sector business remains relatively limited so there are few employment opportunities.

## HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS WORKING IN PUNTLAND and COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The Puntland authorities established HADMA (Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management Agency) in 2005 to lead the coordination of humanitarian interventions in Puntland on a monthly basis. HADMA currently coordinates sectoral meetings on: Health, Education, Water and Sanitation, Environment, Infrastructure and Shelter, Food Security, Livelihood and Fisheries.

UN agencies operating in Puntland include UNICEF (Health, Education, Water and Sanitation, Environment), WFP (Food Distributions), ILO (Road Infrastructure Interventions), UN-Habitat (Shelter and Infrastructure), UNHCR (Refugees, Returnees and Repatriation resettlement), WHO (Health), UNDP (IDPs), FAO (Agriculture and Livelihoods), UNESCO (Education), UNDSS, OCHA (Coordination, Protection and Advocacy), UNFPA (Reproductive Health), UNIFEM (Gender). Some of the INGOs working in Puntland include SC-UK, CARE, Diakonia, VSF, UNA, AFRICA-70, ADRA, NCA, NRC, DRC, Horn Relief, MSF and CEFA. There are a number of local NGOs that serve as implementing partners for international NGOs and UN agencies.

Throughout 2006/2007, OCHA Somalia has received funding from:  
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