



UNITED NATIONS

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**AID REACHES 365,000 DISPLACED WHILE UN AND PARTNERS FACE
CONTINUED DIFFICULTY IN SOMALIA**

(New York: 31 May 2007): The United Nations agencies and humanitarian partners working in the country have provided aid to more than 365,000 of 390,000 Somalis displaced by fighting in the capital, Mogadishu, from 1 February to 10 May 2007.

Since the lull in fighting, all reported movements of internally displaced persons in Somalia have concerned returns to Mogadishu, with between 100,000 and 200,000 people likely to have returned. The majority of those coming back to the capital are had sought shelter in areas around the city in Lower and Middle Shabelle regions. Those who sought refuge in Galgaduud, Hiran, Bay and Bakool regions largely remain there at present.

To date, 366,000 of those displaced by the fighting have been provided with food and non-food assistance such as shelter, household items and/or health services. The United Nations agencies and their partners have been working to provide clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to the displaced, as well as health services and education, but stress that considerable needs remain in these areas.

Of particular concern has been the prevalence of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD); between 1 January and 18 May, 32,000 cases of AWD were reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), of which 970 were fatal. The outbreak has largely been contained in areas to which humanitarian agencies have access, but some areas remain inaccessible.

Even as they deliver this urgently needed assistance, however, the United Nations agencies and their partners continue to face difficult operating conditions in Somalia, particularly in the capital of Mogadishu, due to insecurity. Roads between Mogadishu and Merka, Baidoa and Beletweyne remain generally insecure and are sporadically closed. Landmines have been reported along the main routes out of Mogadishu, and unexploded ordnance (UXO) within the city.

Agencies attempting to bring assistance across the frontier with Kenya are facing possible delays amidst continued negotiations with the Government of Kenya and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia on a framework to facilitate the delivery of assistance. Meanwhile, following the 19 May attack against a World Food Programme (WFP)-chartered ship off the port of Merka, other ships are now refusing to sail to Somalia – with a resulting potential negative impact on the food pipeline.

Additionally, the next season of rains has started and, while not as heavy as anticipated, is affecting main roads. In early May, WFP food distributions were delayed due to impassable roads in middle Juba, while the airstrip at Jowhar has periodically been closed due to the rains.

In follow-up to the 12 May visit of United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator's, an inter-agency mission travelled to Mogadishu from 29 to 30 May to discuss with all stakeholders -- including members of the National Refugee Commission, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other members of civil society including women's groups and elders, and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) -- how to increase humanitarian assistance. As a result, an agreement has been reached for the United Nations humanitarian actors to lead a dialogue on developing a collaborative framework for aid provision. The mission also emphasized that the focus of the current response is now on providing basic services to the displaced, while resettlement plans should be linked to the national reconciliation process.

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