Facts & Figures

- 6.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance
- 3.2 million people going hungry, experiencing acute food insecurity at crisis and/or emergency level
- Over 760,000 internally displaced due to drought, plus 1.1 M protracted IDPs
- More than 53,000 cholera cases and 12,000 cases of measles in 2017
- Nearly 900,000 Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa region and Yemen
- 1.4 million children acutely malnourished

Sources: UNHCR, the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), UNOCHA

European Commission humanitarian funding:
- in 2016: €48 Mio
- in 2017: nearly €120 Mio

Introduction

The failure of successive rainy seasons across the Horn of Africa region has led to severe food and water shortages. The humanitarian situation in Somalia has further deteriorated in 2017 due to the severe drought. A staggering 6.7 million people are in need and 3.2 million go hungry, experiencing acute food insecurity at crisis or emergency level. Food insecurity is expected to deteriorate further over the coming months. In addition, malnutrition, food insecurity and water scarcity has led to a very critical health situation.

Given the dramatic deterioration, the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia was revised and nearly doubled, now seeking USD 1.5 billion. The EU has drastically scaled up its assistance in an effort to avert a catastrophe similar to the 2011 famine which resulted in 260,000 deaths. Its humanitarian partners are providing food assistance in the form of cash and vouchers, water and health care.

What are the needs?

More than half of Somalia’s 12 million inhabitants is food insecure and in need of humanitarian assistance. 1.4 million children are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2017. Somalis have been massively on the move in search of food and water. In some regions, up to 80% of all livestock has died and the remaining animals are weak.

In addition to the dire drought situation, outbreaks of cholera and measles are affecting the population. Since the beginning of 2017, more than
50,000 cases of cholera and watery diarrhoea have been reported and more than 10,000 cases of measles, a sharp increase from previous years.

As yet another rainy season has failed in South and Central Somalia in April-May and high food prices persist, the risk of famine remains real. In a fragile context like Somalia the prolonged drought has had devastating consequences for vulnerable communities who already suffer from the longstanding conflict and a lack of basic services.

There are currently more than 875,000 Somali refugees in the region, mainly in Kenya (313,000), Yemen (256,000), Ethiopia (250,000) and Uganda (41,000). In Somalia, many internally displaced people stay in over-crowded settlements with little basic services, mostly dependent on humanitarian aid. A total of 66,807 refugees returned from Kenya to Somalia from 2014 to 2017, but the continued insecurity, the lack of basic services, livelihood opportunities, and the current drought affecting large swathes of Somalia, make the prospect of return from Kenya to Somalia challenging.

How are we helping?

The European Union continues to step up humanitarian aid to the conflict and drought affected populations in Somalia. In 2016, the European Commission and EU Member States provided 44% of all humanitarian aid in Somalia and in 2017 the humanitarian support now stands at over €430 million.

Responding to the early warning signs, the European Commission has mobilised additional funding following the drought. So far in 2017, almost €119 million has been released to partners who are trying to meet the most urgent needs in the regions hardest hit by water and food shortages and disease outbreaks.

In an effort to rapidly scale up life-saving aid, the delivery of food assistance* through cash is a priority. 100,000 of the most needy households should be reached with EU funded humanitarian aid through to the end of 2017. In Somalia, where local markets are very responsive, cash assistance is proving particularly efficient at helping people in a dignified way without harming the local economy.

Other aid includes emergency preparedness and response, health and nutrition care*, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene*, and protection. The EU supports the treatment of severely malnourished children. Targeting 346,000 children, the number of Somali children that should be enrolled in therapeutic feeding programmes in 2017, is more than double that of other years.

With perennially high child and maternal mortality and recurring epidemics, health care is another priority for EU humanitarian aid. Support goes to hospitals in Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Jowhar to health facilities catering to the displaced, and to emergency teams responding to the cholera outbreak which shows signs of slowing. In general, aid operations focus not only on the regions that are traditionally hardest hit in South and Central Somalia, but also address the needs in Puntland and Somaliland.

In recent years, internally displaced families have received assistance to return to their places of origin or settle in new locations. Longer-term development is needed to prevent people from sliding back into crisis. Coordination is being intensified between the EU humanitarian and development departments.

The Commission has supported the humanitarian response for the refugees in Kenya with nearly €130 million since 1996. It adheres to the principle that any repatriation of refugees needs to be voluntary, safe, informed, dignified and sustainable.

The Commission’s humanitarian partners operate in a dangerous and challenging environment. Access to populations in need remains a struggle due to ongoing conflict. Violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law* are a daily occurrence. Somali children run a high risk of being abducted or forcibly recruited and sexual violence against women is commonplace.

The European Commission is committed to preserving the humanitarian space by striving to reach all people in need wherever they may be and by safeguarding the independence of humanitarian aid.

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