Somalia

Introduction

Somalia is still on the brink of famine and 916 000 Somalis are displaced due to the drought and persisting conflict in 2017. This brings the total number of displaced persons in Somalia to 2 million. 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, cash grants, water as well as nutrition 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. 1.26 million children will be acutely malnourished in 2017, including some 230 000 severely malnourished. Somalis are massively on the move in search of food, water and pasture. In some regions, up to 80% of all livestock has died. Health authorities and partners are hard at work to contain the cholera outbreak which affected more than 76 000 people in the first 7 months of 2017, claiming at least 1160 lives. Over 16 000 suspected measles cases have been reported since January, more than three times the number in 2016. The April/May rains were very erratic. The risk of famine and high food prices persist. The prolonged drought has been devastating for vulnerable communities, many of which never fully recovered from the 2011–12 famine. They also suffer from the longstanding conflict and lack of basic services. With their coping mechanisms severely eroded, drought affected populations will require humanitarian assistance well into 2018.

More than 875 000 Somalis are refugees in Kenya, Djibouti or Ethiopia. Despite the drought, voluntary repatriation from Kenya has continued with more than 70 000 refugees returning since 2014. The EU’s position is that any repatriation should be voluntary, informed, safe and dignified.
How are we helping?

The European Union continues to step up humanitarian aid for the conflict and drought affected populations in Somalia. Responding to the early warning signs in late 2016, the European Commission mobilised considerable funding for its partners in Somalia, including for the drought response, now totaling €119 million. The funds are enabling partners to provide life-saving aid in the regions hardest hit by the water and food shortages as well as disease outbreaks. The international aid effort, which is reaching 3 million people each month, has so far helped to avert famine and curtail food price increases. Together, the European Commission and EU Member States are currently providing approximately 60% of all humanitarian aid in Somalia.

The delivery of food assistance through cash has been a priority. 100 000 of the most needy households - about 600 000 people - are being reached with EU funded cash grants and vouchers until the end of 2017. Giving people cash to buy essential goods in the dynamic market context of Somalia is proving to be an effective and dignified way of assistance.

Other aid includes emergency preparedness and response, health and nutrition care, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, protection and education. With acute malnutrition exceeding emergency thresholds in many areas, the EU supports the treatment of severely malnourished children. Some 230 000 children are expected to receive therapeutic feeding by the end of 2017.

Health care is another priority in view of the perennially high child and maternal mortality and recurring epidemics. EU support is helping the running of hospitals in Mogadishu, Gaalkacyo and Kismayo, health facilities catering to the displaced, and emergency teams responding to cholera and measles outbreak. Aid operations are aiming to reach the hardest hit regions in the country despite the access challenges.

The European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department has provided humanitarian assistance in Somalia since 1994. In recent years, internally displaced families have received assistance to return home. More long-term development is needed to prevent people from sliding back into crisis and coordination between the EU humanitarian and development departments is ongoing to that effect.

The Commission’s humanitarian partners operate in dangerous and challenging contexts. Access to populations remains a constant struggle and violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law are common. The European Commission is committed to preserving the humanitarian space and independence of humanitarian aid in order to reach all people in need.