European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Horn of Africa

Introduction

The EU has significantly increased its humanitarian aid to the millions of refugees and displaced people in the region over the past year. The aid efforts have helped to keep famine at bay. After heavy rainfall, there is widespread flooding in the Horn of Africa. The floods follow years of cyclical drought and intense conflict in many parts of the region. In response to the flooding, the EU has released additional funds to assist flood victims in Kenya and Ethiopia while humanitarian partners in Somalia are providing emergency assistance.

What are the needs?

Across the Horn of Africa region, 13 million people suffer from serious food shortages and need humanitarian assistance. Heavy rainfall in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia has caused devastating floods; 170 people have died and over 700,000 have been displaced as a result. In its wake, the flooding has decimated farmland, livestock and damaged food stocks, making life even more difficult for communities already affected by violence and food shortages. The risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera is particularly high.

The region counts 7 million uprooted people who are internally displaced or refugees. The majority of them rely on aid to get by. Continued humanitarian assistance is needed to stave off hunger, especially in Somalia and Ethiopia. Uganda hosts 1.4 million refugees and has seen an influx of 100,000 refugees from South Sudan and DRC since the beginning of 2018. In Kenya, counties until recently impacted by severe drought are now flooded. In Somalia, over 250,000 displaced people are at risk of flash floods. In Ethiopia’s Somali region where 1.7 million people were already displaced by communal conflict and drought, floods have now uprooted an additional 150,000 people. According to the UN, 1.2 million children and pregnant or nursing women in the region are expected to suffer from acute malnutrition from September 2017 to September 2018.
How are we helping?

In 2017, the European Commission allocated over €225 million in humanitarian support for people in need in the Horn of Africa region. This humanitarian aid helps millions of people who live uprooted as refugees or internally displaced, but also people whose lives are severely impacted by drought and conflict. The funding is used for food assistance, in the form of cash where possible; for health and nutrition care; clean water, sanitation and shelter; livelihoods support and education. Protecting vulnerable people from sexual and gender based violence and other threats continues to be a priority for EU humanitarian aid in the region.

Following excessive rainfall in 2018, the EU provided €1.5 and €2 million in emergency funds to assist affected populations in Kenya and Ethiopia respectively. In Somalia, humanitarian partners were able to respond quickly to the floods thanks to flexible EU funding. In Uganda, which hosts the highest number of refugees in Africa, various partners are providing life-saving assistance, protection and education in the settlements for refugees from South Sudan and DRC.

In response to the severe food crisis in the region, the EU’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations has focused on increasing food assistance. The international response prompted by the pre-famine alert for Somalia in early 2017 has helped to avert famine. Six international aid agencies continue to work together as the EU-funded ‘Cash Consortium’. Its aim is to provide the most vulnerable Somalis with cash to cover their basic household expenses. Water trucking provides communities with clean water.

Pastoralists, internally displaced people, refugees, and returning refugees in the case of Somalia, are among the communities worst-affected by the drought and floods. Their livelihoods destroyed and on the move with few or no possessions, they are the centre of relief efforts. In addition to shelter, water and food assistance, EU aid has allowed for the provision of essential household items such as jerry cans, tarpaulins and mats to uprooted families. Across the region, efforts are ongoing to link humanitarian and development aid whenever emergency situations become protracted (refugees) or predictable (recurring droughts and floods). The aim is to design programmes to help people become more self-reliant and less dependent on aid in the long term.

Despite the drought and conflict in Somalia, the voluntary repatriation of refugees from Kenya has continued. The EU position is that any repatriation should be voluntary, informed, safe, dignified and sustainable.