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SOMALIA

Over a million IDPs need support for local solutions

Somalia has witnessed over two decades of conflict, violence, human rights violations and natural disasters, all of which have triggered repeated waves of displacement. There are still an estimated 1.1 million Somalis – approximately a tenth of the population – who are internally displaced. Most internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to live in dire conditions in protracted displacement. For many, prospects for durable solutions remain remote.

Since its establishment in 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia has sought to promote peace, good governance and better relations with parts of the country which have been seeking degrees of autonomy. However, political and social challenges to the consolidation of the federal structure remain. In 2014, the Somali National Armed Forces and African Union Mission in Somalia launched a military offensive in order to reduce the control of the Islamic militia Al-Shabaab over parts of southern and central Somalia. This led to the new displacement of over 80,000 people. Although more territory is under the control of the central government than at any time since the early 1990s, Al-Shabaab remains a major threat to peace and security.

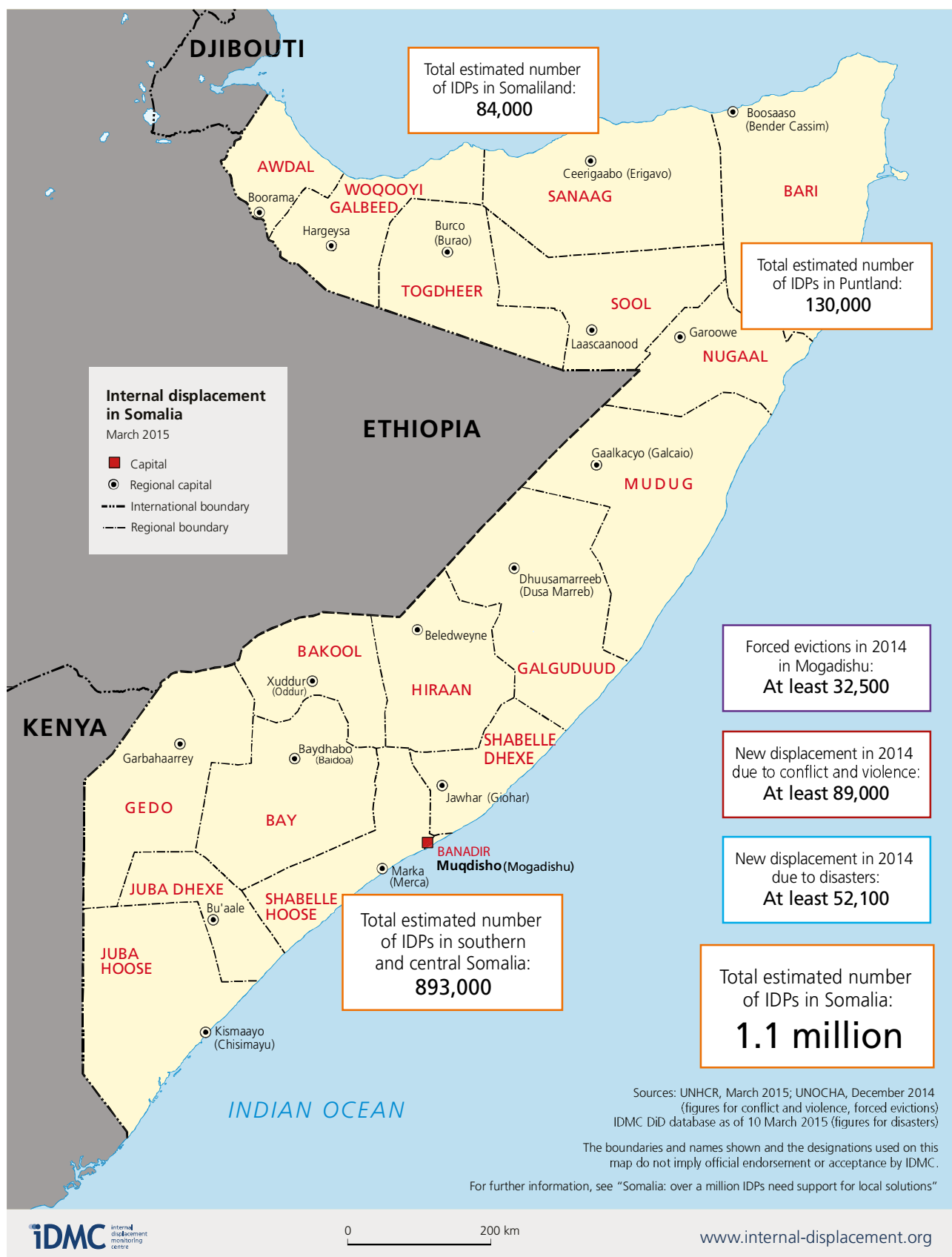
IDPs continue to face risks to their lives, safety, security and dignity. They are disproportionately at risk of gross abuses of human rights, especially women and unaccompanied children. Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread, even in areas of Somalia enjoying relative security. Many IDPs from minority clans suffer pervasive discrimination since they often lack vital clan protection and connections.

In 2014, the combined impact of conflict, insufficient funding, below average rainfall and food price increases pushed Somalia to a grave food security situation. IDPs remain particularly affected by food insecurity, with many above the emergency threshold for malnutrition. In 2014, forced evictions in Mogadishu exacerbated the humanitarian and protection situation for thousands of displaced Somalis.

In October 2014, the federal government took an important step towards protecting and assisting IDPs by adopting a national policy on internal displacement. There have been similar policy initiatives in Puntland and Somaliland. Despite such developments, implementing these policy frameworks will remain particularly challenging due to weak state capacity and scarcity of resources.



Bakaraweyne IDP settlement in Baidoa, Somalia.
Photo: Danish Refugee Council/Axel Fassio, December 2014



Map by: IDMC

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org/search?Type=Map

IDPs must be at the heart of stabilisation and peace consolidation efforts in Somalia. If IDPs are to achieve sustainable durable solutions, humanitarian, development, peace-building and human rights actors – from the government, diaspora, civil society, the private sector and the international community – must work in concert.

Background and causes of displacement

Displacement induced by conflict, violence and human rights violations

Widespread conflict, violence and human rights violations have sparked repeated waves of large- and small-scale internal displacement in Somalia. A multitude of actors, including clan-based and political militias and external military forces, have used forced displacement as a tactic of warfare in order to obtain and exert control. Military operations, insecurity and clan fighting continued to be major causes of displacement in 2014. In addition, over the past few years there has been a dramatic increase in forced evictions of internally displaced people, particularly in Mogadishu, Bossaso and Kismayo by both public and private landowners.

The new Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) was established in 2012, ending a transition process which began with the 2004 launch of the UN-backed Transitional Federal Government. Its creation is considered locally and internationally as a major achievement, but it only represents a first step towards achievement of national stability. Since 2012 the government has reshuffled the cabinet and ministerial responsibilities more than once in response to shifting political pressures. The FGS has continued to face significant challenges while seeking to consolidate Somalia's federal structure in the face of ongoing pressures for regional autonomy. For example in Baidoa, Bay region, political instability as a result of disagreements over the establishment of a regional state, has caused frictions ([OCHA](#), March 2014).

In the northern autonomous region of Puntland and in the de facto independent, but internationally unrecognised, Somaliland, conflict has been mainly due to communal violence. Tensions between clans in the regions of Sool and Sanaag typically increase in the dry season. Disputes over water sources and grazing land are the main drivers of displacement. The ongoing dispute concerning the status of the Sool and Sanaag regions represents another source of violence leading to displacement and limited access. Due to its oil reserves, the north-eastern region of Sool is particularly prone to conflict given the competing claims by Somaliland, Puntland and Khatumo (a political organisation pursuing the creation of a regional state within Somalia and separation from Somaliland).

Despite being ousted in 2011 and 2012 from some of the areas it had controlled for years, the Islamic non-state armed group Al-Shabaab remains a major threat to peace and security. In 2014, the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF) and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) launched a military initiative in order to further reduce the control of Al-Shabaab over large parts of Somalia. Around 73,000 people fled their homes mostly in Hiraan, Bay, Bakool and Shabelle regions during the first phase of the operation in March. Nearly 7,500 people were displaced during a second phase between mid-August and September 2014, mostly in Bakool and Lower Shabelle regions ([OCHA](#), September 2014). Notwithstanding its significant military and territorial losses, Al-Shabaab continues to present a major threat to peace and security in Somalia and in neighbouring nations ([OCHA](#), December 2014; [UNHCR](#), November 2014; [UNSCC](#), July 2013).

Displacement induced by disasters

Recurrent disasters, particularly floods and droughts, are another major cause of displacement in Somalia, often exacerbating the vulnerability of populations already displaced and/or affected by conflict or violence. Due to the high number of Somalis dependent on climate-sensitive agriculture and pastoralism (approximately 70 per cent of the total population)

the country is highly vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather events and climate change. In recent years climate change has led to greater fluctuations in seasonal and annual rainfall levels, higher temperatures and rising sea levels ([UNDP](#), November 2014).

Some regions are faced both with drought and frequent flooding, depending on seasonal patterns. In November 2014, for example, more than 31,000 people left their homes due to flooding along the Juba and Shabelle rivers ([UNHCR](#), December 2014; [OCHA](#), November 2014). In Kismayo and Baidoa, heavy rains caused death and destruction in IDP camps, thus aggravating already precarious living conditions ([DRC](#), November 2014; [CIHAN](#), June 2014). Gedo and Bay regions, among others, were also affected by drought-induced displacement ([Inter-agency assessment](#), October 2014; [UNHCR](#), September 2014). Coastal areas are also affected by tropical storms. In November 2013, a storm and accompanying heavy rains forced an estimated 10,000 people out of their homes and killed over 80 per cent of livestock in the affected areas of Puntland ([IFRC](#), 21 November 2013; [ICRC](#), 18 November 2013; [FAO](#), October 2012).

Figures

As of February 2015, 1.1 million people out of the total estimated Somali population of 12,317,000 were internally displaced according to the latest population estimation survey (PESS) carried out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) ([UNFPA](#), September 2014). Over one third of the IDPs reside in Banadir region where the capital Mogadishu is. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), an estimated 893,000 IDPs live in south-central Somalia, 130,000 in Puntland and 84,000 in Somaliland, though Somaliland authorities put their number much higher ([Brookings](#), January 2015; [OCHA](#), December 2014). Many of the IDPs living in southern and central Somalia have been displaced for more than ten years. Forty per cent of those internally displaced in Mogadishu have reportedly arrived in the capital during the last twelve months ([ReDSS/](#)

[Samuel Hall](#), December 2014). The IDP populations in Somaliland and Puntland also include a mix of new and long-term IDPs, most of them living in urban and peri-urban areas ([UNHCR](#), October 2014). According to the PESS, around 51 per cent of all IDPs are female. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) estimates that 70 to 80 per cent of all IDPs are women and children ([OCHA](#), December 2014; [UNFPA](#), September 2014).

There are considerable caveats regarding the estimation that there are 1.1 million IDPs. First of all, this is a static estimate in a context that is often rapidly changing in a society whose populations are traditionally highly mobile. The sources used for the figure are the many project-based assessments and registration activities through which humanitarians have often collected information. These are generally for particular purposes, with a particular geographical focus and use different methodologies. There is no consistent practice or often no definition of how households are defined. Clearly, this complicates comparison of data. Many actors presume IDP status on the basis of presence in 'IDP settlements', yet there is no consensus on how to define these (JIPS, October 2014, on file with IDMC). The perceived connection between recorded numbers of displaced people in need and the likelihood of assistance also affects the accuracy of data gathering, as estimates are likely to be subject to inflation.

Access also remains a huge challenge for data collection in most areas ([Brookings](#), January 2015; [NGO Consortium](#), October 2014). It can be challenging, or almost impossible, to distinguish between voluntary and forced movements and different categories of people – such as IDPs, the urban poor, economic migrants, returned refugees, IDP returnees, pastoralists who have moved into urban centres following loss of livestock and IDPs residing with host communities. Terminology is also an issue, especially because in the Somali language there is no direct translation for 'internally displaced person'. One word commonly used does not really reflect the forcible nature of the movement, being akin to the concept

of migrant. Some actors focus more on conflict as a cause of displacement, rather than on other causes such as disasters or evictions. This can therefore affect the quality of the data captured and should be given due consideration (JIPS, October 2014, on file with IDMC).

Stakeholders acknowledge that the figure of 1.1 million IDPs is outdated and in need of revision. In 2014, progress was made in better profiling. Processes supported by the Joint IDP Profiling Service (JIPS) were initiated in Hargeisa and Mogadishu. Once the data is available, it may impact estimation of the size of the overall IDP population and help inform a comprehensive durable solutions strategy.

Information on displacement is also collected on an ongoing basis through other systems, such as the Population Movement Tracking (PMT) system. Led by UNHCR and established in 2006, it is intended to capture population movement trends. It was merged with the Protection Monitoring Network (PMN) in 2013 to improve effectiveness and create a Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN) focusing on UNHCR's persons of concern and monitoring of areas with high potential for return of refugees and IDPs. As of the end of 2014, the PRMN was still in a transitional phase.

Other data collection activities include intentions surveys carried out by the Somalia Return Consortium, a UNHCR-led multi-agency initiative to facilitate spontaneous returns. However, there is no adequate comprehensive system that would enable a systematic counting and profiling of displaced populations. This obviously hampers effective programming (Brookings, January 2015; ReDSS/Samuel Hall, December 2014). The set of recommendations provided by JIPS in their scoping mission report, aimed at addressing some of the challenges mentioned above, is a good starting point to consolidate existing and new data (JIPS, October 2014,, on file with IDMC).

Protection issues

The kinds of threats that Somali IDPs faced in 2014 were fundamentally the same as those they have faced for many years: lack of access to justice and basic services, gender-based violence, forced recruitment and the withholding of access to humanitarian assistance (Brookings, January 2015; OCHA, November 2014).

The Somali clan system shapes social, political and economic life and is fundamental to understanding many aspects of contemporary Somali society, including displacement. Extended family and clan affiliation is an essential source of protection and a determinant of the level of access to social assistance. Where possible, people have tended to flee to areas where they could enjoy social acceptance and support to build new livelihoods (Lindley, 2013). IDPs from minority groups usually lack such vital clan protection and connections. This makes them acutely vulnerable to discrimination and abuse in places of settlement, especially women who are left facing discrimination as minority members in Somalia's hierarchical clan system and as women in a male-dominated society (MRG/IIDA, January 2015; UNDP, September 2012). Anecdotal evidence suggests that most IDPs in protracted displacement situations, particularly in southern and central Somalia, belong to minority groups (JIPS, October 2014, on file with IDMC).

Threats to physical security and integrity

IDPs in Somalia face risks to their lives, safety, security and dignity due to dire living conditions and ongoing violence. South-central Somalia is particularly affected as rising insecurity and renewed conflict continue to pose threats to IDPs both during their journey to their areas of destination and after their arrival. The prevalence of landmines and explosive remnants of war poses further dangers (UNMAS, January 2015, on file with IDMC).

Although the two stages of the military offensive in 2014 led to the recovery of several towns in

southern and central Somalia, many of them have remained surrounded by Al-Shabaab. As a result, people living there (including IDPs) have been subjected to, and remain at risk of, grave human rights violations as they exit or, as in the case of returning IDPs, enter towns. As AMISOM plans the next stage of the military offensive, it is fundamental that protection of civilians be given due consideration. The lives of the residents of recovered towns may be put at great risk should AMISOM decide to withdraw or reduce the number of its troops, for it is mainly their presence which is currently ensuring civilians' safety and security in those areas. Communities should be adequately consulted to ensure that they can take necessary measures to remain safe, including by leaving again.

In many areas of Somalia, IDPs are also affected by the presence of gatekeepers who control access and aid flows to and within displacement sites. This often results in the diversion of incoming assistance ([UNSC](#), October 2014). In some cases, tensions between IDPs and host communities have also been reported, mainly around the use of already scarce resources ([Inter-agency assessment](#), October 2014).

Social discrimination and pervasive gender inequality are major challenges. IDPs from minority clans are often marginalised and suffer from abuses and discrimination based on their clan affiliation. Displaced children are particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation. Children as young as nine are still frequently recruited to serve as combatants ([UNICEF](#), January 2013). Together with internally displaced women, children are among the most affected by sexual and gender-based violence, especially as family separation during displacement leaves many having to fend for themselves and increases their level of exposure ([OCHA](#), November 2014).

Internally displaced women and girls are often exposed to sexual violence en route to their areas of destination, or when they leave settlements to collect firewood, fetch water or use distant or badly lit latrines. They are also at risk within settlements due

to the makeshift nature of most shelters, insufficient lighting and ease of entry for armed men ([OCHA](#), December 2014; [HRW](#), September 2014). Other forms of gender-based violence include domestic violence which is often exacerbated by stress, loss of livelihoods and displacement-induced changes in gender roles. Women are also exposed to harmful traditional practices such as forced early marriages, which increase in situations of forced displacement. In some cases, internally displaced women and girls have to resort to 'survival sex' to gain access to food and other essential goods ([Somalia GBV WG](#), January 2015).

The inter-agency GBV Information Management System registered over 1,000 cases of rape from January to November 2014, most cases affecting IDPs. Actual numbers are thought to be higher due to significant under-reporting ([UNHCR](#), December 2014). Perpetrators of human rights abuses reportedly include personnel from armed groups such as Al-Shabaab, SNAF, AMISOM, regional security forces, clan militias and others ([UNSC](#), October 2014).

Dire housing conditions

IDPs' living conditions differ. While some live in makeshift shelters, others are hosted by family members. IDPs who can afford to rent rooms in privately owned permanent buildings are able to settle in private housing. Others settle informally in and around urban centres. In some cases, IDPs occupy municipal land or live in government buildings. More frequently, they settle on urban fringes on land either privately owned or which lies within the traditional domain of clans who demand payment ([Wardheer News](#), January 2015; [Lindley](#), April 2013).

Settlements are often overcrowded. In many cases, shelters are in urgent need of improvement or replacement to be made secure ([OCHA](#), December 2014; [ACTED](#), October 2014). Fires in IDP settlements, typically resulting from open cooking fires, are common, particularly in certain parts of the country during dry windy periods in June-September ([AMISOM](#), January 2015).

Poor access to nutrition, food, water, sanitation and healthcare

In 2014, the combined impact of conflict, insufficient funding, below average rains in agricultural areas (the government declared drought in seven regions) and rising food prices pushed Somalia to a very worrisome food security situation. Moreover, Al-Shabaab consistently denied access to humanitarian assistance for people under their areas of control and restricted movement of people and goods into areas under government influence. This affected all Somalis but surveys have shown that IDPs have the highest rates of severe acute malnutrition. The under-five death rate among Mogadishu IDPs is six times the average (OCHA, [22 December](#) and [17 October](#) 2014; [WFP](#), October 2014).

Localised droughts and contamination of water sources as a result of flooding have led to a further decrease in already limited water resources in several parts of the country. IDPs are often forced to flee to the outskirts of urban areas, where available water resources are limited ([IRIN](#), November 2013; [Reuters](#), April 2014). Many are unable to afford the rising costs of water and food ([DRC](#), November 2014; [WFP](#), October 2014). IDPs often have insufficient water storage and collection facilities, forcing women and children to walk long distances and queue for hours. In some cases, those who own the land on which IDP settlements are sited oppose construction of permanent water and sanitation facilities in order not to encourage long-term settlement (IDMC interviews, June 2013).

Restricted access to clean water, combined with poor sanitation and hygiene facilities, puts IDPs at increased risk of disease. This is further aggravated by their limited access to health facilities, due to long distances or high costs of medical treatment ([DRC](#), November 2014; [OCHA](#), November 2014). Restricted humanitarian access and population movements have led to low vaccination rates. This has been linked to an increase of outbreaks of communicable diseases, particularly in overcrowded IDP settlements ([UNICEF](#), January 2015; [OCHA](#), December 2014).

Education

Conflict and instability have had direct effects on children's physical, mental and emotional development, severely affecting the already weak Somali education system ([OCHA/UNHCR](#), March-April 2011; NRC, December 2012 and March 2013; OCHA, September 2012, on file with IDMC). The destruction of buildings and teaching materials and interruptions to schooling due to prolonged displacement and armed conflict and natural disasters have meant that enrolment rates are among the world's lowest: barely 22 per cent of all primary school-aged children are in school in south-central Somalia. It is estimated that nearly 60 per cent of all school-aged children lack access to education ([OCHA](#), July 2014). IDP children, particularly girls, are less likely to attend school than other Somalis but there are geographical differences in their degree of exclusion ([OCHA](#), December 2014; [Smith, Eds.](#), 2012). Dropout rates among displaced youth are particularly high due to frequent voluntary or forced movement, early marriage of girls and parental pressures to earn income ([Smith, Eds.](#), 2012; NRC, July 2012 and May 2013, on file with IDMC).

Poverty constrains access to education as displaced parents are unable to afford tuition fees. Even when free primary education is available, as in Somaliland, they still struggle to pay for incidental expenses ([Moyi](#), 2012; IDMC, May and June 2013, on file with IDMC). Lack of sufficient teachers, facilities and learning materials are further aggravating factors ([OCHA](#), December 2014).

Livelihoods and employment

Most Somalis survive at basic subsistence levels. Economic activities revolve around pastoralism, agriculture and trade. Pastoralists' internal displacement, therefore, has a negative impact on the access to food and livelihoods of all those who depend on pastoralism, even if they are not themselves displaced. Main income sources for IDPs are casual labour, followed by petty trade, self-employment, skilled labour, begging and remittances. These meager income sources often fail to cover basic daily

needs of IDP households, including for food ([DRC](#), November 2014; [FSNAU](#), October 2014). In some IDP settlements most people rely on humanitarian aid as their main source of income ([ACTED](#), October 2014; [FEWSNET](#), May 2014). IDPs spend much of their income on food, up to 88 per cent in the south of Somalia. This renders them significantly more vulnerable to food price rises compared to the overall population ([FSNAU](#), October 2014). Long distances and insecurity in moving between IDP settlements and local markets often hinder their ability to establish sustainable income-generating activities ([UNDP](#), September 2012).

In many cases, displaced women are the sole providers for their families. Cultural norms and childcare responsibilities often restrict them to low-paid activities ([Samuel Hall and ILO](#), October 2014). Many IDP children are forced to work to support their families. They are mostly engaged in low-paid and arduous domestic and manual labour, thus exposed to exploitation and abuse and prevented from pursuing education. IDPs belonging to minority groups face particularly high obstacles to accessing employment as they lack the necessary family or clan networks. In addition, they often face exclusion, exploitation and abuse, such as the denial of payment for work they have done (IDMC interviews, June 2013 - on file with IDMC).

The high rate of youth unemployment, currently estimated to be around 67 per cent, is particularly concerning when considering the young age of the Somali population: around 70 per cent is below the age of 30. Their lack of education, skills and livelihood opportunities frustrates young people and may encourage many towards radicalisation or membership of criminal and other armed groups ([Government of Somalia](#), December 2014). Displaced youth need to be equipped with the right skills and knowledge to assist the nation's recovery and development (HLPF, November 2014, on file with IDMC).

Many IDPs lack the adequate skills and training to access job opportunities or need significant sup-

port to restore their livestock and recover farmlands. Even skilled IDPs can be vulnerable as they find their abilities of little use in places of displacement. Displaced populations from rural areas in south-central Somalia find their agriculture and livestock skills unwanted in urban places of displacement. If IDPs are to be integrated in a sustainable manner, this must be facilitated through comprehensive vocational training programmes suited to current and future market needs ([ReDSS/Samuel Hall](#), December 2014; [UNDP](#), September 2012).

Access to justice

Three systems of law coexist in Somalia: secular, sharia and customary (xeer). Xeer and sharia laws are particularly predominant in rural areas where access to the formal system is extremely limited. A lack of harmonisation in the way the different systems interact, address crimes and resolve disputes prevents consistent and transparent delivery of justice ([UNDP](#), September 2012). IDPs often lack awareness of legal rights and the means to afford justice-related costs. In addition, the weak legal and policy frameworks have greatly affected the dispensation of justice as legal proceeding cannot be commenced where laws are inconsistent or non-existent.

Somali patriarchal culture often shapes the application of law (particularly sharia and xeer), leading to gross gender discrimination and denial of women's rights to justice, including land and inheritance entitlements (GPC, 24 September 2014, on file with IDMC; [UNDP](#), September 2012). Fearful of stigmatisation, imprisonment, forced marriage to the perpetrator or retaliation, women often prefer to not report cases of sexual and gender-based violence ([HRW](#), 13 February 2014). Customary law based on negotiation among clan elders is often only accessible for members of the dominant local clan, thus disadvantaging IDPs from minority groups ([UNFPA](#), [UNDP](#) and [LAW](#), October 2014; [Lindley](#), April 2013).

Abuses against IDPs have taken place in a general context of impunity for violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The FGS has

acknowledged the extent of the problem of sexual violence and in 2013 pledged to address the issue. However, in reality little has been done to address the problem of rape and sexual assault of women and girls, particularly among vulnerable displaced communities ([HRW](#), February 2014).

Housing, land and property

Housing, land and property (HLP) issues in Somalia centre around security of land tenure and forced evictions, which expose IDPs to further protection risks. IDPs faced with forced evictions adopt different coping mechanisms. They often end up occupying other public buildings, which in turn puts them at risk of multiple evictions. HLP challenges in Somalia are particularly exacerbated by the lack of a land law or policy and weak technical capacity in land management. Until the introduction of the interim constitution, which includes provisions on land issues, land disputes were mostly negotiated orally (IDMC interviews with NRC ICLA, January 2015). Due to a lack of land tenure security, illegal land expropriations are rampant in both rural and urban areas, in some cases allegedly with the involvement of government officials. The return of thousands of Somali refugees, IDPs and members of the diaspora has also led to an increase in disputes over land ownership as many, particularly those returning to urban areas, have found their dwellings occupied ([Wardheer News](#), January 2015; [NRC/LAW](#), December 2014; [IRIN](#), November 2013).

Increased pressure on urban land has led to more forced evictions and relocations of IDPs in cities such as Mogadishu, Bossaso and Kismayo. An increasing number of forced evictions of IDPs from public or private land has been recorded over the past year. IDPs are usually given insufficient or no notice and offered no alternatives ([NRC/LAW](#), December 2014; Protection Cluster, November 2014, on file with IDMC).

Humanitarians acknowledge the need for reconstruction and development in Somalia but advocate for evictions and relocations to take place accord-

ing to internationally acceptable standards. They have also made increased efforts to monitor the risk of, and improve their response to, forced evictions including by mapping public buildings inhabited by IDPs, negotiating actions with relevant authorities and providing multi-sectoral assistance packages for evictees (IDMC interview with NRC, January 2015). In order to increase land tenure security for IDPs aid agencies have sought to put long-term land tenure agreements at the core of their shelter and infrastructure plans. They are working in coordination with authorities responsible for providing land for sustainable settlement (IDMC interviews, January 2015; [Shelter and NFI Clusters](#), April 2012).

At settlement level, disputes also arise due to abuses caused by gatekeepers and conflicts between international NGOs and private land owners as landlords breach land tenure agreements in the absence of titles and evict beneficiaries from the settlements. In Somaliland, disagreements between IDPs and their landlords together with double-issuance of ownership certificates for the same plot have been common sources of land disputes ([NRC/LAW](#), December 2014; [NRC](#), December 2014).

IDPs often have difficulties claiming their HLP rights as they tend to lack the necessary documentation, connections and local know-how to access legal aid and justice mechanisms ([ReDSS/Samuel Hall](#), December 2014). Internally displaced women are especially vulnerable to HLP rights abuses. As a general rule, women are prohibited from owning, renting or inheriting land or any property in their names ([Displacement Solutions](#), 2008).

Prospects for durable solutions

The situation in Somalia differs from one location to another. In Somaliland and Puntland there is relative stability but many areas of south-central Somalia remain volatile with limited humanitarian access and continued population displacement. Most IDPs continue to live in dire conditions in protracted

displacement. For many, prospects for durable solutions remain distant.

It is thus particularly important for the authorities and the international community to increase efforts to gradually upgrade the living conditions of IDPs in protracted displacement pending a durable solution, in order to address the risk of dependency and facilitate pathways out of chronic poverty. The newly adopted Policy Framework on Displacement within Somalia offers concrete examples of how this can be done. It recommends interventions focused on improving and expanding existing services, increasing access to shelter, helping facilitate access to HLP rights, ensuring livelihoods through dedicated programmes and protecting IDPs against forceful movement to unsafe areas.

Patterns of internal displacement in Somalia are diverse: short- and long-term, single or multiple events, protracted or newly emerging, in both rural and urban areas. This diversity needs to be reflected in the way durable solutions are pursued and supported. Support to establish sustainable livelihoods for IDPs is particularly important, and must be context specific. There is a need for a multi-disciplinary approach by humanitarian, development, human rights and peace building actors in order to create conditions for durable solutions. Peace building activities are essential as internal displacement is not only a consequence of conflict, but it is part of it. Displacement impacts how the conflict unfolds and leads to new forms of social and political interconnections. Solutions for IDPs, therefore, are critical for stabilisation and peace consolidation in Somalia (Schrepfer, May 2013, on file with IDMC; [Solutions Alliance](#), December 2014; [Lindley](#), April 2013).

In the short-term, challenges to the consolidation of the federal structure can represent an obstacle to achievement of durable solutions for IDPs. In the medium- and long-term, an established federal structure could provide an opportunity for implementing solutions that need to be local, given the diversity of contexts and patterns of displacement

in various parts of the country. It is essential that consideration of issues around durable solutions to internal displacement remain atop the agenda of both federal and regional authorities.

Durable solutions for Somali IDPs are sought predominantly through return or local integration. In parts of Puntland and Somaliland that are relatively stable local authorities have worked with international agencies to support local integration projects by facilitating access to land in identified sites for relocation and/or by improving living conditions in areas where IDPs live. Finding adequate land for relocation initiatives and ensuring some level of tenure security for the displaced remain major challenges.

An estimated 18,200 IDPs reportedly returned to areas of southern and central Somalia in 2014. Some IDPs have reportedly opted for return given their dire living conditions in areas of refuge. Humanitarian actors assist the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of displaced people through the Somali Return Consortium. However, questions remain around the sustainability of returns ([Samuel Hall](#), July 2014).

Despite the signing of a Tripartite Agreement between Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR to support the voluntary return of Somali refugees, UNHCR has underlined that conditions in most parts of Somalia are not yet conducive to wide-scale returns of either IDPs or refugees, since the latter often find themselves in IDP-like situations upon return (OCHA, [December 2014](#) and [November 2013](#)). In some cases, the government has encouraged return despite unfavorable conditions, including by providing aid mainly in IDPs' areas of origin. It has also not offered adequate support for the two other internationally acknowledged forms of durable solutions - local integration or settlement elsewhere ([Samuel Hall](#), June 2014; [FEWSNET](#), May 2014).

Limited services and disrupted livelihoods pose additional challenges to returnees, in part because return assistance rarely takes into account of, or

seeks to enhance, the capacity of existing organisations in the area of origin ([Samuel Hall](#), June 2014). The recovery of land, property and livestock, as well as competition over scarce resources and limited employment opportunities can trigger further clan conflict and tensions.

Supporting mobility and access to resources for internally displaced pastoralists is particularly important, because their capacity to re-adopt their lifestyle will impact the life of many who depend on this for their own livelihoods.

Several initiatives exist to boost durable solutions for IDPs in Somalia. Within the Solutions Alliance – a global initiative to advocate for the inclusion of displacement in development agendas so to achieve a higher sustainability of interventions targeting refugees, IDPs and local communities – a thematic group is working specifically on these issues in Somalia. A Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat was also established in March 2014 to assist key stakeholders develop a more consistent approach with regards to durable solutions for displaced and displacement-affected communities in the Horn of Africa ([ReDSS](#), 2014). UNHCR and the Somali government have also set up the Somalia Solutions Platform to outline a strategic solution-oriented strategy to promote durable solutions for IDPs ([OCHA](#), 10 April 2014).

National and international response

National response

In October 2014, the government of Somalia undertook an important step towards addressing internal displacement by adopting a policy framework that lays out a comprehensive strategy to prevent new displacement, improve IDPs' living conditions and create conditions conducive to durable solutions. The policy has been developed in close cooperation with UNHCR and the office of the UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs ([OCHA](#),

24 November 2014). In December 2014, an Agency for Refugees and IDPs was established within the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs (which is responsible for addressing IDP matters). The government, with the support of UNHCR and the UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of IDPs, has also developed guidelines on evictions and relocations.

There have been similar policy initiatives on internal displacement in both Puntland and Somaliland. IDP policy guidelines were adopted by the Puntland authorities in November 2012. Awareness raising activities around them are ongoing. In Somaliland, a comprehensive draft IDP policy was finalised in 2014 and is awaiting formal adoption. These documents offer important guidance on how authorities should carry out their primary responsibilities to protect and assist IDPs and how they should coordinate with other relevant stakeholders. As of February 2015, Somalia had internally ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (the Kampala Convention), but its instrument of ratification had not yet been deposited with the AU Secretariat.

Beyond these displacement-specific frameworks, the 2012 Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia sets out the rights and freedoms that all Somalis, including IDPs, shall enjoy without discrimination. In September 2012 the president issued a Six Pillars Policy, setting out priorities to alleviate the suffering of Somalis and create effective state institutions. Pillar 3 explicitly pledges to plan and achieve the reintegration of refugees and IDPs in their places or origin. Other pillars implicitly contain elements conducive to durable solutions for IDPs (Schrepfer, May 2013, on file with IDMC; IDMC, baseline consultations for a policy on internal displacement in Somalia, May 2013).

Welcome though these initiatives are, their finalisation and implementation is imperiled by weak governance, limited human and financial resources and lack of access to certain areas. It is thus essential

that the authorities work with civil society (including the diaspora and private sector philanthropists) and the international community to assist and protect IDPs and create conditions conducive to durable solutions.

It is important to recognise that significant assistance to IDPs has also been provided by Somali host communities which, despite being impoverished, have not only tolerated but have helped large numbers of displaced people. The traditional and Islamic principles relating to the treatment of guests and the vulnerable and the socio-cultural ideology of *Somalinimo* - a sense of cultural attachment between the Somali people - have resulted in significant provision of assistance to IDPs by host communities ([ECHO](#), December 2014; [Lindley](#), April 2013; [IDMC/NRC/RSC/NUPI](#), November 2011).

International response

Somalia is still one of the most challenging security environments for the delivery of aid. Fighting, insecurity and deliberate obstruction by some parties to the conflict continue to restrict IDPs' access to assistance and protection. In 2014 while humanitarian access became possible in wider areas its quality and sustainability worsened in many places due to a combination of intensified conflict and deteriorating security. In urban centres "recovered" by SNAF/AMISOM state control is largely limited to certain areas and supply lines remain highly vulnerable to attack. Some towns besieged by Al-Shabaab are only accessible by air. The provision of assistance to rural areas remains particularly difficult ([Brookings](#), January 2015; [USAID](#), November 2014; [NGO Consortium](#), October 2014). In the first half of 2014, more than 1,500 incidents with humanitarian impact were reported, a seven per cent increase compared with the same period in 2013. This was due to a surge in attacks by non-state armed actors and the launch of government military offensives ([OCHA](#), 24 July 2014). This raises questions about the proper balance between staff security and the quality of programming. In many areas, humanitarian actors completely rely on local actors to implement programmes.

Clan dynamics and discrimination have played a major role in IDPs' access to assistance. The presence of actors who exercise control over IDP camps across Somalia is also a major issue. These gatekeepers are often landowners or business people with close connections to local powerbrokers. Reportedly, in some cases up to 80 per cent of aid has been diverted. These high losses have often not been made public in order to maintain donor confidence and reduce the risk of funding reductions. This clearly raises questions about the integrity of humanitarian aid in Somalia ([Brookings](#), January 2015; [NGO Consortium](#), October 2014; [RI](#), November 2012). Other impediments to aid delivery are linked to fragmentation of the government and bureaucratic obstacles ([NGO Consortium](#), January 2015; [OCHA](#), December 2014).

Since 2006, humanitarian response in Somalia has been implemented through the cluster approach with NGOs and government officials participating in cluster meetings to a varying extent. Despite delivering important life-saving assistance, the cluster system, and humanitarian programming in general, have been marred by the effects of remote management, as many international organisations have managed programmes in Somalia from Nairobi. According to an evaluation of the 2011-12 famine, the disconnect between the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Nairobi and implementing partners inside Somalia led to the disregard of early warnings by the HCT which could have mitigated its effects. In November 2014, the Protection Cluster undertook an important step by initiating its relocation to Mogadishu in order to improve coordination and increase NGO and government involvement in its work (GPC, November and September 2014, on file with IDMC; [Brookings](#), January 2015).

The integration of all UN agencies into the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in January 2014 merged the UN's political and humanitarian objectives in order to improve coordination and consistency. However, this has also presented new challenges for humanitarians. The UN Security Council decided to establish UNSOM for an initial

period of one year in order to provide technical and policy support to the central government and extended its mandate for another year under a broader mandate ([UNSC](#), May 2014). However, the merger has resulted in a perceived blurring of lines between humanitarian objectives and political and military agendas, thus putting humanitarian staff at increased risk. This, together with the effects of counter-terrorism laws on humanitarian assistance and the, often inevitable, need to engage with non-state armed groups, has created concerns about a potential compromise of humanitarian principles ([Brookings](#), January 2015; [PHAP](#), January 2014; [NRC/OCHA](#), July 2013). In addition, the close collaboration between AMISOM and UNSOM is not without difficulties for humanitarian actors, given the reported involvement of certain AMISOM personnel in human rights violations ([Brookings](#), January 2015; [ODI](#), December 2013).

An opportunity to factor in displacement issues in development, peacebuilding and state building efforts as part of the durable solutions for Somalia has been provided for by the New Deal compact which defines priority areas of interventions and aims to channel funding in a more predictable and structured way in alignment with national priorities. This was a key focus for the international community and donors for Somalia in 2014 ([ReDSS/Samuel Hall](#), December 2014). There has been a push from the international community to incorporate durable solutions for the displaced into the New Deal, but sustained advocacy will be critical to make it happen ([NGO Consortium](#), January 2015).

Funding

For 2015, Somalia requested \$863 million ([OCHA](#), February 2015). As of November 2014, despite a high level of needs, the 2014 Strategic Response Plan which sought \$933 million for Somalia was only 39 per cent funded ([OCHA](#), November 2014).

Some have attributed the funding shortfall to financial mismanagement, competing demands of other emergencies or security concerns around some programmes. Irrespective of the reasons, the continuous overstretching of resources has hampered the response to the needs of both protracted and new IDPs ([Brookings](#), January 2015); [ReDSS/Samuel Hall](#), December 2014). Funding shortfalls have had a particularly negative impact on the persisting severe food security situation in the country as well as on other areas of response. There is a need for flexible funding allowing for emergency assistance and long-term resilience programming. Some areas in Somalia, especially those with many IDPs, will require both New Deal and humanitarian funding to address both emergency needs and support the process of peace and state building ([NGO Consortium](#), January 2015; [OCHA](#), November 2014; [Saferworld and World Vision](#), November 2014; [Samuel Hall](#), June 2014).

About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement. For the millions of people worldwide displaced within their own country, IDMC plays a unique role as a global monitor and evidence-based advocate to influence policy and action by governments, UN agencies, donors, international organisations and NGOs.

IDMC was established in 1998 at the request of the Interagency Standing Committee on humanitarian assistance. Since then, IDMC's unique global function has been recognised and reiterated in annual UN General Assembly resolutions.

IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an independent, non-governmental humanitarian organisation.

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