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SOMALIA POST RETURN MONITORING SNAPSHOT

2020 mid-year monitoring | August 2020

This post return monitoring snapshot presents selected findings of data from interviews with Somali refugee returnees interviewed in Somalia over the past 30 months. This data set is based on interviews with 1,678 returnee households (HH) across different return locations in Somalia. This exercise follows the previous post-return monitoring snapshot issued by UNHCR in December 2019.

Contextualizing the findings

- The 398 interviews in the first half of 2020 were carried out by telephone, and occurred after the introduction of COVID-19 related social distancing measures. Telephone numbers were randomly selected among lists of returnee households who have been assisted in return by UNHCR and partners from 2014 to 2020.
- As in previous surveys, the vast majority of the respondents were returnees from Kenya though in 2020 a greater proportion of returnees from Yemen (87) and other countries of asylum have been included in order to help understand if differences exist in their situation based on displacement history.
- Overall, approximately 62% of the respondents were female, and 93% of respondents said that they were the head of household. Overall, individuals included in households surveyed totaled 8,972 in the period November 2019 to May 2020, representing roughly 10% of all 91,828 returnees who have returned with UNHCR support since 2014.

All years

1,678
household
interviews

8,972
individuals
represented

2020 mid-year monitoring

398
household
interviews

60%
female
respondents

Overall, a high level of satisfaction with decision to return

Overall, **89% of respondents were satisfied with their decision to return**. Of the households who were *not* satisfied with the decision to return, the three reasons most frequently cited were limited livelihoods opportunities (overall – 25%, 2020 – 17%), instability of security (overall – 16%, 2020 – 21%) and lack of assistance or support from authorities (overall – 16%, 2020 – 18%).

Figure 1: Satisfaction with decision to return (overall)

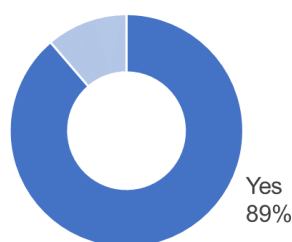
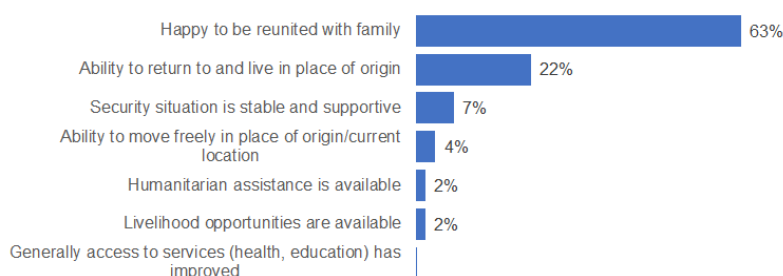


Figure 2: Primary reason for being satisfied with decision to return (overall)



Stability of return location

In 2020, 78% of respondents stated that they plan to remain in their current location permanently with little variation over the years of the survey. The top three reasons given for those who did not intend to stay were limited livelihoods opportunities, poor access to basic services, and to be closer to family.

For those not intending to stay, most respondents were considering relocating within Somalia. Only 3% of the surveyed returnee households (58 out of 1678) responded that they would consider returning to their former country of asylum (predominantly Kenya, only one HH reported they would consider returning to Yemen) and only 2% would consider moving to another country of asylum.

Of the households interviewed in 2020, 18% indicated that they currently reside in an – what is inadequately referred to as – “IDP settlement” meaning that more than 80% live among host communities. Out of those households who reside in Bay region, 28% reported in 2020 that they lived within an IDP site. In Lower Juba, the percentage of households reported living in an IDP site was lower at 18%.

Figure 3: Intention to remain in current location permanently (2020)

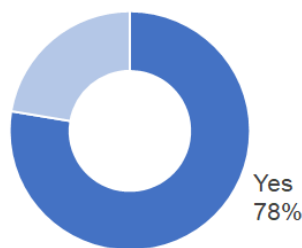
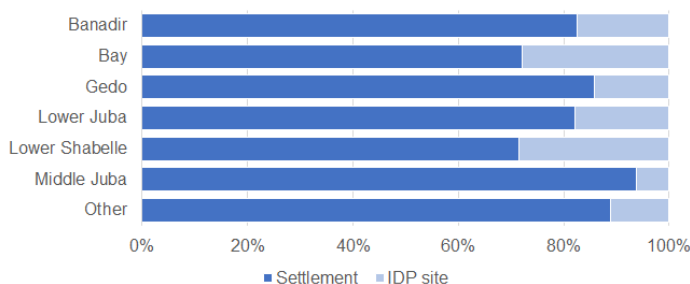


Figure 4: IDP site or town/village (2020)



Security

In 2020, 97% of respondents indicated that they felt secure and safe in their current location (compared to 95% overall years), and 98% reported no member of the household had been threatened, intimidated or experienced violence since returning to Somalia (95% overall). 89% indicated that members of the household can move freely in the community and surrounding districts.

Overall, 88% of respondents informed that they can move freely in their community and surrounding district. For Lower Juba, the area of return for the majority of returnees from Kenya, 15% do not feel that they can move freely. This is likely due to rural areas outside Kismayo being under control of non-state armed groups. The highest rate of returnees feeling insecure was reported for those living in Gedo (as per below chart); however, given the security situation there, UNHCR and partners currently do not facilitate returns to this area.

Figure 5: Has any household member been threatened, intimidated or experienced violence since returning to Somalia? (overall)

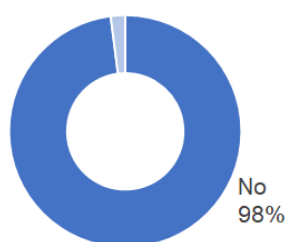
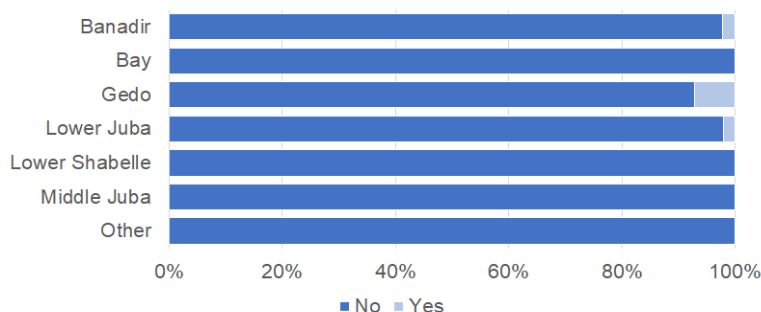


Figure 6: Do you feel insecure or unsafe in your current location? (overall)



Discrimination and relationships with host communities

When measuring achievement towards durable solutions, discrimination on account of return/displacement status is an important factor for consideration.¹ The vast majority of respondents indicated that they had not faced discrimination on the basis of being a returnee (93% overall, 94% in 2020).² More than 90% of households report not having been subject to clan/ ethnicity-based discrimination. As well, 97% stated in 2020 that they had not experienced disputes with other (non-returnee) members of the community. In 2020, only 3% of the households reported having faced discrimination based on their ethnic background or clan group.

Figure 7. Experience of discrimination on the basis of being a returnee (2020)

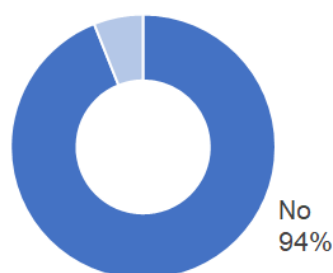
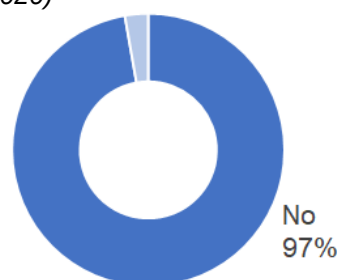


Figure 8. Experience of disputes with other (non-returnee) members of the community in the area of settlement (2020)



Housing, land and property

Where disputes with other (non-returnee) members of the community had been reported, the leading cause was related to housing, land or property. For households interviewed in 2020 and who have returned in the past year, 94% live in housing that they do not own. Over time, however, the proportion of ownership increases, with 75% of respondents who returned four or more years ago living in their own properties. An exception in this regard is Banadir region where the figure remains at over 90% of respondents not having ownership of their place of residence.

In addition, 70% of households report having no documentation for proof of occupation of the place they live in. With more than 90% not owning and 70% having no documentation, there is a high degree of informal arrangements – including living with relatives, or squatting – potentially leading to protection concerns, including housing insecurity and risk of eviction.

Figure 9. Number of households, returned in the past year, owning the housing they live in

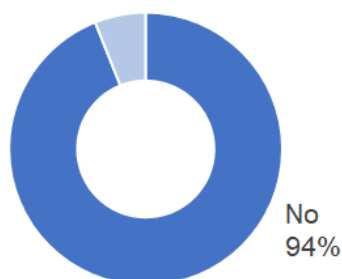
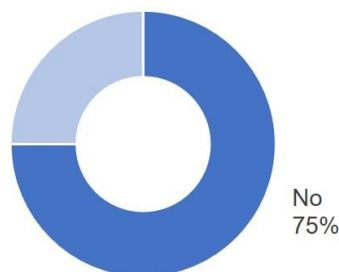


Figure 10. Number of households, returned 4 years ago or more, owning the housing they live in



¹ See for example, 2010 Durable Solutions Framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

² This finding corroborates with external data in a different but related context. For instance, the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) in their July 2020 aspiration survey with IDPs in Baidoa, Dollow, Kismayo and Mogadishu found that “for the majority of households, relationships between communities are reported to be very good or good in all locations i.e. very limited tensions between both groups (displaced and host communities).” See https://regionaldss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ReDSS_Aspirations_Survey_Social_Integration.pdf.

Education

For surveys conducted in 2020 for returnees, almost 80% of respondents indicated that not all children in the household attend school regularly (2019 - 62%). The caveat, however, of this finding is that at the time of the survey, schools had been closed across Somalia as part of COVID-19 government measures. During the remainder of 2020, the next survey will attempt to address key education issues, especially on the effectiveness of distance learning and access to educational resources in the COVID context. The Federal Ministry of Education re-opened primary and secondary schools on 15th August 2020 while universities are expected to re-open on 5th September 2020.

See for details how UNHCR with the Ministry of Education and partners are committed to ensuring access to education for returnee children and youth: UNHCR Somalia Multi-Year Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (pp. 14-15) and the UNHCR Somalia Education Strategy entailing a disengagement strategy to ensure sustainability after the UNHCR return-related education grant ends.

Household Income and Livelihoods

In 2020, 65% of returnee households reported that their sources of income are insufficient to meet the needs of the household. The effect of government measures against COVID-19 in 2020 have had a drastic effect on livelihood opportunities for returnees as well as other Displacement Affected Communities in Somalia. Vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by reductions in international remittances and a decline in purchasing power.³ Income sources among returnee households are typically day labour and small business or self-employment that leave returnee households vulnerable to economic shocks, both local and global.

Figure 11. Sufficiency of income levels to meet the needs of the household (2020)

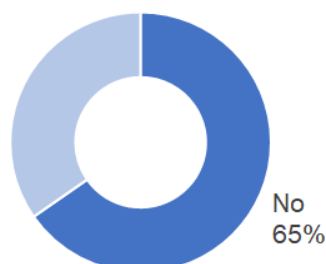


Figure 12. Primary income sources in the past year (2020)

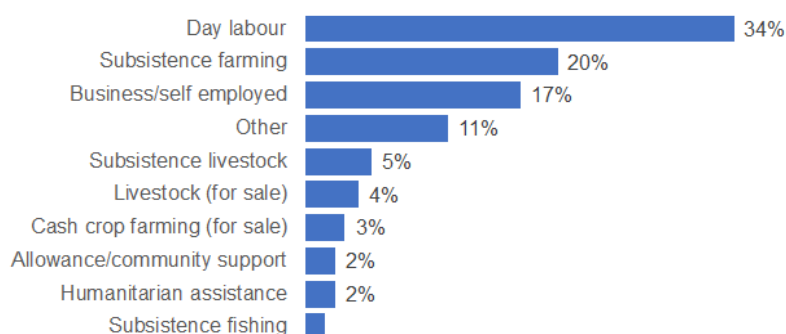
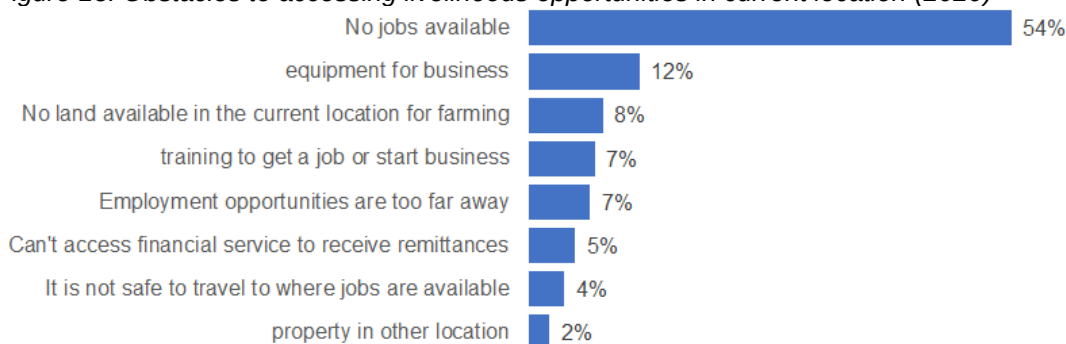


Figure 13. Obstacles to accessing livelihoods opportunities in current location (2020)



³ Also see on this: [CALP | Global remittances to suffer a blow from COVID-19 | June 2020](#); [EU REF | How will remittances affect Somali COVID-19 Response | April 2020](#)

Identification documents

In 2020, 96% of households report that not all members have Somalia government-issued identification. However, 97% of those households also report that lack of ID documents has not resulted in their experiencing problems since their return. Formal identification is a primary means to access rights and, to some extent, services. Furthermore, while legal documentation processes for the planned upcoming federal elections are yet to be finalized, possession of government-issued identification may reduce the risk of disenfranchisement and potential exclusion.

Figure 14. Do members of your household possess Somali Government identification? (2020)

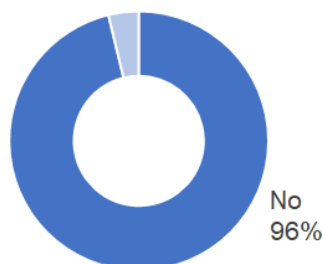
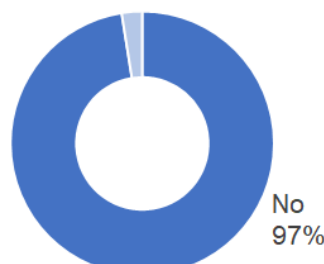


Figure 15. Has your lack of identification documents ever caused you any problems? (2020)



The findings presented in this snapshot represent a selection of findings of UNHCR's post-return monitoring. More comprehensive data is available and will be used in discussion with partners and stakeholders, and for planning purposes.

Although further exploration and analysis at the field level is needed, the findings suggest that more investment is required in strengthening the service infrastructure in return areas and in developing livelihoods opportunities, access to micro-finance and inclusion of returnees into social safety nets/ social protection mechanisms for returns to be sustainable. Particular emphasis must be placed on

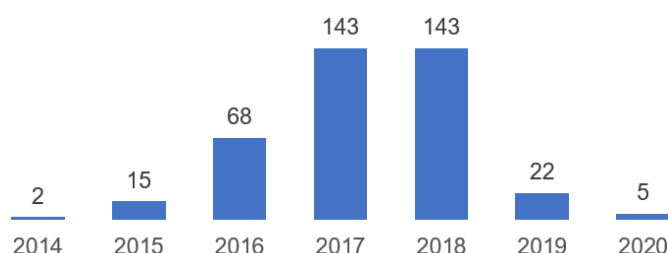
- addressing **housing, land and property issues in collaboration with the competent authorities**;
- identifying and addressing the needs of persons **with specific vulnerabilities**;
- area-based/ **whole-of-society and community-based protection approaches**;
- **transition into longer-term development type of programmes**.

Post-return monitoring is an ongoing activity of UNHCR that will continue throughout and be expanded in 2020.

Methodology

Since December 2014, UNHCR has provided assistance to approximately 16,000 households in their voluntary return to Somalia. In the current post-return monitoring system, 1,678 household level interviews (10% of the total) have been carried out by telephone and face-to-face from 2018 to date. The households sampled for telephone interviews were randomly selected from the lists of telephone numbers provided to returnee households on arrival with the goal to ensure representation by year of arrival and region of return. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with households within communities containing returnees known to UNHCR and partners and may not be strictly a random sample. A breakdown of the 2020 sample (returnee households surveyed according to return year) is depicted below. Further details on sampling methodology are available on request.

Figure 16. Sampled number of households according to return year (2020)



Joint internal and external analysis

During June 2020, UNHCR has presented preliminary findings from 2020 to external durable solutions partners as well as discussed findings with UNHCR in Kenya – the results of both discussions have led to further insights into the situation of returnees, as well as recommendations on how to address the identified issues and improvements to the approach. More detailed joint analysis sessions will be conducted as new findings arise, and a methodology has been proposed. A structured joint analysis of data enables:

- a rigorous approach to ensure that each result is given due consideration;
- findings/conclusions may be validated through consensus of actors or partners with different viewpoints (or where consensus not reached, formally documented with rationale);
- external information and expertise can be used to triangulate or shed further light on findings;
- recommendations for joint inter-agency action can be made and agreed.

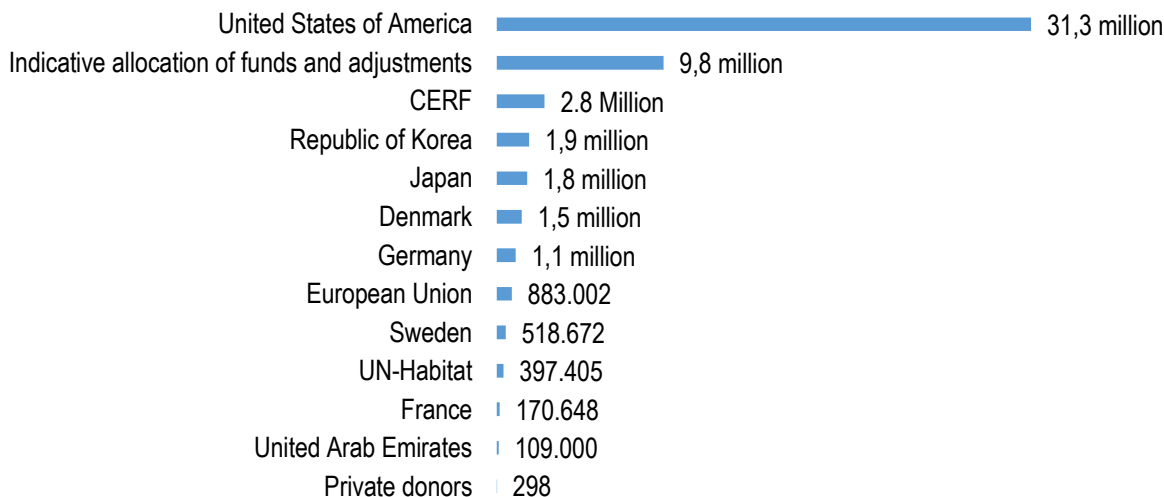
Next steps for 2020

The purpose of post return monitoring is to support key areas within UNHCR's solutions mandate such as to ensure return is informed, voluntary and conducted in a safe and dignified manner, to support the sustainability of returns and reintegration, to monitor and follow up on protection issues as well as to provide area-based information to prospective Somali refugee returnees in countries of asylum. Its primary purpose is not the assessment of humanitarian needs of returnees although key findings can provide evidence in this area. Existing needs assessment activities such as the nationwide Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA) can also inform facets of post return monitoring and the intention in 2020 is to work with existing partners such as OCHA and REACH to ensure an adequate representation of returnees within the national needs assessment and to further harmonize indicators within the agreed frameworks leading to more effective joint assessment and analysis. The impact of COVID-19 and related measures appear to have had a significant effect on the situation of returnees in 2020 and since this is likely to be medium to long term, post return monitoring will be enhanced on this issue.

Financial Information (18 August 2020)

UNHCR is extremely grateful for the crucial support provided by donors contributing to the Somalia Operation or, more broadly, global UNHCR programmes.

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