

# UNHCR SOMALIA BRIEFING SHEET

July 2010



## General Situation

Somalia is the country generating the highest number of refugees in the world, after Afghanistan and Iraq. As of the end of July 2010 there were **600,484 Somali refugees**, mainly hosted in Kenya, Yemen, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Tanzania and Uganda and 1.4 million Somalis internally displaced within the country, settled mainly in the South-Central region.

In 2010, almost 50,065 Somalis sought refuge in neighboring countries and over 200,000 were internally displaced, mainly in South Central Somalia, in particular from the capital, Mogadishu.

The collapse of the state, lawlessness and anarchy in the country, led to one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today, translating into unacceptable suffering of innocent civilians who see their basic rights violated every day.

Since the fall of the Siad Barre's regime in 1991, Somalia fell in the hands of different militias commanded by powerful warlords, who divided the country along clan lines. Since then, there have been at least 15 attempts to re-establish a national government, the last of which brought to power Sheik Shariif Ahmed, at the end of January 2009. Although the establishment of the new Transitional Federal Government was perceived with optimism by the Somali population and the International Community, Shariif is facing overwhelming challenges, as armed opposition groups continue deadly attacks on the Government and African Union peacekeeping forces, and still control large parts of Somali territory.

Somalia is a country divided in three regions: Somaliland (a self-proclaimed Independent state, not internationally recognized), Puntland (a semi-autonomous region) and the South Central Region.

The whole of Somalia continues to be in security phase IV (programme suspension), with Mogadishu and other areas on Phase V (evacuation). This has a very significant impact on the operations of UNHCR and the humanitarian community as a whole, especially in terms of the limited access to the population of concern and the limited number of staff members who are allowed to operate in filed locations.

### 2010 Key Facts and Figures

**Number of Beneficiaries:** 1,438,990

Refugees 1,838

Asylum seekers 24,924

IDPs 1,414,000 million

**Number of Staff Members:** 87 (34 in Nairobi, 53 in the Field)

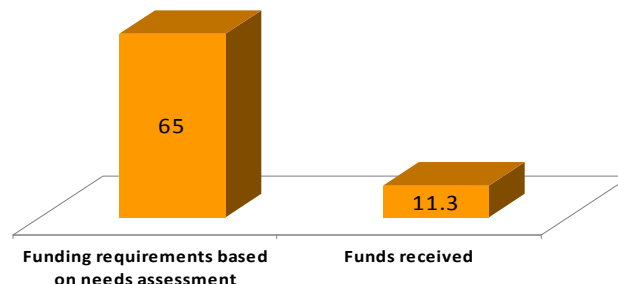
**Office Presence:** 6 Offices

1 Branch Office (Nairobi)

2 Sub-Offices (Hargeisa, Bossaso)

3 Field Offices (Garowe, Galkayo, Baidoa)

### UNHCR Somalia Funding Situation in million USD as of July 2010



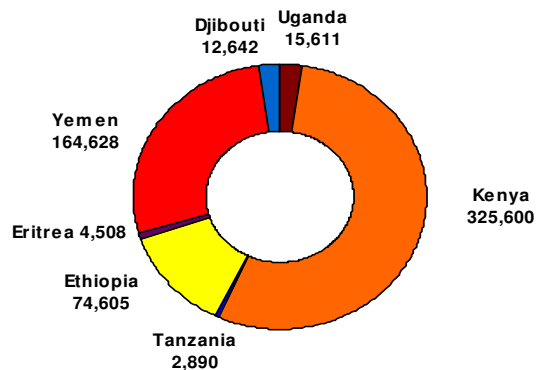
## Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Somalia hosts a total of **1,838 refugees** and **24,924 asylum seekers**, mainly from Ethiopia. UNHCR's refugee operation is focused in the regions of Somaliland and Puntland, with the overwhelming majority of the refugees and asylum seekers (precisely 90% of the refugees and 85% of the asylum seekers) being hosted in Somaliland.

In the absence of a formal national asylum framework, the situation of refugees in Somaliland and Puntland is essentially insecure and the overall protection context remains weak. This is particularly highlighted by arbitrary detention of recognized refugees, as well as the hostility and discrimination towards "foreigners" which impedes access to the (limited) socio-economic opportunities available to the local population. Refugees do not have legal rights to work, and access to protection through law enforcement and justice mechanisms is limited.

UNHCR carries out refugee status determination under its mandate and also provides health, education, shelter and legal assistance to all recognized refugees, in addition to targeted assistance to extremely vulnerable households of asylum seekers.

### Somali refugees in the region as of July 2010 Total 600,484



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## *IDPs*

As of the end of July 2010, the number of IDPs in Somalia is estimated to be **1.4 million**. Among them, one million Somalis have fled Mogadishu in 2007 and 2008, following and outbreak of violence between the transitional Federal Government (TFG) and insurgents starting in February 2007. Over 366,000 of them now live in makeshift shelters along the road linking Mogadishu to Afgooye, some few Kilometers to the west of the capital.

Following relative improvements in the security situation in Mogadishu between February and April 2009, over 65,000 internally displaced people and refugees had traveled back to the capital from various areas of South Central Somalia and Somaliland, as well as from neighboring countries, such as Kenya and Yemen. Nonetheless, after the eruption of fighting between Government forces and armed opposition groups on May 7<sup>th</sup> 2009, hundreds of thousands of people have fled from their homes in Mogadishu (over 200,000 in 2010 only).



Pregnant IDP woman collects waste to earn a living in an IDP camp in Galkayo, Puntland. B.Bannon/UNHCR

Since 2006, UNHCR Somalia co-chairs with OCHA the protection cluster, coordinating protection policies and the implementation of protection programmes targeting 1.4 million IDPs in Somalia. Important components of the work of the protection cluster are the protection monitoring and the population movement tracking system that allow all humanitarian agencies to have accurate data on the number and needs of beneficiaries, to use as a basis of their programming.

UNHCR also co-chairs the Shelter and NFIs Cluster with UN Habitat. Its coordination work allows all actors to plan jointly NFIs distributions, avoiding overlaps and gaps. The shelter activities have two main components: temporary and permanent shelter. While UNHCR is mainly responsible for the implementation and coordination of programmes related to the temporary shelter, UN Habitat is the focal point for the coordination of permanent shelter.

Distributions of emergency / temporary shelter materials and other relief items and protection cum livelihood interventions are the activities carried out by UNHCR in favor of IDPs.

In response to the emergencies in 2010, UNHCR has distributed emergency relief items to over 91,000 internally displaced people, mainly in the South Central region, where the needs are more urgent.

## *Mixed Migration*

Tens of thousands of people from the Horn of Africa risks their lives to escape conflict, poverty and recurrent drought, by undertaking a dangerous journey through Somalia and across the Gulf of Aden to reach Yemen. Many die during the journey, while others are subjected to abuse and injury at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers. The majority of the persons attempting to use these routes come from two main areas: Ethiopia (Oromo, Ogaden, and Tigrinya regions) and Somalia (Somaliland and South Central regions).

The rates of human smuggling continue to rise every year. While in 2007, 29,500 people tried to cross the Gulf of Aden, in 2008 the number raised to 50,000 with more than 1,000 who died during the journey and to 77,802 in 2009. Since January 2010, over 21,000 people crossed into Yemen. Among the people smuggled there are desperate migrants in search of better economic opportunities as well as asylum seekers who flee from persecution and war.

UNHCR Somalia is leading, together with IOM, a task force of humanitarian agencies developing policies and coordinating responses to protect migrants and asylum seekers who could potentially be smuggled. All the activities implemented try either to prevent smuggling or to respond to urgent needs of its victims.



One of the victims of human smuggling from Somalia to Yemen buried on the Yemeni shore of the Gulf of Aden A. Webster/UNHCR

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To improve the protection of the population, local authorities are trained and sensitized to respect the rights of the migrating population. Through radio messages and leaflets, UNHCR tries to inform as many people as possible about the asylum procedures existing in the regions of Somaliland and Puntland, to make all potential refugees aware of the fact that there is an alternative to risking their lives trying to cross the Gulf of Aden. The information campaign also warns against the dangers of crossing and the limited opportunities available in Yemen, especially for Ethiopians, who are not recognized as prima facie refugees and, in some instances, are reportedly forcibly returned to their country of origin.

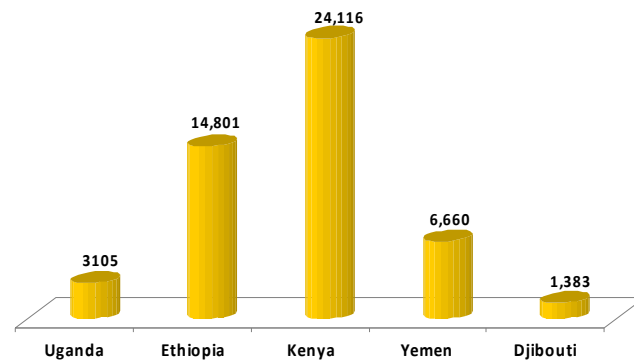
UNHCR also carefully registers all potential asylum seekers. All new mothers and pregnant women, as well as all female headed families and elderly people, receive special items and shelter material. Psycho-social support and medical assistance is also provided to the vulnerable people. In particular, HIV positive asylum seekers receive special attention and assistance in medical centers. In some cases, UNHCR provides subsistence allowances to vulnerable families in need.



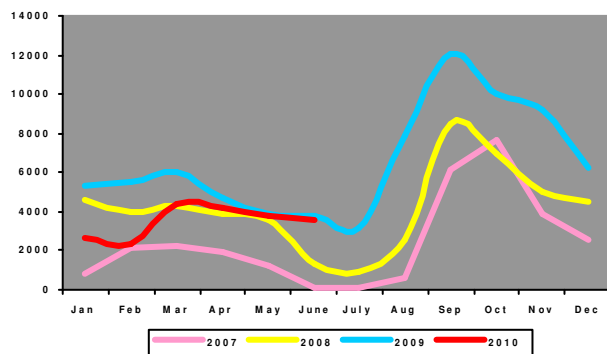
Ethiopian women in Bossasso, Northern Somalia, waiting on the shores of the Gulf of Aden for a boat that will transport them to Yemen  
A. Webster/UNHCR

Year	Total Departures	Somalis	Non Somalis	Deaths and Missing
2007	29,360	17,785	11,575	1,408
2008	50,091	33,019	17,072	743
2009	77,802	32,988	44,744	376
2010	21,035	6,660	14,375	5

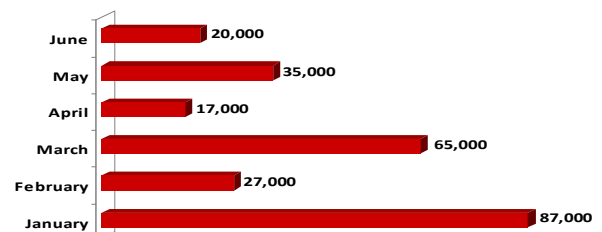
## Somali Refugees received in countries of asylum in 2010 Total 50,065



## New arrivals on the shores of Yemen



## Internal Displacement of Somalis in 2010



## UNHCR Somalia Major Donors in 2010:

Central Emergency Response Fund, European Commission, Italy, Japan, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

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