

**MISSION REPORT ON SOMALI REFUGEES IN
GODE ZONE.
(DRAFT)**

From 7th to 14th August 2011

Inter-agency MISSION TEAM MEMBERS:

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(and all other active NGOs)

OVERVIEW:

Following reports of the existence of purported refugees in Somali region in Gode and Afder zones which was brought to the attention of UNHCR and ARRA by, WFP, OCHA, WASDA and MERLIN, active NGOs in Gode, a joint ARRA and UNHCR led Taskforce, immediately formed a joint mission comprising representatives of UNHCR, ARRA and IOM to leave from Addis to Gode and to be joined by both local and international NGOs and UN bodies already active in the Gode and/or Somali region.

The team visited the targeted asylum seekers entry points and settlement areas as well captured relevant and important information in regard to the situation of refugees and the need of subsequent assistance.

Term of reference of the joint mission was as follows:

- (1) To meet with the Woreda/Zonal authorities and obtain their views on the Somali new arrivals;
- (2) To conduct an assessment of protection and assistance needs of the newly arrived population;
- (3) Through impromptu interviews to compile basic information about the group, including an assessment of places of origin, ethnicity, main reasons of flight from Somalia, desires of the group for relocation to a camp/ and or considerations for their incorporation in the local community.
- (4) To assess the possible presence of other categories of people of concern, mainly nationals affected by the drought.
- (5) To assess the extent of impact and effects of the presence of this group on the local population and the environment.
- (6) To share its findings in a common report and make necessary recommendations to UNHCR and ARRA jointly, for further necessary actions.

The mission from Addis arrived in Gode on 7/8/2011 and had meetings with both Zonal administration and the UN OCHA, WFP and NGOs in Gode, during the meeting the team was briefed on the updates in regard to purported refugees influx and living conditions within Gode zone and neighboring Afder zone .

From 8th to 9th Aug, 2011, the team started their fact finding mission by visiting the asylum seekers entry points of Morodille (Adadle Woreda, Gode)

From 10th to 11th Aug, 2011 the team visited God Dheere and Kalafo town (Kalafo Woreda, Gode zone).

From 12th to 13th Aug, 2011 the team visited Bare (Bare Woreda, Afder zone).

During our mission it was learnt that, the asylum seekers started arriving in the mentioned areas as from the beginning of July, 2011. More than 95% of the asylum seekers are estimated indeed from Somalia, while majority are women and children.

INFLUX OF SOMALI ASYLUM SEEKERS AS OF BEGINNING OF AUGUST 2011.

ZONE	WOREDA	KEBELE	NO. OF HHS	INDIVIDUALS Numbers
GODE	Adadle	Morodille	1916	11,496
GODE	Kalafo	Kalafo town	77	461
GODE	Kalafo	God Dheere	678	4068
AFDER	Barre	Barre	82	492
AFDER	Barre	El-Harr	174	1044
		TOTAL	2926	17,561

NB. The figures reflected on the table above, are the results of impromptu interviews and obtained from various channels including NGOs and Government, and are subjected to change and require further verification during the process of registration, owing to the continued arrivals of new asylum seekers.

The entry points used by the above asylum seekers are as follows;

Morodille (Adadle Woreda, Gode zone) - There are three cluster settlements about 50 meters apart in the South- Western fringe of Morodille town. Vast majority are from Rahweyen clan and originate from Bokool and Bay regions of Somalia, some minor groups also originate from Hiran and Gedo, and they speak Mai language which distinguish them from the host community.

God Dheere town (Kalafo Woreda, Gode zone) - The refugees arriving in God Dheere Kebele, are from the same areas as referred above.

Bare and El-Harr (Bare Woreda, Afder zone) - The refugees in these entry points are from Gedo and belong to the same clan and similar linguistic similarities (Mai).

Current Situation and Protection Environment:

- Volatile border situation;
- Fear of infiltration by elements of Al-Shabab;
- Proximity of Ethiopian Defense Force base.
- Continuous drought situation along the entire border zone, which has affected entire host community;

- In accessibility of road to deliver food, relief assistance.
- Administrative structures under formation in Morodille- lack of health facilities, sanitations, water, schools etc.
- Negative environmental impact which was already depleted (cutting of trees and hunting wild animals for food).
- Health hazards, such as measles, acute diarrhoea, fear of spread of epidemic TB, whooping cough etc. Lack of shelter, open defecation and random burial sites of mostly children and few adults.
- High pressure on the host community over sharing of individual food rations.
- Potential fear of epidemic out break.
- Consumption of taboo foods (leaves, domestic pets, thrown away bones etc)

Push factors:

- Persisting drought over the last three years, compelling the people to flee. While many people also lost their livestock and crops.
- Insecurity posed by the Al Shabaab, along the entire central and southern border of Somalia.
- Livestock confiscations by Al Shabaab forcing men and young adults to look after the property, weak family members and few remaining livestock.
- The ban to cross over to Ethiopia initially imposed by Al Shabbat was removed, after realizing a big number of death cases.
- Severe food shortages and lack of assistance in Somalia itself and subsequent prevention of aid workers to operate in Somalia of whom many humanitarian organizations were evicted.

Pull factors:

- Government's hospitality and host community's willingness to support, despite similar pressing situation on the host community to share their rations;
- Visible Cooperation and commitment from the Government to find lasting solutions, (i.e. ready to provide land for camp establishment, beyond the 50 KM border, whereby protection is guaranteed in a fully secure environment and access to water sources within the vicinity.
- NGOs, Local NGOs, such as OWDA and WASDA. And International NGOs ADRA, Merlin, and alongside WFP have taken some basic steps to help alleviate the needs of the host community but also extend minimal assistance to asylum seekers.

Mission's Findings:

- ✓ There is a pressing need in the areas of shelter, food, health, protection, water and NFI by which intervention is urgently needed to save the lives of many malnourished, weak and sick asylum seekers.

- ✓ There is an urgent need for registration and immediate relocation of the cases to a safer and a more protection environment.
- ✓ There is a strong unwillingness to be relocated to Dolo Ado, because of the ethnic cohesiveness, long distance owing to their villages across the border. From our spot interviews, we realized that there is no objection to community based assistance for specifically those who are currently living in Barre town (Afdar Zone, Barre Woreda) and Kalafo town (Gode zone, Kalafo Woreda).
- ✓ In the interim, the team during the final briefing requested the active NGOs in Gode zone to come up with a pledge to assist the asylum seekers in the affected areas to avert imminent deaths.
- ✓ In addition, we requested the Gode Zonal administration to enhance the relief efforts and coordination within the existing structures in an organized manner.

Recommendations:

1. There is an urgent need, to immediately dispatch food before the technical formalities and registration is in place and related essential items (NFI) as well as shelter.
2. Urgent undertaking of an immediate joint registration exercise.
3. Pre- registration sites should be established near the entry points.
4. Supply of essential drugs is urgently needed.
5. In consultation with the Zonal administration, an immediate identification of site location for camp establishment in Gode zone which is the most conducive environment.
6. In the existing contingency plan due considerations should be given to the influx occurring in Gode zone.
7. The asylum seekers in towns (specifically in Kalafo and Barre towns) to be assisted in a community based approach within their locations.
8. IOM to plan and execute relocation exercise of the asylum seekers and appropriate related assistance immediately after the registration commences at the entry sites.
9. In the interim measures, ARRA, UNHCR and IOM should have a focal point person in Gode to coordinate the activities and liaise with the head quarters in Addis Ababa.



Starving refugee in Barre makeshift camp



Severely Malnourished child in God Dheere makeshift camp



Freshly dug grave at Morodile makeshift camp