



Somalia



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	1,500,000
Percentage of total population	16.5%
Start of current displacement situation	1991
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	1,500,000 (2009)
New displacement	400,000
Causes of displacement	Internationalised and internal armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations

IDPs in Somalia had grounds for optimism at the beginning of 2009; after the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia in January, a lull in fighting allowed for the return of an estimated 70,000 people to Mogadishu up to April. Meanwhile, a new president was elected at UN-sponsored peace talks in Djibouti.

However, from May 2009, fierce fighting between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its allies including the AMISOM African Union forces and insurgent groups such as Al-Shabaab and Hisbul-Islam, and between the insurgent groups themselves, reversed this trend and led to a renewed exodus from Mogadishu and other towns. Fighting also spread to other towns as insurgent groups and allies of the government fought over territories in south and central Somalia, and residents of towns and villages surrounding Beletweyne, Kismayo, Galgaduud, and Gedo were forced to flee to other villages and into the bush.

At the end of 2009, an estimated 1.5 million people were displaced within Somalia due to the ongoing fighting. Inter-clan fighting in the relatively safe Somaliland also led to the displacement of hundreds of people in 2009.

The conflict led to the further worsening of a grave humanitarian situation and continued to severely limit the access of humanitarian agencies to internally displaced populations, as aid personnel and their property were increasingly targeted, especially by Al-Shabaab, which controls most of the territory in south and central Somalia. Al-Shabaab also publicly banned some UN agencies from working in areas under its control, forcing the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF to suspend assistance to displaced populations. In July 2009, a camp in Jowhar hosting some 49,000 IDPs was cut off from WFP assistance.

Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law were also reported in areas with internally displaced populations. Local human rights organisations and UN sources highlighted cases of insurgents recruiting child soldiers from IDP camps. Fighting close to areas inhabited by civilians and near IDP camps was also reported. The physical security of internally displaced women was an issue in all the camps, with cases of rape reported in addition to other attacks on camp residents, especially in Galkayo.

Conditions in IDP settlements in 2009 fell far short of international standards. In the area of the Afgooye corridor outside Mogadishu, one of the largest concentrations of IDPs in the world, overcrowding and a lack of basic services and sanitation

facilities created a public health emergency. In 2009, the UN-led humanitarian cluster responsible for water and sanitation was only able to supply an average of eight litres of water per day per person, while in some areas of the corridor, people had as few as two litres per day.

Sanitation in the Afgooye corridor, as in other IDP sites within Somalia, was equally insufficient. An inter-agency assessment in 2009 found that there was one latrine for every 212 displaced people in the area, although SPHERE standards prescribe a ration of one latrine for 20 people. As a result, cases of acute watery diarrhoea were reported in IDP camps.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia in 2009 was critical. Nearly half the Somali population was said to be food insecure, including the entire internally displaced population. Nonetheless, some donors cut funding to agencies in 2009 for fear that assistance might end up in the hands of insurgents. UNICEF warned that funding cuts were forcing it to reduce programmes.

Access to education and health care for internally displaced children in 2009 was among the worst in the world. One in five children was acutely malnourished and hundreds of thousands remained at risk of death. This situation was aggravated by continued fighting and impediments to humanitarian assistance. An inter-agency assessment found that emergency levels of acute malnutrition continued unabated in 2009, with one in four internally displaced children malnourished.

From 2008 to November 2009, over 40 aid workers were killed and over 30 abducted. The continued insecurity forced many agencies to relocate the few staff members still based in Somalia to Nairobi. This reduction in field capacity had a significant impact on the provision of food aid, medical assistance, health care, water and sanitation to IDPs. Local organisations tried to fill the gap left by international organisations, but their capacity and resources were insufficient to meet the needs.