

SOMALIA

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023

GBV Advocacy Brief



Overview

In the third quarter of 2023, although, Somalia averted the looming famine, due to above average Gu season rainfall, efforts of local communities & authorities and sustained humanitarian assistance, thousands of Somalis still remained vulnerable to extreme climatic shocks. The humanitarian situation compounded during the reporting period as a result of the extended effects of the unprecedented drought, increased prices of the essential commodities, political instability, eruption of clan fighting in the Sanag region of Somaliland and the ongoing conflicts. The security situation remained tense, with Al-Shabab, referred to as the non-state armed group (NSAG), frequently conducting indiscriminate attacks where civilian became victims. In a bid to reclaim territory from

the NSAG, Somali forces and their allies continued the Black Lion military operations primarily in Hirshabelle and Galmudug States. Additionally, Somalia was on the verge of another climate emergency with the prediction of extreme El Niño weather patterns during the Dyer rainy that would bring heavy rains and flooding. In the context of this crisis in Somalia during the third quarter of 2023, heightened the vulnerabilities of women and girls to gender-based violence (GBV) as a significant risk that included exploitation, sexual and intimate partner violence. Women and adolescent girls, women from minority clans, female headed households and women living with disabilities are the most marginalized and currently most affected by the crisis.



According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classifications (IPC), from July to September 2023, 3,7 million people were expected to face crisis or worse food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 3 and above) including over 900,00 who are likely to face emergency (IPC Phase 4). About 97,000 women and girls are estimated to suffer from lack of access to protective shelter and adequate specialized services for GBV

Families were forced to abandon their homes to seek refuge in makeshift shelters or overcrowded displacement camps, where they face inadequate living conditions, lack of clean water, limited access to essential services and enhanced protection risks that includes GBV. According to the Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), 198,000 people were displaced in Somalia during the quarter. Nearly 37% of the displacements is attributed to

the ongoing conflicts while 52% displacements occurred due to the extended effects of drought. Nearly, 70% of the people displaced were estimated to be women and girls.

The GBVIMS report for the third quarter recorded 2823 new GBV cases in the country that includes 714 incidents of sexual violence. This reflected an increase by 4% compared to quarter two of 2023. It was also noted 62% of the reported incidents are physical assault followed by 17% of rape. As per the case context, 57% accounted for intimate partner violence.

During the 3rd quarter of 2023, The GBV AOR partners reached 186,319 persons (77,960 Women; 23,285 Men; 45,493 Girls and 39,581 Boys) with GBV prevention, response and capacity building services.

GBV Risk and Exposure

Apart from the draught and conflict displacements, the Black Lion operations, aimed at combating insurgent groups, inadvertently contributed to the risk of GBV, as increased military presence and conflict-related violence resulted in heightened levels of violence against women and girls. It was also observed that as a result displacement many girls were subjected to forceful marriage by their parents with the aim of gaining economic support inform of dowry to cater for their basic needs in these critical times.

Women and girls were exposed to sexual violence and IPV, as they seek casual work alternatives to support household income. In such situations of hopelessness and dire poverty, women and adolescent girls may be coerced into exchanging sex for food. Moreover, the loss of income and livelihood opportunities increased economic stress, exacerbating tensions within households, and potentially leading to an uptick in domestic violence.



Actions taken by GBV partners

In response to the escalating challenges faced by women and girls affected by the crisis in Somalia, GBV AoR partners implemented a range of critical interventions to address their needs.

- Dissemination of referral pathways in targeted locations, ensuring that survivors have access to essential services.
- Enhanced and timely coordination including GBV in emergencies service delivery
- Distribution of Dignity Kits, Menstrual Hygiene Management Kits to improve protection and dignity for women and girls.
- Provision of Case Management, Psychosocial Support and Counselling.
- Cash Assistance through specialized case management for vulnerable populations.
- GBV one-stop centers and health facilities provided CMR and were supplied with Rape Kits (Kit 3)
- Deployment of mobile teams to hard-to-reach areas affected by conflict and the natural disaster.
- Awareness-raising activities were conducted in various locations. These activities covered a range of topics including referral pathways, GBV sensitization, and flood safety and response measures.

Challenges and gaps

- Limited access to the needy and operational areas.
- Limited number of specialized and trained GBV experts for GBViE service delivery has remained a challenge including the insufficient dedicated coordinators at the hubs.
- The scarcity of essential resources such as food, water, and shelter further compound the challenges faced by women and girls, forcing them to resort to negative coping mechanisms to survive.
- Insufficient funding to provide adequate services to the survivors.

Critical areas of needs as disaster preservers for vulnerable women and girls, including GBV survivors

- **Referral Pathways:** Routine update and dissemination of referral pathways in drought locations.
- **Access to GBV-Specific Healthcare and other services:** Sustain the provision of clinical management of rape, psycho-social counselling/support and case management for GBV survivors. The survivors require access to specialized healthcare services tailored to their needs.
- **Advocacy:** Advocacy to clusters and action to integrate GBV concerns in response initiatives.
- **Protection and Security:** GBV survivors are at heightened risk of further violence and exploitation during crisis. Strengthening protection mechanisms, including the presence of trained protection officers, community watch groups, and safe spaces, helps mitigate these risks and ensures the safety of survivors in affected areas.
- **Improved Coordination:** Remote support to coordination platforms to continuously monitor to ensure that standards of GBV service provision are implemented.

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