

SOMALIA

GBV Advocacy Brief

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2023



Gender Based Violence AoR
Somalia



Overview

During the last quarter of 2023, Somalia witnessed a life time El Niño event that resulted in unprecedented deluge in many parts of Somalia, plunging the country into a myriad of challenges that are exacerbated by the severe drought earlier in the year and the chronic ongoing conflict. The impact of these floods is multifaceted, affecting various aspects of life in Somalia, including infrastructure, agriculture, displacement, and conflict dynamics. The floods severely damaged infrastructure such as roads, bridges, and buildings, hindering access to essential services and disrupting transportation routes hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid and services, thereby worsening the already dire situation for affected communities especially in

areas like Luuq, Beletwayne and Baidoa. In rural areas, the flooding destroyed agricultural land, crops, and livestock, leading to food shortages and loss of livelihoods. According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classifications (IPC), from October to December 2023, 4.3 million people were expected to face crisis or worse food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 3 and above) including over 1 million who are likely to face emergency (IPC Phase 4). The corresponding figure for IPC 3 and above in the previous quarter was 3.7 million. The increase is due to a combination of factors, including the adverse impacts of El-Niño related heavy rains and flooding and anticipated decline in the level of humanitarian assistance because of funding constraints. About 700,000 women and girls are estimated to suffer from lack of access to protective shelter and adequate specialized services for GBV

Moreover, the displacement of people due to flooding compounded existing challenges associated with conflicts, internal displacements and tensions within communities in Somalia. Families were forced to flee their homes to seek refuge in makeshift shelters or overcrowded displacement camps, where they face inadequate living conditions, lack of clean water, and heightened health risks, enhanced protection risks that includes GBV, spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera and malaria According to the Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), 1.39 million people were displaced in Somalia during the quarter with 1.18 million in November 2023 alone, More than 80% of the displacements in the quarter were attributed to the unprecedented El Nino floodings. More than 65% of the people displaced were estimated to be women and girls.



Furthermore, the floods disrupted access to essential services such as healthcare and education, exacerbating the already fragile state of Somalia's public infrastructure. The inundation of health facilities and schools disrupted essential services, leaving communities vulnerable to disease outbreaks and depriving children of education.

The GBVIMS report for the fourth quarter recorded 2544 new GBV cases in the country that includes 495 incidents of sexual violence. It was also noted 50% of the reported incidents are physical assault followed by 12% of rape. As per the case context, 50% accounted for intimate partner violence. It was also observed that as a result of the floods related displacement and destruction of school

facilities many girls were subjected to forceful marriage by their parents with the aim of gaining economic support in form of dowry to cater for their basic needs in these critical times. Women and adolescent girls, women from minority clans, female headed households and women living with disabilities are the most marginalized people in Somalia, and currently most affected by the natural disaster.

During the fourth quarter of 2023, The GBV AoR partners reached 242,017 persons (108,729 Women, 31,795 Men, 61,722 Girls and 39,771 Boys) with GBV prevention, response, and capacity building services.

GBV Risk and Exposure

The severe floods in Quarter4, displacing families and derailing livelihoods escalated the vulnerability, risks and exposure of women and girls to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), compounding the already precarious situation in many areas like Luuq, Beletwayne and Baidoa. GBV encompassed various forms of violence, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, disproportionately affecting women and girls.

The breakdown of social support systems and community structures further heightened the risks of GBV. With families separated, traditional protective mechanisms weakened, leaving women and girls more susceptible to exploitation and abuse. Moreover, the loss of income and livelihood opportunities increased economic stress, exacerbating tensions within households, and potentially leading to an uptick in domestic violence.

51%

of households reported no services for women and girls

According to the Multi Sectoral Needs Assessment (MSNA), 51% of households reported no services for women and girls (psychosocial support, recreational activities, reproductive services); while 26% report that the water points are too far and expensive and 11% long waiting time. Persons with disabilities (12%) find it difficult to access water points while 26% of households reported that female members during their last menstrual period had menstrual hygiene management challenges which prevented them from working, participating in the community and/or carrying out daily tasks and responsibilities.

Actions taken by GBV partners

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

- Enhanced and timely coordination including GBV in emergencies service delivery
- Dissemination of referral pathways in targeted locations, ensuring that survivors have access to essential services.
- 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 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. Active response to reported cases were provided ensuring survivors receive necessary support.
- Training sessions and vocational programs were conducted to empower women and girls, including GBV survivors, with life skills and income-generating opportunities.
- Notably, the 16 days of GBV Activism saw extensive awareness-raising efforts, reaching over 18,000 individuals through events and sessions.

Challenges and gaps

- Pressing demand for dignity kits and specialized case management services tailored to the needs of GBV survivors and vulnerable women and girls. Case management services also include psychosocial support, legal aid, CMR and referral services.
- Urgent need to establish temporary safe spaces specifically designed for women and girls in flood-affected areas such as Luuq, Beledweyne, and Baidoa. These safe spaces serve as vital sanctuaries where women and girls can seek refuge, receive support, and access essential services in a secure and supportive environment.
- 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.

- There has been an inadequate supply of Kit 3 due to global supply challenge.
- Limited number of trained GBV experts for specialized service delivery has remained a challenge including the insufficient dedicated coordinators at the hubs.

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

- **Safe Shelter:** Ensuring safe and secure shelter for GBV survivors is paramount during floods. Temporary shelters should be equipped with privacy measures and security provisions to protect survivors from further harm and provide them with a safe space to seek refuge.
- **Access to GBV-Specific Healthcare:** GBV survivors require access to specialized healthcare services tailored to their needs. This includes reproductive health services, post-exposure prophylaxis for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, trauma counseling, and support for managing physical and psychological injuries resulting from violence.
- **Hygiene and Sanitation:** Maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation is crucial for the well-being of GBV survivors and vulnerable women and girls. Providing hygiene kits, clean water, sanitation facilities, and menstrual hygiene management resources ensures that survivors can maintain their health and dignity in flood-affected areas.
- **Protection and Security:** GBV survivors are at heightened risk of further violence and exploitation during floods. 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.
- **Legal Support:** GBV survivors may require legal assistance to access justice and protection from perpetrators. Providing legal support services, such as legal aid, counseling, and referrals to legal resources, helps survivors navigate legal processes and seek accountability for the violence they have experienced.
- **Psychosocial Support:** GBV survivors often experience trauma and psychological distress as a result of their experiences. Access to psychosocial support services, including counseling, support groups, and mental health interventions, is essential for survivors' recovery and well-being.
- **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Engaging communities in GBV prevention and response efforts is critical during disasters. Empowering women and girls to participate in decision-making processes, challenging harmful gender norms, and promoting gender equality contribute to building resilient and supportive communities against GBV.

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