

SOMALIA

GBV Advocacy Brief

JANUARY - MARCH 2023



Overview

The drought crisis in Somalia, which is now in its sixth season without rain, continues to be one of the most severe and felt shocks, endangering the lives, dignity, and prospects of millions of people. For women and girls, the impact has been severe. Ongoing conflicts, a spiraling economic crisis, displacements, unprecedented food and staple shortages, have converged to exacerbate gender-based violence. From January to March, 6.3 million people were expected to face crisis or worse food insecurity outcomes (IPC Phase 3 and above) including 322,000 who are likely to face catastrophic hunger (IPC Phase 5); while 1.2 million women and girls are estimated to suffer from lack of access to protective shelter and adequate specialized services for GBV.

New displacements within Somalia amounted to 288,000 people in January, most of which was either conflict-induced (79 percent) or drought-induced (20 percent). The GBVIMS data revealed a 5% increase in reported rape cases in February compared to January at 3% 2023. The data also showed an 6% increase in reported cases of intimate partner violence for February compared to January at 4% 2023. 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 drought.



203,597

**Number of people reached
by GBV AoR partners**

Humanitarian access remains a major impediment to the delivery of assistance in Somalia, especially in areas where conflict is ongoing and security concerns are high. Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubaland and South West State are areas of particular concern. The armed conflict in Lascanood in the disputed Sool region in December 2022 has led to injuries, loss of lives and property and displacement. To date, over 160,000 families have been internally displaced by this conflict primarily into Somaliland and Puntland while an estimated 98,000 people fled into the neighbouring Somali region of Ethiopia. Casualties from inter-communal and clan clashes in Laas Caanood in the disputed Sool Region worsened displacements and interruption in humanitarian service delivery; with increased exposure to protection risks and services.

Several areas of Somalia received moderate rains starting 12 March, with the heaviest rainfall recorded in Gedo and Bay regions, particularly in Baardheere, Wanle Wayne, Luuq and Doolow districts. According to the latest rainfall outlook for the 2023 Gu season. Partners have raised concerns over a likely deterioration of the living conditions, particularly for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in overcrowded settlements with inadequate shelter. The rains also come at a time when partners are struggling with a surge in disease outbreaks, including acute watery diarrhoea/cholera, and measles cases, which are likely to increase due to the risk of people consuming contaminated water and lack of adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities and services.



The GBV AoR Somalia response plan for 2023 targets two million people of a total of three million people in need of specialized GBV services. The target includes the newly displaced and those experiencing protracted displacement. Eighty per cent of the target population are women and girls who are at risk of exposure to GBV including Intimate partner violence, FGM, Early/ forced Marriage, sexual assault and abuse. while men and boys constitute the remaining 20 per cent. During the first quarter of 2023, The GBV AoR partners reached 203,597 persons ((96,475) 47% Women, (26,753) 13% Men, (57,144) 28% Girls and (23,225) 12% Boys) with GBV prevention, response and capacity building services.

GBV Risk and Exposure

Loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, migration of heads of household, women and adolescent girls to urban cities, IDP camps due to displacements caused by droughts and floods predispose women and adolescent girls to risks of sexual abuse and exploitation. Widows and female-headed households suffer significant vulnerabilities due to greater care burden and unpaid domestic chores worsened by water and food insecurity. Reports of rape and IPV, due to lack of proper shelter and privacy in crowded IDP settlements and distance to water points are on the increase. In 2022 GBV/ CP/ CCCM conducted a joint assessment in Banadir, Baidoa, Gedo, Dollow and Belet Wenye districts in Somalia; which indicate that only 26 per cent of the respondents (approximately three in every 10 households) reported they live in an area that have public lighting, 12 per cent live in areas that have spaces designated for women and girls, 25 per cent have lights around their latrines and bathing areas while 61 per cent indicated they que for water before and after sunrise.

Child marriage and FGM have become a negative coping mechanism for families to escape poverty, exposing the girl child to risk of physical and sexual abuse, poor nutrition, and increased chance of maternal neonatal death. The Lasanod conflict fighting resulted in attacks on civilian facilities including indiscriminate shelling affecting the main hospitals, destruction of property, markets and water points. Displaced women and girls are at risk of being raped or sexually harassed.

GBV service provision across Somalia remains low as compared to the needs and geographical landscape of response. Despite the improved funding for GBV in 2023, there are still needs for sustained CMR provision, Psycho-social counseling and support; direct cash support to meet basic needs and need to integrate GBV prevention in service delivery for IDP and host communities.

What GBV Actors are doing

- i. GBV service providers successfully adopted mobile service provision to ensure that services remained accessible despite the challenges of access to delivery site locations.
- ii. Referral pathways were updated and disseminated to ensure up to date information on service availability.
- iii. Service mobilization, sensitization and awareness raising activities were undertaken to ensure services were available and accessible. E.g marking of calendar events such as the Anti-FGM day on in February and the International Women's Day in March. GBV service providers leveraged on the events to raise awareness on GBV Prevention, Mitigation and Response.

- iv. Distribution of dignity kits to vulnerable women and girls, including GBV survivors and non-GBV survivors.
- v. Provision of psychosocial counseling and support to women and girls during service delivery, at the One Stop Shops and Women and Girls Safe Spaces.
- vi. Women and girls' safe spaces provide safe recreational spaces to build new friendships, share experience and acquire skills.
- vii. Provision of GBV Case management and PSS to survivors of GBV.
- viii. Provision of Cash and Voucher assistance to the affected women and girls.
- ix. Coordination of the GBV AoR.

Challenges and gaps in the GBV response.

Ongoing challenges include:

- i. Limited funding for GBV Programming and coordination to respond to the many needs of women and girls in Somalia.
- ii. Lack of sufficient human resources e.g., GBV Coordinators at the hubs to support GBV response and mitigation.
- iii. Limited number of trained GBV experts at the hubs.
- iv. Poor data analysis and reporting at the sub national level
- v. Inadequate legal services and support
- vi. Inadequate WGSS as first level reporting for referrals.
- vii. Limited capacity for partners to access the remote areas for service delivery.

Conclusion

GBV AoR partners will continue to focus on using the integration approach as detailed in the GBV AoR drought response integration strategy. This strategy builds on the IASC GBV guidelines for integrating GBV concerns into cluster planning, implementation, and monitoring. It is also strengthening its approaches to prevention, focusing on using community men and boys to work towards changing negative social and gender norms.

**For further information contact
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