

IN-FOCUS BRIEF – Women and Girls Situation

Middle Shabelle and Bardale/Baidoa

May 2021

Introduction:

Women, adolescent girls and children continue to be hardest hit by flooding, droughts and displacements in the first and second quarter of 2021. This in-focus brief presents the present realities of women and girls as they struggle to come to terms with human suffering and challenging conditions occasioned by the events of floods and displacements in Middle Shabelle, Bardale/Baidoa regions.

For Middle Shabelle the character of humanitarian emergency includes devastating dry seasons usually followed by alternating rainy flooding seasons. River flash floods as a result of overflow and breakage of weak river points compounded by heavy downpours led to massive flooding in both the assessed districts, Mahaday and Jowhar in Middle Shabelle region. In total **66,000** individuals have been totally displaced from their dwellings out of which **45%** are women and girls, while **28%** are children.¹ **For Jowhar in particular** - Out of the **3,593** individuals that were displaced by the Shabelle river floods, 2795 individuals of the displaced (**77%**) are female, children and girls.²

The **Bardaale** and **Baidoa** districts displacements on in April 2021 due to fear of forced recruitment and threats from Al-Shabaab worsened the burden of IDPs in Baidoa and affected a greater number of women and girls. Prior to the displacement Al-Shabab reached out to residents in the villages on the outskirts of Bardaale and Baidoa and issued a directive to conscript boys between 12 to 20 years to join the Al-Shabaab militant forces. About **6,585** households of **39,630** individuals were recorded arriving in Bardale district whereby **541** households of other displaced people moved to Baidoa. The displaced families include female headed households, children, elderly and disabled persons. **70%** of the displaced populations are women and children. About **60%** of the displaced populations settled in the already existing IDP sites while **25%** of the New arrivals merged with the local communities of their relatives.³

¹Joint multisectoral assessment May 11th-16th 2021, Middle Shabelle

²Brief from IMC, May 2021

³Initial Joint Assessment Report on Forceful Eviction in 17 Villages Toosweyne Area under Bardale District of Bay - Region Somalia on 11th - 13th April, 2021

Impact of women and adolescent girls

Floods has been completely destroyed houses, water points, latrines, street lights, poultries, farmlands, livelihoods and schools with subsequently resulted in food insecurity, family separation for children, open defecation and loss of sources of primary income for female headed households. A likelihood of an increase in GBV due to lack of physical and community protection; lack of privacy in toilets, poor shelter, reduced mobility for women to seek incomes to support their families is imminent if no action is undertaken to reduce potential GBV risks and exposure. recent May 2021 joint assessment of the GBV and CP clusters on the Bardale/Baidoa displacement found that 90% of the respondents were of the opinion that t there are no security personnel patrolling outside their camp/ community while 19% of the respondents believed that there was an increase in GBV. Out of this total - 37% indicated sexual exploitation, 33% indicated a rise in sexual harassment and abuse, 57% indicated a rise in female genital mutilation, 20% indicated an increase in intimate partner violence. Adult women 54% faced intimate partner violence while for the girl's child marriage was indicated as 64%. 89% of the respondents also highlighted that women and mens latrines and bathrooms are not separated. 80% of the respondents stated that firewood or charcoal collection are not safely and easily accessible while 96% indicated that women do not receive Non Food Items that their dignity hygiene and safety.⁴

GBV risks and exposure:

Significant GBV risks for women and adolescent girls emanate from the lack of proper shelter and lighting at IDP camps and the fear of being raped or harassment as they go in the dark to use the toilets or do open defecation. No shelters to sleep at night from the bad weather and during the day from the scorching sun compounds safety and security for women and girls and makes them susceptible for rape, sexual harassment and abuse. Lack of safe water source and distance to safe water sources. There is heightening risk of sexual violence against girls and women as they are exposed to open living conditions and lack the protective shelter. Increasing levels of IPV as men loose incomes and face a life of unemployment which may increase friction over the use of family scarce resources or may force men to migrate leaving women to become "emergency" household heads. For instance, the main source of income were the cash crops along the river bank in Jowhar which were unfortunately destroyed by the floods. The lack sources of income may increase tension and frictions in households and contribute to intimate partner violence. A recent brief report by IMC indicated 20% increase in IPV cases in Jowhar

The potential for girls to drop out of school given the destruction of schools or the need for families to use them for child labour or care burden is high. Increasing economic hardship due to the flooding is forcing some girls to drop out of school because their parents can no longer afford to pay for their school fees and other expenses.

The potential increased in forced and early marriages are expected as families struggle to provide social and economic security. There is also the physical risk of snake biting for women, girls and children as they go about seeking water, firewood or play.

⁴Joint GBV/CP Rapid Assessment – Bardale/Biadoo Displacement May 2021

Action by the GBV AoR partners, Challenges and Gaps

GBV partners are intervening to provide rape services to GBV survivors, case management and psychosocial counselling and support. GBV service mapping and community sessions on how to protect themselves against GBV in Jowhar. However, some hard to reach villages most affect in Jowhar does not these services due to access limitations as boat travel is required.

Gaps in services in include legal support, GBV safe houses, provision of solar lamps, dignity kits, mosquito nets, mattresses, bedsheets, shelter and NFI, toilets, water points and food.



Critical inputs Needed:

- i. Need for cash and voucher support to improve access to food and other basic needs for vulnerable women and girls
- ii. Need for solar lanterns and mosquito nets
- iii. Urgent need for water points are closer to communities and families
- iv. Need for lockable, safe and segregated latrines
- v. Need to support legal services and provision of GBV safe house for GBV survivors
- vi. Scale up GBV services particularly through a GBV hotline, provision of transportation for referral services and equipping health facility close to IDPs with skills and supplies for basic responses to GBV.

