

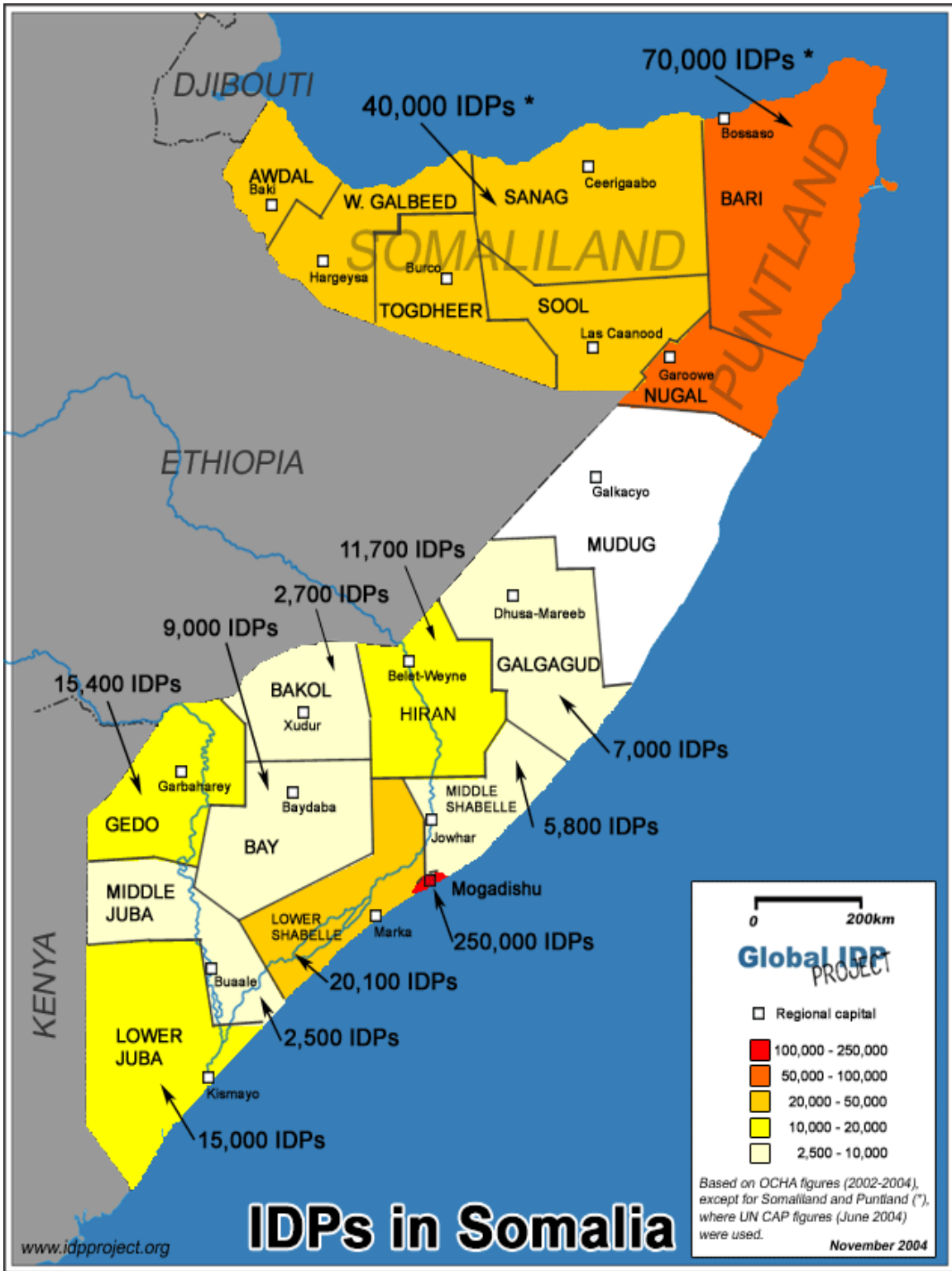
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Internally displaced Somalis face uncertain future after years of state collapse

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MAP OF SOMALIA



Executive summary

An enormous task confronts the new President of Somalia, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, if he is to restore security and a functioning government after 13 years of total state collapse. Despite rising expectations in the new government, Somalis continue to flee warfare, which has lasted for over a decade, claimed up to half a million lives and left the country with some of the lowest development indicators in the world. The north-western region has declared itself independent since 1991 and various autonomous administrations have since mushroomed. An estimated 370,000-400,000 people remain internally displaced, more than five per cent of the population. Despite a ceasefire agreed in October 2002, fighting continues intermittently. The security situation is so volatile that President Abdullahi Yusuf, elected in October 2004, cannot work from his own capital and has remained in exile in Kenya. The violence has forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes again and prevented cultivation in 2004, mainly in the regions of Mogadishu, Gedo, Juba, Shabelle and Galgadud. In addition, some regions are suffering from the worst and longest drought ever experienced since 1974, often with irreversible effects.

The fragmentation of the state has its roots in a military coup in 1969, led by Mohamed Siad Barre; he installed a dictatorial regime, whose divide-and-rule policy succeeded in polarising grievances into clan-based wars and eventually splintered its own support-base. Barre was overthrown in 1991, but the loose anti-government coalition quickly fell apart and proved incapable of changing pre-established war patterns. Since the early 1990s, various warlords have fought to establish hegemony over Somalia's most fertile lands – between the Juba and the Shabelle rivers – and key ports such as Mogadishu. These fertile regions were traditionally inhabited by minorities who today account for most of the displaced population.

Control over power and resources, notably land, has been the main driving force behind conflict in Somalia. The ethnic map of some areas was redrawn by strong clan militias who dispossessed farmers of valuable and fertile riverine lands in the south. The legitimate inhabitants were killed, evicted or conscripted as forced labour on the lands they once owned. Unless property issues are carefully addressed in the process of peace-building and reconstruction, patterns of illegal occupation will be consolidated and the return of displaced people will be seriously undermined.

Internally displaced people (IDPs) in Somalia are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable as they have lost all their assets and are subject to multiple human rights violations. They do not enjoy protection through clan affiliation; in some parts of the country the de facto authorities do not protect them and often divert humanitarian assistance. Most displaced from southern minority groups continue to suffer political and economic discrimination. Often they are denied access to the most basic services such as water, latrines and education. Women and girls are at risk of being raped by armed men when collecting water or firewood and their makeshift huts offer no protection from assailants.

In the insalubrious urban slums where they flee, they receive little or no assistance and most survive through casual work and begging. Income is barely sufficient for one meal a day, resulting in high malnutrition and mortality rates. Paradoxically, the largest IDP population lives in the country's most dangerous place, Mogadishu, where they are often forced to flee militia clashes and are exploited and abused by the gunmen who control their camps. These "gatekeepers" extort aid rations or money from IDPs and force them to work or evict them when they cannot pay.

In Somaliland, the self-proclaimed Republic in the north-west, displaced people are at risk of deportation from an October 2003 decree. Following a series of killings of foreign aid workers, authorities vowed to expel all "illegal immigrants" who were not of Somaliland origin. Since late 2003, the IDPs have lived in fear of being returned to the conflict-ridden south. In response, local ministries with UN support are planning a registration campaign which is hoped to raise awareness of and ensure respect for the rights of IDPs.

Somaliland, which proclaimed its independence from Somalia in 1991 but has not yet gained international recognition, has been the most successful in establishing peace and moving towards reconstruction. However, authorities there are unlikely to be willing to integrate IDPs locally unless substantial international support is forthcoming. It had to absorb over half a million returning refugees in the past decade with very little external support and is seriously short of water and most basic services.

The new Somali government has a huge task ahead, particularly with regard to sustaining reconciliation and reconstruction throughout the country; demobilising and reintegrating about 55,000 militiamen; controlling weapons; forming a police and military force; rebuilding a functioning judicial system and establishing mechanisms to share internal revenues, among others. The new President has also asked the African Union to deploy 20,000 peacekeeping troops to consolidate the repeatedly violated 2002 ceasefire.

In addition, the President – and former leader of the self-declared autonomous region of Puntland in the north-east since 1998 – has yet another conflict to manage. Soon after he was sworn in an unconfirmed number of people were killed in clashes over the contested status of the Sool and Sanaag regions. These regions fall within the boundaries of former British Somaliland, but are claimed by Puntland as part of its territory on the basis of clan-affiliation.

Consolidating a functional government and restoring peace and security in a country largely controlled by warlords and free-lance gunmen will surely take time. As long as insecurity prevails, IDPs face an uncertain future and foreign assistance will remain inadequate. However, assistance to communities in existing pockets of security is possible and should be encouraged. Local efforts by civil society, elders and businessmen interested in establishing a more peaceful and secure environment deserve particular support. Unless international financial support for peace and reconstruction is raised drastically, the chances for IDPs to return to their homes and reintegrate will remain illusory.

Key recommendations

To the new government and local authorities of Somalia:

Once the new Federal Somali Government is operational and exerting authority, it should:

- Abide by their commitments and national obligations towards ensuring adequate protection and assistance of all citizens, including internally displaced people
- provide particular protection to displaced women and IDPs from minority groups not belonging to the clan system or seeking refuge far away from their clan-home area, who are particularly exposed to serious human rights abuses
- establish a functioning judicial system to protect the rights and freedoms of the Somali citizens, including the different minority groups, ethnicities, gender, and clans
- develop strategies for, and implement, the demobilisation and reintegration of militias in order to restore security and create conditions conducive to the return of IDPs
- develop a national strategy for the return and reintegration of IDPs, which should be based on a needs assessment determining the preferred durable solution of the displaced

To the government, local authorities, the UN and donor countries:

- address the complex issue of property restitution to IDPs, to avoid the consolidation of the illegal occupation of land, create conditions for sustainable return, and revive the agricultural sector ensuring food self-reliance

To the UN and donor countries

- contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to return and reintegration, including by
 - increasing support to communities in stable and secure areas of the country
 - decentralising aid flows to local authorities showing commitment to good governance, as well as to grassroots organisations
 - identifying civil society actors including elders and members of local business communities, who have an interest in work for a more peaceful and secure environment and supporting their efforts as way to promote peace, stability and reconstruction

- provide financial assistance, capacity-building and training to local human rights, humanitarian and development organisations
- significantly raise development assistance to facilitate the integration of the 800,000 returning refugees in Somaliland in order to ease social tensions
- ensure that assistance actually reaches IDPs in Somaliland by designing projects which positively discriminate displaced people from south and central Somalia who are often denied access to their rights and to the most basic services
- ensure that projects be designed and implemented on the basis of needs assessments and sound socio-cultural and economic analysis in order to provide IDPs with adequate assistance
- mainstream protection throughout assistance and development activities targeted at IDPs

To the Somaliland authorities and the UN

- implement the planned registration of IDPs as a step towards recognising them as uprooted people in need of assistance and having the right to stay or return when conditions have improved in their areas of origin
- train and sensitize authorities about IDPs' rights and their responsibility towards the displaced
- train and properly inform IDPs about the registration so that they can be fully involved in the process

Background and political developments

The fragmentation of the Somali state has its roots in a military coup in 1969, led by General Mohamed Siad Barre; he installed a dictatorial regime, whose divide-and-rule policy succeeded in polarising grievances into clan-based wars and eventually splintered its own support-base. In 1991, the state collapsed and Barre was overthrown, but the loose anti-government coalition quickly fell apart and proved incapable of changing pre-established war patterns. Thereafter, the country descended into a full-fledged civil war and has remained without an effective central government for 13 years. Various warlords fought over the control of key resources, embedded in the capital Mogadishu, port-towns, and the fertile lands between the Juba and Shabelle rivers. A short-lived US-led military peacekeeping operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), ended in a fiasco. Serious misjudgement in 1993 embroiled the UN in the war and culminated in the killing of hundreds of Somali civilians and tens of foreign peacekeepers in Mogadishu. The UN eventually pulled out in 1995.

In 2000, a Transitional National Government (TNG) was created at peace talks in the Djibouti town of Arta. The TNG never gained broad-based recognition and faced continued opposition from all sides. It was unable to assert control over Mogadishu and attempts to impose its authority outside the capital have been unsuccessful. For the past four years, clans and factions grouped under the umbrella of the Somalia Restoration and Reconciliation Council (SRRC) as well as Mogadishu-based warlords have fought against TNG forces and its allied militias, resulting in heightened armed conflict in southern and central Somalia.

After more than a dozen failed peace initiatives, a National Reconciliation Conference was launched in late 2002, under the mediation of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). After two years of negotiations in Mbagathi, Kenya, the conference agreed on the composition of a new parliament, which in October 2004 elected Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, the former leader of the self-declared autonomous region of Puntland, as President of Somalia for a transitional period of five years. However, the President, his Prime Minister – who will form the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) – and the Transitional Federal Parliament remained in exile in Kenya because of the volatile security situation in the capital Mogadishu. The parliament is composed of 275 members, with an equal share of seats allocated to the main clans of southern/central Somalia (Darood, Hawiye, Digil-Mirifle and Dir) and the 31 remaining seats to the minorities. The planned 12 per cent ratio for women was not met. During the interim period, until a representative government is elected, the TFG faces enormous tasks. It will have to sustain reconciliation and reconstruction throughout the country, consolidate the ceasefire, demobilise and reintegrate about 55,000 militiamen, re-build a functioning judicial system, control weapons, form a police and military force and establish mechanisms to share internal revenues, among others (IRIN, 26 October 2004; IRIN, 8 September 2004). It will also need to prove to the Somali population that a revived state is not just an instrument of predatory accumulation, repression, expropriation and clan hegemony.

In order to monitor the October 2002 ceasefire between faction leaders and the TNG, which has been repeatedly violated, the new President requested the African Union to supply up to 20,000 peacekeeping troops. However, many Somalis who remember the UN intervention in Somalia are uneasy about the prospect of another peacekeeping force, and free-lance gunmen see it as a threat to their employment (IRIN, 8 September 2004). In such a context, the consolidation of a functional government, peace and security will take time. Meanwhile, more assistance should be provided to existing pockets of security. Efforts of civil society, elders and businessmen interested in establishing a more peaceful and secure environment deserve particular support (Menkhaus, forthcoming).

While the southern and central regions of Somalia have been plunged in civil war and lawlessness, the self-declared, internationally not recognised Republic of Somaliland in the north-west has been the most successful in establishing peace and moving towards reconstruction. Somaliland proclaimed its independence from Somalia in 1991, following a brutal campaign of repression of the region's rebel movement by the Barre regime, during which up to 1.5 million people were displaced and hundred of thousands fled abroad (USCR, 2001). The regime's counter-insurgency operation had culminated in a civil war in 1988, and the systematic targeting of the regions' Isaaq clan members, seen as supporters of the insurgency, led to charges of genocide (IGAD/UNHCR/UNDP, December 2000, p.7). Since 1991, Somaliland has reintegrated 800,000 returning refugees, rebuilt cities and established a government with hardly any external support (UN, 18 November 2004, p.7). Its people reaffirmed their vote for independence in a referendum in 2001 and held peaceful presidential elections in 2003, laying the basis for a multi-party system. Somaliland has refused to take part in the Mbagathi negotiations, reiterating its claim of independence.

In the north-east, the self-declared autonomous region of Puntland was established in 1998. It was led by Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed (now President of Somalia) and went into a political crisis in 2001 when he refused to hand over power to his successor. The ensuing armed conflict was settled in May 2003 by a power-sharing agreement through which cabinet posts were assigned to the opposition and rival militias were integrated into the army. However, Abdullahi who seems to derive most of his power from military strength, appears to have devoted most of his energies to his presidential ambitions; and the Puntland administration has never been really functional, including for reasons of limited resources and capacity (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003). During September and October 2004, an unconfirmed number of people died in clashes between Puntland and Somaliland over the contested status of two border regions (IRIN, 1 November 2004). Puntland claimed the Sool and Sanaag regions as part of its territory on the basis of clan-affiliation. While they fall geographically within the borders of pre-independence British Somaliland, most of their inhabitants belong to the clan associated with Puntland but are sharply divided in their loyalties. The ascension to the presidency of the former Puntland leader has changed the balance of power; pressure on Somaliland to reunite with Somalia will increase and the two regions could become another flashpoint for conflict (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.23). It is hoped that the aspirations for peace existing in both regions will counter-balance these tensions.

Somalia's neighbours have played ambivalent roles, at times mediating peace negotiations and at times involved in virtual proxy wars in Somalia (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.15). The UN Security Council has repeatedly condemned the continued flows of weapons to Somali factions from all neighbouring countries, which violate the 1992 arms embargo, fuel conflict and risk jeopardising lengthy negotiation efforts. To tackle the problem, the UN Secretary-General extended the mandate of a monitoring group until March 2005 (UN News, 26 August 2004).

Causes and patterns of displacement

Since the 1970s, Somalia has drifted from one emergency to another, running the whole gamut of civil and inter-state wars, fragmentation, repression and famine. The conflict, which has claimed up to half a million lives since 1991, has centred on control over power and resources, notably land, water, the livestock trade and aid. Warlords have deliberately displaced people, looted and destroyed food stocks, mined watering places, grazing lands and major trading roads, and destroyed medical and administrative infrastructures, in order to prevent people from other clans from sustaining a livelihood. The most ravaged regions have been the southern and central areas and the main ports of Mogadishu and Kismayo. Armed factions have fought to gain control over their supposed "native territories", often forcing local minority groups and clans to either become subservient, or to escape before being killed. Occupying militias commonly levy taxes at gunpoint in areas and routes under their control, forcing many poor farmers to move out of their lands. It is the farming minorities traditionally inhabiting the fertile riverine lands in the south, who have been worst affected by these scorched earth policies. While they constitute one-fifth of the Somali population, they account today for most of the displaced (UN, 18 November 2004, p.9).

It is unusually hard to give meaningful figures for displacement in a country where two-thirds of the population led a nomadic or semi-nomadic existence, traditionally moving with their herds to and from grazing and agricultural lands, water sources and trading centres. Wars and natural disasters have complicated and hampered these seasonal migrations. Since the 1990s people have increasingly moved to the



Internally displaced children and young adults living in one of the 13 settlements in Bosaso, Puntland. (Benetti/2004)

main towns such as Mogadishu, Kismayo, Bosaso or Hargeisa, in search of work, food, water and medical assistance.

In 2004, rough estimates were that up to 400,000 people were internally displaced in Somalia, out of a total population of 6.8 million (UN, 18 November 2004; UNDP, 2004). At the height of fighting in 1992, up to two million people were internally displaced and another million had fled to neighbouring countries (UNICEF, 10 December 2003). Tracking displaced populations in Somalia is particularly difficult as virtually all Somalis have been displaced by violence at least once in their life. In addition, many IDPs are dispersed, or living in unplanned settlements alongside destitute rural and urban populations rather than in camps (UN November 2001).

In the first place, people tend to flee within their region of origin and seek protection where their clan is dominant. However, the protracted nature of conflict which has changed the ethnic map of certain areas, has forced many people to flee far away from their kin. Many reached the relatively secure areas of Somaliland and Puntland in northern Somalia, where they mingled with other indigent groups and waves of returning refugees.

As a result of the recurrent insecurity in the south and centre of the country, very few IDPs have gone back to their areas of origin and many have lived for over ten years in overcrowded and unsanitary urban slums. There, they tend to regroup in unplanned settlements along ethnic lines. An estimated 40,000 IDPs lived in Somaliland, most of them in Hargeisa (UN, 15 June 2004). Puntland hosted some 70,000 IDPs, including a recent influx of IDPs from Somaliland among which about 28,000 lived in Bosaso port in about 13 settlements (UN, 15 June 2004; 18 November 2003). Ironically, the most dangerous place in the country, Mogadishu, has attracted the largest population of displaced people, up to 250,000, mainly due to perceived economic opportunities the capital offers (UN, 18 November 2004).

Recent displacements

Since 1995, there have been few large-scale displacements in Somalia. However, tens of thousands of people are temporarily displaced by localised conflicts every year. Despite the peace process launched in 2002, intermittent conflicts have made the ceasefire meaningless, preventing people from cultivating their lands and forcing thousands of Somalis to flee again, mostly in the regions of Mogadishu, Gedo, Juba, Shabelle and Galgadud.

Another wave of inter-clan violence in Gedo during May-June 2004 may have displaced up to 10,000 people, who sought refuge in Beletamin camp, already hosting about 4,000 people. Thousands fled across the borders to Kenya and Ethiopia (ACT, 17 September 2004). Meanwhile, reconciliation efforts among Rahanweyn elders have improved security in the Bay and Bakool regions and triggered the return of thousands of people who had been displaced by power-struggles among the higher ranks of the Rahanweyn Resistance Army in October 2003 (UN, 15 June 2004, p.3).

In Mogadishu violent conflicts between Abgaal sub-clans over the control of the northern part of the city forced about 7,500 families to flee and over 100 people were killed in May 2004 (OCHA, 31 May 2004; 9 July 2004).

In the Lower Juba region, General Mohamed Said Hersi's forces clashed with the Juba Valley Alliance (JVA), the militia coalition that controls Kismayo, causing temporary displacements in September 2004 (IRIN, 20 September 2004). These two sides fought over control of this port in 1999 and 2001. It has become southern Somalia's main market for food, especially as Mogadishu port remains closed due to insecurity.

Since April 2003, clan conflicts over control of grazing lands and water in the Galgaduud region have continued intermittently into 2004, displacing between 5,000 and 9,000 people. The IDPs whose houses and water stores have been destroyed and livestock killed had little to survive on. And local communities' ability to cope with the influx was compounded by serious shortages of food and water due to current drought conditions (UN, 15 June 2004, p.2; UN SC, 12 February 2004).

Critical lack of protection

For over a decade, IDPs in Somalia have been among the most vulnerable in the world. Somalis have been deliberately displaced by warlords and militias aiming at gaining or maintaining control over resources and power. Civilians continue to be deliberate targets of militia attacks as most warring parties are unwilling to recognise any rule of law or unable to implement it (UN, November 2002, p.14). International protection standards as set forth in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have proven difficult to implement during the past 13 years of state collapse. Under these conditions IDPs have not been protected by local or de facto authorities, nor do they have access to due process of law in the absence of a properly functioning legal system (UNCHR, 30 November 2003). Now that a new President has been elected, there is an embryonic state to be held accountable for the fate of its people and responsible for the protection of its displaced citizens. However, state building and the establishment of law and order will take years to consolidate, in a country whose southern and central regions are still mostly controlled by warlords and militias.

Most IDPs in Somalia belong to ethnic minorities such as the Bantu and Bajuni communities or minor clans with a low social status, and have suffered a long history of discrimination, land dispossession and forced displacement. Since protection is granted through clan affiliation in Somalia, displaced people from minority groups, not belonging to the clan system or seeking refuge far away from their clan-home area, have been particularly exposed to serious human rights abuses including physical violence, rape, forced labour, evictions and theft.

Mogadishu, home to the majority of Somalia's IDPs, is divided by a "green line" separating the north and the south of the city, dominated by the Abgal and Haber Gedir clans respectively, with each part being fragmented into smaller fiefdoms controlled by seven to

ten rivalling warlords fighting each other. As a result, IDPs and local residents are often caught in the cross-fire of violent conflicts and are forced to flee again, putting their lives at risk when trying to cross from one part of town to another.

IDP settlements in Mogadishu and other southern towns are often controlled by “black-cats” or “gatekeepers”, who sometimes offer some degree of security to camp residents but in exchange extort money and food aid rations from IDPs. Some reportedly extorted as much as 75 per cent of aid destined for IDPs (ODI, 31 December 2003, p.13-4). In case the inhabitants cannot pay, they are forced to work for the gatekeepers for free. Rape and forced labour at gunpoint are common occurrences in these IDP settlements (OCHA IDP Unit, 16 April 2004).

Particularly vulnerable are women and children who constitute three-quarters of the displaced population in Somalia (UNCU, 30 July 2002). Rape has been used frequently as a weapon of war by militias in retaliation or to humiliate a subjugated ethnic group (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003; UNCU/OCHA, 1 August 2002). The level of assault reported by IDPs in camps clearly confirms that women and girls are not adequately protected in this environment; about one-third of children reported rape as a common problem within their family, a significantly higher proportion than the 17 per cent recorded among the general population (UNICEF, 10 December 2003, p.29). Women and girls are at particular risk of rape when they walk long distances away from the camps in search of water or firewood. At night, the lack of latrines forces them to walk to the margins of the settlements where they are at great risk of attack. As a result of war, many households are headed by women. Their small huts made of cloths with often no proper door offer no protection against assaults by men stealing belongings and raping women at gunpoint with impunity (Interviews conducted by the Global IDP Project, Bosaso, August 2004). Displaced women from minority groups or outside their clan home area pose no threat of retaliation let alone punishment. Women have often little recourse to systems of justice – whether through clan customary law (*xeer*) or Islamic law (*sharia*). They are also afraid to report sexual abuses because they are often not welcome in the areas where they have taken refuge and because of the social stigma associated with rape.

Fires in IDP settlements are recurrent in northern Somalia. Some 1,200 IDPs were left homeless and five were killed after a fire broke out in a Bosaso camp in July 2003, probably due to the fact that women use cooking fires in small huts made out of old rags, cardboard and sticks. In addition to losing all their belongings, many of them cannot afford to rebuild their huts and



Typical IDP huts made out of old rags, plastic, ropes and sticks, Hargeisa, Somaliland. (Eschenbacher/2004)

end up even more deprived, without assistance, living in the open or temporarily with friends. Another fire incident in a settlement in Hargeisa left hundreds of mostly women and children without shelter in late 2003 (UNCHR, 30 November 2003, para.59).

The protection of IDPs in the north-west has been further threatened since October 2003, when the Somaliland administration issued a decree by which it would deport all “illegal immigrants” who were not of Somaliland origin (UNSC, 12 February 2004, para.35). This raised particular concern for people displaced from southern and central Somalia, who are considered “foreigners” by the Somaliland authorities and would face high insecurity were they to return to their areas of origin. These IDPs are often stigmatised for coming from the region associated with the crimes of the Barre dictatorship (Ibrahim, 15 August 2002, p.5). Northern authorities have not treated IDPs as citizens with equal rights, nor have they facilitated their socio-economic and political integration. Today, they live in the most squalid slum and waste areas on the outskirts of main towns. IDPs have been denied access to basic services and subject to forced relocations. They have also suffered harassment and human rights violations when competing with local labour or begging on the streets (OCHA, 23 April 2004; UN, 18 November 2003, p.13). Although the decree has not been implemented, IDPs are living in constant fear of deportation from Somaliland and many have sought safety in Puntland (OCHA, 23 April 2004).

Supported by the UN, the Somaliland authorities are planning to register all “illegal immigrants”, including people displaced from southern and central Somalia, in order to define which categories would be entitled to protection under international refugee law, humanitarian standards or human rights law. The registration could result in the recognition of the displaced as uprooted people in need of assistance who have the right to stay or return when conditions improve in their areas of origin. Documentation issued as part of the registration could help IDPs filing claims to regain their land upon their return home. The registration campaign would also give a better picture of their numbers, needs and location. It could significantly improve their humanitarian and protection situation, provided the authorities are properly trained and sensitised about IDP rights, the displaced are fully informed about the purpose of the registration and involved in the process, and that it leads to an increase in assistance (Interviews, Hargeisa, August 2004).

Property, return and resettlement - the cornerstones of peace

Control over power and resources, notably land, is the main driving force behind conflict in Somalia. The war has redrawn the ethnic map of some areas, as strong clan militias took possession of valuable and fertile lands in the south. The legitimate inhabitants were often evicted or fled massacres and sometimes were conscripted as forced labour onto the lands they once owned (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.32). To cite only a few examples, militias of the Hawiye clan occupied areas of Mogadishu, Lower Shabelle and Juba valley. The Marehan clan occupied areas once inhabited by the Rahanweyn and Aulihan clans; in turn the Aulihan displaced Bantu communities and Hawiye clansmen in the Buaale area. In 1999 militias loyal to the Haber Gedir clan carried out a scorched earth policy against Ra-

hanweyn villages in the Bay region (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.18-19). The illegal occupation of property and farmland is a key problem to be addressed in the process of peace-building and reconstruction in Somalia. Until then, it will seriously constrain the ability of IDPs to return to their areas of origin.

Despite hopes of stability and potential return raised by the election of a new President, internally displaced people from south and central Somalia still have few real incentives to go back to their home areas. For most of those who were originally residents of Mogadishu, Juba, Shabelle or Gedo regions, return is neither safe nor viable yet (OCHA, 5 August 2004). As mentioned above, most of their lands have been occupied by other clans, their villages were sometimes burnt to the ground – such as in Bu'ale, Middle Juba during the clashes of the past two years. Over 80 per cent of southern Somalis in Hargeisa cited war and insecurity as the main obstacle to return (Clark, June 2002, p.31). The lack of viable return opportunities consolidates the illegal, nepotistic and violent transfer of property started under the Barre dictatorship, undermines prospects for durable solutions and ultimately is an obstacle to reconciliation.

Land dispossession in areas of origin and lack of access to land in areas of refuge are the most serious problems affecting IDPs. IDPs from minority groups and outside their clan home area usually do not have access to land other than rented plots. Land in Somalia tends to belong to specific clans. The dominant clans inhabiting the regions where IDPs seek safety would not easily sell land to “outsiders” or members of other clans (Lindgaard, 23 March 2001). Even where possible, buying land would increase the risk of IDPs being dragged into conflicts which they normally want to avoid given their particular vulnerability. In addition, there mostly is no or not enough public land available that could be allocated to IDPs by local authorities. As a result, the vast majority of IDPs rent plots on privately-owned land while the rest squat temporarily on government sites or abandoned buildings. Most IDPs are unprotected and can be evicted by landlords or authorities at any time. The insecurity of land tenure and ownership was cited as the primary concern of IDPs during a survey conducted in 2002 (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.19).

In Somaliland, the land problem is exacerbated by the fact that authorities have had to absorb 800,000 returning refugees in the past decade, out of which 470,000 were assisted by UNHCR. However, the vast majority returned to the capital Hargeisa rather than to their areas of origin and had to be provided with land to resettle. Somaliland, like most of Somalia, has received hardly any external support despite suffering from great poverty, unemployment and lacking most basic services. Ninety-five per cent of the returnees are unable to meet their basic needs, according to UNHCR, and there is fierce competition for land with access to basic facilities. Water, for instance, is extremely scarce, even for local residents. The government has started relocating returning refugees who had settled spontaneously on government and private land alongside IDPs, to Aw Aden and Ayaha permanent sites. While returning refugees were registered for relocation on the presentation of a refugee card, IDPs appeared not to be included in the relocation programme. Although a few of the displaced managed to rent plots from returning refugees who had multiple refugee

cards, most were stranded on the street with their huts dismantled having nowhere to resettle (Interviews, Hargeisa, August 2004).

In Bosaso (Puntland), the issue of land tenure of IDPs is largely related to urban planning. IDP settlements are built on privately-owned land, and since the municipality owns hardly any land,



Displaced families stranded with their dismantled homes, Hargeisa, Somaliland. (Benetti/2004)

it is difficult to find a plot to relocate IDPs. An attempt in 2002 failed, due to disagreements among the Bosaso authorities, on whether to return or integrate IDPs locally, as well as disagreement with UN agencies who have provided hardly any support to the IDPs in the past decade (UNCU, 30 July 2002, pp.18-9). The land was far from town, lacked transport facilities and job opportunities. The lack of cadastral surveys made it difficult to determine who the land belonged to, therefore agencies were reluctant to provide services to it. The Bosaso authorities were still trying to find land closer to town to relocate IDPs as of August 2004 (Interviews, Bosaso, August 2004). However, they are by and large reluctant to allocate land to displaced people from the south to avoid attracting more people. Bosaso has seen its population increase nearly 30-fold in the past 15 years, mostly due to war- and drought-induced in-migration, and has become a major port and trading city (Interviews, Bosaso, August 2004).

Despite the frequent outbreak of fires in IDP settlements, the displaced continue to build their huts with cheap and highly inflammable materials. Fear of eviction, hopes to be resettled and the wish to return to their home areas once the security situation allows, have deterred many of them from investing in their housing (Interviews, Hargeisa and Bosaso, August 2004; Clark, June 2002, p.28).

International agencies have also been reluctant to invest in water points, latrines or other infrastructure development projects in IDP settlements situated on privately owned land, as there have been numerous cases of landlords or militias appropriating and privatising such facilities in order to charge fees from IDPs for their use (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.19). Displaced people from southern/central Somalia in Hargeisa (Somaliland) were discriminated against by returnees originating from Somaliland who sometimes restricted their access to resources and services as they did not consider these “outsiders” as being entitled to assistance, according to observers (Interviews, Hargeisa, August 2004).

No access to most basic services and low nutritional status

IDPs' access to the most basic services was said to be close to non-existent in Somalia, one of the world's poorest countries. Intermittent fighting and drought mean that conditions in IDP settlements are more crowded than ever, with associated high levels of disease. Dehydration from diarrhoea is one of the main causes of death, reflecting the fact that close to 80 per cent of the Somali population have no access to safe water and nearly half have no access to sanitation (UN, 18 November 2004, p.22). Moreover, IDPs often have to pay to use latrines in addition to paying rent, in the insalubrious settlements where they live. As a result most camps are littered with garbage and faeces, increasing the incidence of disease.

In Gedo, women and girls displaced within and outside Belet Hawo town walked 10 km daily to fetch water, increasing the risk of being raped by militias. This is why most families lived on less than 10 litres of water per day per person, far below the minimum recommended of 15 litres (ACT, 17 September 2004). In a desert environment, water has been a highly coveted resource; as a result, most existing water sources have been destroyed or contaminated by warring factions in order to deprive the enemy; for example, out of 175 wells in Bay and Bakool, over 100 have been damaged beyond repair (UNICEF, 6 September 2000). When available, water is often sold at prices unaffordable to IDPs, who have no choice but to drink from contaminated streams. In Hargeisa IDPs paid three times as much as local residents for water (ACC/SCN 41, April 2003). Due to the lack of safe drinking water and sanitation in IDP camps, there are endemic outbreaks of cholera every dry season in the main towns like Mogadishu. In the rainy season, floods are common and about 1,000 displaced families in Mogadishu had their huts washed away and destroyed in June 2004 (OCHA, 9 July 2004).

At least 1.3 million people require emergency food assistance in Somalia until early 2005 (FEWS, 27 September 2004). The North is suffering a fourth consecutive year of drought in 2004, something not experienced since 1974. Many pastoralists have lost up to 90 per cent of their stocks and seen their livelihood and way of life destroyed, often irreversibly. Despite the comparative fertility of their lands, the southern



Resettled people queuing for water, Hargeisa, Somaliland. (Benetti/2004)

and central regions are also seriously food insecure, mostly due to intermittent fighting and consecutive years of below normal rainfall. As concerns the nutritional status of the displaced, they are at three times greater risk of malnutrition than resident populations (ACC/SCN 39, 31 October 2002, p.16). IDP malnutrition rates at about 20 per cent in

2004 far exceeded the emergency threshold, particularly affecting Bosaso, the Juba riverine areas and Galgadud (FSAU, 13 October 2004). Malnutrition among displaced children in Mogadishu, where high insecurity impedes the conducting of regular assessments, peaked at 39 per cent in 2002, falling to 15 per cent in 2004 (FSAU, 31 May 2004; 31 August 2002). The southern riverine areas, once Somalia's breadbaskets, are the most affected by conflict-induced food insecurity, with Gedo registering the worst malnutrition rates at 34 per cent in 2004 mainly due to insecurity (ACT, 17 September 2004). In 2004, the riverine areas are suffering from unusual crop losses of between 60-80 per cent in some parts (FEWS, 27 September 2004). As a result, food prices reached record highs and with purchases being the main source of food for 99 per cent of IDPs, their nutritional intake seriously shrank (FSAU, 31 May 2004).

High malnutrition rates among IDPs not only reflect low purchasing power but also the poor quality of the intake of nutrients and early weaning practices. In Bosaso and Somaliland for example, two-thirds of displaced children were weaned before the age of six months, resulting in high incidence of diseases. This was often due to the fact that poor women, often the main bread-winners, engage in petty trade and casual work, at the expense of child care practices (FSAU, 31 May 2004).

Health services and infrastructures have been ravaged by war and only one-fifth of the Somali population have access to health care. Most hospitals lack equipment and drugs and there are fewer than 15 qualified doctors per million people (MSF, 9 December 2002). Nearly a quarter of Somali children die before they reach the age of five and mortality rates among displaced children are up to 60 per cent higher than among the local population (UNICEF, 10 December 2003; UN, 18 November 2003, p.12). The maternal mortality rate is one of the highest in the world due to the fact that most deliveries take place at home and the widespread practice of female genital mutilation increases the incidence of maternal mortality. The health status of IDPs is considered to be even worse as most of them lack access and/or cannot pay for medical care. For example, Bosaso has only one mother and child health centre for a population of over 120,000 people including about 28,000 IDPs (UN, 18 November 2003, p.153).

IDPs' self-reliance stretched by war, economic shocks and drought

During the past 13 years of protracted war, Somalis have survived in one of the most extreme environments, lacking a functioning government or basic services, and with hardly any foreign assistance. Today recurrent droughts and war have stretched their coping mechanisms to the limit. The fine socio-economic balance between pastoral and agricultural communities based on the exchange of milk and meat products against cereals and the right to seasonally graze on fallow lands has been greatly disrupted. Somalia is the third poorest country in the world, with nearly half of the population living in extreme poverty, on less than \$1 per day (UNDP, 2004; UNHCR, 30 January 2004). Displaced people live in even poorer conditions as they have lost their properties and productive assets, are in a

difficult social and political environment and lack relief food and assistance from aid agencies.

War, displacement and the collapse of the industry and service sectors have resulted in unemployment rates affecting 65 per cent of the urban work force (UNDP, 2004). In Somalia, the division of labour is established along identity. Each clan or ethnic group has specific skills adapted to their survival needs and environment. For example, the Galgala are traditionally wood craftsmen, other minority groups like the Tumul are blacksmiths, the Midgan work with hides. The Bantu are traditionally small-scale farmers whose agricultural skills are not transferable to the urban environment where they flee; the same applies to displaced agro-pastoralists and nomads. These groups usually work in labour-intensive, low-skill and low-income jobs. The men find irregular employment as porters, builders, latrine-diggers or casual labourers and the women work as domestic servants, garbage collectors, cleaners or petty traders (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.26).

The labour market is also regulated by clan and sub-clan networks. IDPs lack the capital and the social connections to have access to trade and market activities which tend to be dominated by sub-clans of the Isaaq in Somaliland and by Margeeten and other Harti sub-clans in Puntland. In both regions, IDPs competing with local labour or begging on the streets have been subject to beatings, robberies, and other harassments, and as “guests” they do not enjoy full legal rights and protection (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.24).

IDPs from the south living in the slums of north-western Somalia have had hardly any access to gainful employment and most find it difficult to integrate into the lucrative informal economy. In some parts of Somaliland, up to 93 per cent of displaced households depended exclusively on begging to survive and the little income they raised was often barely sufficient to provide one meal per day (UNCU, 30 July 2002, pp.15, 27). Most IDPs are unable to access any assistance or business opportunities, unlike returnees, who are able to get small income-generating loans from international organisations, and draw support from their clan and the council of elders. It is unlikely that southerners displaced in Somaliland will be socially and economically integrated, according to analysts, due to the fact that they are associated with the crimes of the Barre regime committed against the people of Somaliland, and are easily identifiable by their different speech and look to northerners (Ibrahim F., 15 August 2002).



Displaced woman selling food in an IDP settlement, Bosaso, Puntland. (Benetti/2004)

While IDPs in Puntland tend also to be viewed as undesirables by the local community, they have more job opportunities, especially in Bosaso where the building sector is booming and port activity is thriving. Displaced families in Bosaso generally earn about \$1 a day, over twice what most displaced earn in Hargeisa (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.20-21). Casual work and borrowing were the main sources of income for 95 per cent of displaced households in Bosaso (FSAU, 30 September 2004). Similarly in Juba (southern Somalia), nearly half of the displaced households surveyed had to borrow income or food in order to cope. As women in IDP settlements often outnumber men, they are the primary breadwinners, often at the expense of childcare. But since the income earned is very limited, displaced households depend heavily on the income of children who often beg or shine shoes instead of attending school (UNICEF, 10 December 2003).

Food shortages and poor health and water access in southern and central Somalia undermine host communities' ability to cope with the influx of displaced people. The price of imported food remained high as transport costs between Mogadishu and the Juba Valley were inflated by many 'tax-collecting' militia checkpoints (FEWS, 8 May 2003). People displaced also lacked cooking utensils and coped by sharing the few available ones, which limited meal preparation to once a day in Bakool (FSAU, 20 February 2004). In addition, IDPs' coping mechanisms, such as cutting trees to sell for charcoal and firewood, are causing further long-term damage to the environment (UN, 15 June 2004, p.2).

Unlike returnees and local residents, IDPs do not benefit from remittances – amounting to up to \$1 billion in 2000 – or from kin support, therefore they are more vulnerable to economic shocks. The prolonged and continued livestock import ban imposed by the Gulf States since 2000, as well as the closure of the Al-Barakaat Bank (main channel for remittances), following accusations of abetting terrorism in 2002, seriously reduced income levels and purchasing power. The ban seriously affects nomadic pastoralists, who comprise nearly half of the population, and particularly north-western and north-eastern Somalia, where the livestock trade is the main source of livelihood for 70 per cent of the population (UN, 18 November 2003, p.10; IGAD/UNDP/UNHCR June 2002, p.17). At the same time, opportunities for casual labour at the ports have diminished, affecting IDPs who traditionally worked as porters in places such as Bosaso. Consequently, competition over scarce jobs increased sharply between urban residents and the displaced from the south who have been increasingly excluded and discriminated against. This discrimination affects IDPs' standard of living as it determines the degree of access to income, which in turn affects their access to other rights, such as the right to food, health and education.

Very few displaced children attend school

Despite some improvements in recent years, Somalia's Primary Gross Enrolment ratio is the lowest in the world. Only one in five children are enrolled in primary schools with girls constituting only about one-third of the pupils (UN, 18 November 2004, p.13). Yet education remains one of the most chronically under-funded sectors in the Somalia UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP); at mid-2004, this sector was only four per cent funded (UN, 15 June

2004, p.8). Less than 40 per cent of teachers have gone through training and many have not completed their own primary education (UN, 18 November 2004, p.10). Whole generations of Somalis have little to no formal education and few marketable skills and are easily drawn into militia activities, posing serious threats to the security and socio-economic development of the country.

As a result of the war, virtually all school facilities have been either completely or partially destroyed and when classroom space is scarce, local children are given priority over displaced children. Furthermore, the social discrimination of minority groups, particularly in Somaliland, is one of the main reasons why IDP children from the south are often not at school (Clark, June 2002, p.46).

As the whole public school system has collapsed, the few operational primary schools are private, functioning mainly through community and parental support. As for secondary education, it remains confined to highly urbanised areas. Either way, displaced families have often no money to pay for the fees, even in the cheaper Koranic schools (ODI, 31 December 2003, p.13). In this respect girls are particularly disadvantaged as they must remain at home to help since many mothers run small-scale businesses outside the home (UNICEF, 30 October 2003). Besides, parents often need their children to work or beg to bring in some income at the expense of their education (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.27).

Somali identities and culture

Based on their patrilineal kinship, the Somali people are divided into five major clans, which split into numerous sub-clans and minority groups. The major clans are the Darood, Dir, Hawiye and Isaaq known as the Samale group, and the Digil-Mirifle categorised as the Sab group. Clans have formed alliances which provide their members physical security and a social welfare safety net. Exogamous marriages into another clan are ways to establish alliances which can be drawn on in times of hardship. Conflicts are minimised and managed by customary law (*xeer*), and the tradition of blood payment (*diya*) serves to deter crime and prevent retaliation (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.2). However, elders' conflict mediation mechanisms and the traditional systems of reciprocal help have been seriously eroded by conflict in many parts of the country, and the clan system has proven to be a divisive and destructive force when manipulated for economic and political gain. Now, free-lance militiamen rule at gunpoint and communities have grown mistrustful. On the other hand, in the absence of a state structure the clan system has been virtually the only source of law and order. The interest of businessmen in creating conditions conducive to market activities in a secure environment has become an increasingly important stabilising force, cutting across clan differences (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003).

Minorities make up about 20 per cent of the population. They are outside the clan system, and have been marginalised and subject to attacks and violations by the dominant clans (UN, 18 November 2004, p.9). They are divided into two main groups. The first includes the Midgan, Tumul, Yibir, Gaheyle, Galgale and Boni. Each of these caste-like groups is

specialised on a specific profession like hunting, crafts, leather and metal work, which are considered “polluting” by the Somali clans. A second group includes the Bantu, Benadiri and Eyle who are not considered “ethnic Somalis”. Some are believed to come from early non-Somali agricultural communities and others to be descendents of Tanzanians, Mozambicans and Malawians who were taken to Somalia in the 19th century by Arab slave traders. They are small-scale farmers and come from the riverine areas of southern Somalia. Bantus have never been recognised as “real” Somalis and thus have been discriminated against and placed in servitude, treated as second-class citizens (UNCU, 30 July 2002, pp 5-6).

IDPs from these groups have hardly any access to the judicial system. The three systems of law in Somalia (secular, *sharia* and customary (*xeer*) law), coexist in a chaotic and gender-discriminatory way. The legal framework throughout the country remains poor and minorities or displaced people, either outside the clan system or outside their area of origin are not protected by customary law. Besides, *sharia* courts do not adhere to international standards and militias generally enjoy impunity for the human rights abuses they commit (AI, January 2003).

Problems of humanitarian access

Insecurity has been so acute in Somalia, that it has been difficult to provide adequate and timely assistance, let alone to effectively monitor the humanitarian condition of IDPs. In Mogadishu and other regions, humanitarian workers have been kidnapped or killed by militias, and the ambush and looting of humanitarian vehicles are common occurrences. As a result of this volatile security, there is no permanent international presence in the country. Since the withdrawal of UNOSOM in 1995, virtually all humanitarian agencies are based in Nairobi and fly in only for short missions. ICRC is one of the only agencies which since the 1990s has maintained access to most southern and central regions of Somalia, through negotiations with more or less legitimate authorities and warlords. The security situation however, cannot be generalised and several areas in the north of the country have sustained relative stability and peace for many years.

Humanitarian access has also been hindered from outside, when in 2004 Kenya denied Somali passport holders entry. This ban is not only impeding freedom of movement but also information exchange and participation of Somali staff working for humanitarian agencies, all of which are based in Nairobi (UN, 15 June 2004).

The interest of some warlords to regain or consolidate power during the Mbagathi negotiations ensured that violence and armed conflict continued throughout much of southern and central Somalia. In 2004, the worst affected regions included Mogadishu, Shabelle, Juba and Gedo. Intermittent sub-clan militia clashes continued to hinder access to displaced populations, forcing agencies to temporarily pull out, for example, of Belet-Weyne (Hiran) and Belet-Hawo (Gedo) (OCHA, 31 August 2004). A notable exception was the Bay region where peace and reconciliation among the Rahanweyn improved access, allowing the return of IDPs who had fled clashes in 2002-2003.

Humanitarian relief delivery and access to IDPs by road was greatly reduced by militia road blocks and armed attacks, which doubled in 2004 on the roads leading to Mogadishu (OCHA, 9 July 2004). For instance, transporters avoided the only tarmac road linking Mogadishu port with Belet-Weyne due to increased taxation by militias, robberies and lootings. This created additional food shortages, which doubled the price of locally-produced crops within a week in July (OCHA, 31 July 2004). The Juba Valley and Lower Shabelle were affected by the same phenomena, which raised transport and food prices and lowered the food security of deprived displaced people. In such a situation, it has been claimed that some sub-clans have benefited from humanitarian aid more than the intended target groups, by manipulating the delivery of assistance through the granting of security or “safe passage” only to areas that will benefit their clan militias (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.35).

Most of the population, including IDPs, critically suffer from militia roadblocks and extortion. As they cannot afford to pay the illegal taxes, they lose their freedom of movement; this situation of siege puts their nutritional and health conditions at risk as they are unable to access assistance, fetch water, go to the market or graze animals. In Qoryoley (Lower Shabelle) for example, militias taxed anyone who wanted to draw water from the river, effectively denying poor IDPs access to water (UNCU, 30 July 2002, p.34).

Heightened threats against humanitarian workers have resulted in tighter security measures in 2004. In Somaliland, traditionally the most secure region in Somalia, five NGO workers were killed between October 2003 and March 2004, allegedly by Islamic fundamentalists or other groups with an interest in destabilising the region. As a result, some agencies temporarily pulled out of the region (UN, 18 November 2004).

In central and southern Somalia, aid organisations – which are often the only service providers – must negotiate access with a host of non-state actors. Crime, banditry, extortion and kidnapping threats are rife in the absence of an authority to enforce law and order. In this context, national and international staff have increasingly been the target of attacks due to clan rivalries or disputes over allocation of employment contracts, property rental or project site location, adding to the ongoing risks of working in Somalia (Menkhaus, UNHCR, August 2003, p.47-8).

Mogadishu, where most IDPs live, has offered uniquely complex operational and security environments. Since the fall of the Barre regime in 1991, the city has been divided between north and south, by the green line controlled by militias and very risky to cross. Each part is further divided into a chaotic mosaic of militias and warlord fiefdoms between which movement is also very dangerous. As a result, the few humanitarian agencies operating in town, such as MSF Spain, ACF and ICRC, have separate programmes for the north and south and are often forced to resort to the protection of armed escorts (ICRC, 9 March 2004). Even so, ACF, for example, was forced to scale down its water and sanitation activities in IDP camps in 2004, because of extortion from militias demanding money to allow agencies access to the displaced (OCHA, 30 June 2004). As expatriate workers are at

great risk of being abducted, most programmes in Mogadishu are implemented through national staff. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to Mogadishu is further complicated by the fact that continuous fighting has kept the port and the airport out of reach for most of the past decade.

Humanitarian assistance, a drop in the ocean

Given the scale of war and destruction and the volatile security situation in Somalia, it may be premature to expect that the transitional government will be in the position to have an impact on the humanitarian, socio-economic and political situation in the short term, let alone that it will have the capacity to establish authority throughout the country and achieve durable peace (UN, 18 November 2004, p.10). It is therefore likely that most of the southern and central regions of the country will stay in a state of chronic complex emergency: little authoritative government, high levels of criminality, sporadic armed conflict, lack of economic recovery, endemic humanitarian needs, minimal health care and education, and population displacement. As a result, most operational humanitarian activities will remain ad hoc, lack sustainability and depend on security.

At national level, the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB) was set up in 1993 to coordinate the activities of UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. In south and central Somalia, OCHA fielded a number of national humanitarian affairs officers in 2003 in order to strengthen its coordination role, managed from Nairobi. In Somaliland, the Ministry of National Planning and Co-ordination is the focal point for UN organisations, but there is no national framework to guide their planning and implementation. The Somaliland authorities stressed the need for international organisations to improve coordination and better involve them in the design and management of projects. In Puntland, insecurity and the high turnover of top administration posts hampered coordination efforts.

In the absence of a functioning government, community-based organisations and individuals have sporadically taken up the responsibility to provide security and assistance to vulnerable populations. For example businessmen paid the fees of some displaced children in Bosaso to enable them to attend school (Interviews, Bosaso, August 2004). The Somali Red Crescent is the only national humanitarian institution represented across the country, providing health care, disaster preparedness and relief. A number of local NGOs, such as Gashan in Hargeisa, are also active in supporting IDP communities, despite serious lack of funding. In addition, Islamic charities provide assistance to IDPs in Mogadishu and throughout the country, mainly with school and health facilities.

As long as functioning and accountable government structures are not established in southern and central Somalia, and pending the elaboration of IDP programmes in the north, humanitarian assistance to IDPs will remain almost entirely dependent upon the international community. The UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the international response. While there is no one single agency specifically mandated to pro-

tect and assist IDPs, their needs have been included in the programmes of various agencies according to their respective sectoral or thematic focus. During 2005 UN agencies and NGOs will continue to work with local authorities and communities towards three strategic goals outlined in the UN Consolidated Appeal: first, to save lives through emergency aid and helping vulnerable communities become more resilient to crises; second, to enhance the protection of and respect for human rights, particularly those of IDPs and minorities; and third, to support emerging governance structures and civil society through capacity-building, and to provide and enhance access to basic services to vulnerable communities, in order to foster peace building, reconstruction and development. Throughout, agencies will aim at maintaining a strong link between relief assistance and long-term recovery activities. The 2005 Consolidated Appeal for Somalia seeks \$164.5 million for 93 projects in eleven sectors (UN, 18 November 2004, p.1).

The UN Internal Displacement Division, which selected Somalia as one of its priority countries in 2004, assists the UN Country Team in its efforts to improve the UN's response to the displacement crisis. In order to support the protection work of the Humanitarian Coordinator, a Protection Coordinator was also appointed in mid-2004. A workshop on the Guiding Principles for Internally Displaced Persons was facilitated by UNHCR and OCHA in Hargeisa in June 2004; two other workshops organised by OCHA and NRC were held in Bosaso and Hargeisa in August 2004.

Among the international NGOs, MSF Spain, Action Contre la Faim (ACF) and CARE have been the most active in assisting IDPs in south and central Somalia. MSF and ACF are among the few organisations maintaining operations in Mogadishu. The ICRC has delivered assistance to war-affected populations throughout the conflict and runs the only two major surgical hospitals in the country, located in Mogadishu, mostly treating weapon-wounded civilians, including IDPs (ICRC, 16 August 2004; 9 March 2004).

It is evident that there remain serious gaps in the international response to internal displacement in Somalia. While international agencies have officially committed to prioritise IDPs, they are still at pains to design IDP-specific projects within their sectoral or thematic focuses. With few exceptions, most projects still target vulnerable populations at large, on the assumption this will also benefit the displaced. However, as this report points out, IDPs are likely to fall between the cracks of the humanitarian assistance system, particularly in the north, unless they are positively dis-



IDPs and returnees re-building their huts at a resettlement site, Hargeisa, Somaliland. (Benetti/2004)

criminated on the basis of needs assessments taking into account social, cultural and economic factors. More efforts are needed by agencies to understand the particular vulnerabilities of IDPs in their specific context. This is essential for ensuring that assistance is delivered in a way that actually reaches the displaced and improves their protection while at the same time addressing the needs of host populations in order to ease social tensions. To ensure better protection of IDPs, agencies should develop a protection-focused approach to assistance, rather than treating protection and humanitarian activities separately.

Limited or late funding curtails emergency prevention and preparedness, as well as longer-term activities. In 2003, many of the projects for integration, protection, human rights, and economic reconstruction could not be implemented due to lack of funding and insecurity (UN, 18 November 2003, p.7). As of November 2004 only half of the \$120 million appealed for through the CAP was funded. Donor support for Somalia has fallen by 90 per cent over the last decade (UNHCR, 30 January 2004). A drastic increase in donor support is needed for the return and reintegration of IDPs, recovery and peace-building in Somalia.

With 60 per cent urban unemployment, the northern regions have had to cope with the additional challenge of absorbing over half a million returning refugees since 1997, most of whom have not been able to meet their most basic needs and ended up living alongside IDPs in slums (UNHCR, 30 January 2004; UN, 18 November 2003, p.10). The authorities of Somaliland requested \$64 million to donors in 2004. Without substantial international support for rehabilitation, reintegration and development interventions, this situation risks jeopardising the much-valued peace and stability achieved there in the past ten years.

Security issues will have to be addressed as a priority in southern/central Somalia in order to progress towards durable solutions for the return and reintegration of IDPs, in particular the demobilisation and reintegration of about 55,000 militiamen (IRIN, 26 October 2004). If not carefully supported in a community-based approach, aimed at alleviating poverty, fostering economic development and providing access to basic services, the local integration or voluntary return of IDPs could create conflicts instead of being an element of peace-building.

Although the people of Somalia have shown remarkable resilience, they have little chance of getting out of the cycle of poverty and war with the low level of assistance currently allocated to their country.

Note: For more detailed information on the internal displacement situation in Somalia, please visit the [Somalia country page](#) on the Global IDP Project's online IDP database .

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Note: All documents used in this profile summary are directly accessible on the [List of Sources](#) page of the Somalia country page.

About the Global IDP Project

The Global IDP Project, established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1996, is the leading international body monitoring internal displacement worldwide.

Through its work, the Geneva-based Project contributes to protecting and assisting the 25 million people around the globe, who have been displaced within their own country as a result of conflicts or human rights violations.

At the request of the United Nations, the Global IDP Project runs an online database providing comprehensive and frequently updated information and analysis on internal displacement in over 50 countries.

It also carries out training activities to enhance the capacity of local actors to respond to the needs of internally displaced people. In addition, the Project actively advocates for durable solutions to the plight of the internally displaced in line with international standards.

For more information, visit the Global IDP Project website and the database at www.idpproject.org.

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