



IOM SOMALIA

# EXTERNAL UPDATES

September & October 2020



To address overall migration challenges in Somalia, IOM works closely with the Federal Government of Somalia, regional authorities, the UN, donor governments and civil society by implementing programmes through three pillars: (1) Preparedness and humanitarian response; (2) Long term recovery and durable solutions; and, (3) Migration governance and development. Since 2006, IOM has delivered frontline services to crisis-affected populations, while steadily developing models and partnerships for longer term recovery and migration governance. With over 450 staff, IOM Somalia operates from its main office in Mogadishu, seven field offices and eight satellite offices, as well as the Nairobi Support Office in Kenya.

# SITUATION OVERVIEW



The humanitarian crisis in Somalia, characterized by both natural and man-made factors, is one of the most complex and longstanding emergencies in the world. Due to decades of poverty, marginalization, armed violence, insecurity, political instability, natural hazards and lack of development, the humanitarian situation remains critical in the country. Recurrent natural disasters have been devastating for Somali communities and continue to drive displacement, while ongoing conflict impacts protection and human rights, reduce resilience and hinder access to basic services.

Somalia continues to be impacted by the **triple threat of COVID-19, seasonal floods and desert locusts**. COVID-19 continues to spread, infecting over 4,300 people by the end of October. In 2020 alone, more than 1.6 million people have been affected by floods, including 840,000 people being displaced. The Deyr rains (October to December) affected over 73,000 people, including 13,000 people being displaced by the floods. The rains destroyed farmland, roads and other infrastructures. The rains also provided a breeding ground for the desert locusts in Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug. In these regions, around 685,000 people have been affected, with 2.1 million people expected to face acute food insecurity later this year.

## HIGHLIGHTS September & October 2020



**78,840** PEOPLE consulted at IOM supported health clinics



**38,085,900** LITRES of **CLEAN** and **SAFE WATER** provided from shallow wells



**9,552** **NON-MEDICAL FACE MASKS** created by 80 IDP women in Baidoa, Doolow and Kismayo



**35,990** **MOVEMENTS** tracked in September and October at 7 Flow Monitoring Points (FMP)



**260** **FAMILIES** interviewed during a shelter needs assessment



**29** **WOMEN** graduated from the Baidoa Female Transition Centre



**4,990** **INDIVIDUALS** reached with **AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS** on COVID-19



**123** **RETURNEES** assisted with **ACCOMODATION** and **TRAVEL SUPPORT** to their final destinations



**78** **DIASPORA EXPERTS** active  
**29** **LOCAL INTERNS/EXPERTS** trained



**12** **IMMIGRATION OFFICERS** trained on the screening of travellers in Kismayo, Doolow and Dhobley

IOM contributed to the COVID-19 response in Somalia to halt further transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact of the outbreak, including the socio-economic impact. For detailed information on IOM's COVID-19 activities per programmatic area, please read more in [IOM's Weekly COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Updates](#).





## Barwaqo relocation phase II

IOM and government partners started the preparation of the second phase of the relocation of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Baidoa, after the first phase was completed, in which 1,000 households were relocated by IOM in July 2019. Following official commitment in July by the South West State government to support the second phase of relocation in Barwaqo, IOM started the preparation of the public land. To date, a total of 32.5 hectares of land has been bush cleared and 102 out of the 1,009 plots demarcated.



# HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE



## Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

IOM improves the living conditions and protection of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in sites and settlements and ensure equitable access to services and assistance of all persons in need in the regions of Kismayo, Doolow and Baidoa. IOM is the co-lead of the CCCM Cluster in Somalia.

BAIDOA	DOLOW	KISMAYO
<b>168</b> EXITS FROM IDP sites in Baidoa	<b>96</b> EXITS FROM IDP sites in Doolow	<b>19</b> EXITS FROM IDP sites in Kismayo
<b>2,518</b> ENTRIES INTO IDP sites in Baidoa	<b>661</b> ENTRIES INTO IDP sites in Doolow	<b>962</b> ENTRIES INTO IDP sites in Kismayo
<b>2,456</b> Complaints received through the CFM Addressed: <b>84%</b>	<b>2,041</b> Complaints received through the CFM Addressed: <b>98%</b>	<b>1,994</b> Complaints received through the CFM Addressed: <b>100%</b>

**Movement Trend Tracking (MTT):** through MTT, IOM monitors the numbers of people entering and exiting Baidoa ([see here](#)), Doolow ([see here](#)) and Kismayo ([see here](#)) IDP sites, reporting their main reason for movements.

### WOMEN PARTICIPATION PROJECT

IOM continued its women participation project that provides a voice to women in IDP sites. The women committees continue to play a significant role in COVID-19 mitigation efforts.



**9,552 NON-MEDICAL FACE MASKS** created by **80 IDP WOMEN** in Baidoa, Kismayo and Doolow which are now available on all markets in both cities

### LAND EVICTIONS

In Kismayo and Baidoa, IDPs continue to face the risk of eviction. Many IDPs live on privately owned land, which frequently is claimed back by the owner. IOM is closely following up with IDPs to provide solutions when an eviction notice is received. When eviction is inevitable, IOM supports with relocation. In Baidoa, IOM supported the relocation of 235 households who were given a three-day notice to leave their land. They were provided with a new plot of private land with a formal land lease agreement for five years. The camp management mobilized neighbouring IDPs to welcome the new community members and facilitate their integration into the new community.

### CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT CLUSTER

The PSEA Taskforce, co-chaired by IOM, and the CCCM Cluster organized a PSEA workshop with the aim to establish PSEA referral pathways for the CCCM Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM). Furthermore, the CCCM cluster facilitated a two-day training in Mogadishu. The workshop focused on disability inclusion methods that can be mainstreamed within CCCM activities in addition to best practices for collection disability data.

**844 SITES** established with CCCM mechanisms



**10 DISTRICTS** with CCCM **COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS** activated




**16 CCCM PARTNERS**









## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Adequate access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is essential to prevent dehydration and reduce the risk of water-related diseases such as diarrhoea, cholera and other potential outbreaks. IOM Somalia WASH emergency programmes focuses on the immediate provision of WASH services to affected populations across Somalia. These interventions are among the highest priorities following the onset of any crisis, natural disaster or complex situation.

-  **8 BOREHOLES** and **35 SHALLOW WELLS** **CONSTRUCTED** or **REHABILITATED** in Bakool, Galgaduud and Mudug Districts
-  **100,332 PEOPLE** assisted with **SAFE WATER** through upgraded and protected **SHALLOW WELLS**
-  **38,085,900 LITRES** of **CLEAN AND SAFE WATER** provided per week from shallow wells

-  **127,120 PEOPLE** assisted with **SAFE WATER** from new and **REHABILITATED BOREHOLES**
-  **200 PIT LATRINES** rehabilitated in Belethawa and Doolow for **1,200 HOUSEHOLDS**
-  **199,246 PEOPLE** reached with **HYGIENE PROMOTION** activities,
-  **27,004 PEOPLE** received **HYGIENE KITS**



All rehabilitated water sources will use solar power to operate

### ACTIVITIES FOR THE GLOBAL HANDWASHING DAY

On 15 October, IOM and local implementing partners celebrated Global Handwashing Day. An event was organized for students of Mushkaat Primary School in Daynile District of Mogadishu to increase awareness and understanding on the importance of handwashing with soap as an effective and affordable way to prevent diseases, including COVID-19. At household level, the hygiene promoters identified and visited 20 vulnerable families to discuss the main water and sanitation issues and actively promote appropriate hygiene practices.

### HYGIENE PROMOTION AND KITS DISTRIBUTION

IOM field teams carried out hygiene promotion activities to improve sanitation and hygiene practices among communities at risk of COVID-19 as well as AWD and Cholera outbreaks. The hygiene promotion activities focused on handwashing with soap, cleaning of water containers, household water treatment and safe waste disposal methods. In coordination with the other agencies, the team complemented the awareness-raising campaigns with the distribution of hygiene kits reaching:

-  **12,500 HOUSEHOLDS** in Doolow, Bacadweyne, Belethawa, Bardhere and Qardho

### MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (MECC)

IOM conducted an environmental awareness session for vulnerable returning migrants and the communities of return in Hodan district, Mogadishu. The event was conducted in cooperation with Hodan District Authority, and the implementing partner African Solutions. It aimed to engage students and academics from Somalia National University Faculty of Environmental Science and environmental protection experts from the community, to raise awareness on environmental degradation in the city, as well as identifying local solutions to reduce environmental degradation.



## Health

IOM delivers and promotes accessible, equitable and comprehensive, preventive and curative health programmes which contributes towards the physical, mental and social well-being of migrants, enabling them and host communities to achieve social and economic development. IOM aims to deliver basic health care services for migrants and mobile populations who face many obstacles in accessing essential health care services due to the recurrent drought and continuous conflict.

IOM provided essential health care services to IDPs, host communities, migrants and returnees through 31 static health facilities, 4 mobile clinics, 3 transit centers and 2 migrant reception centers.



-  **78,840 PEOPLE** visited health facilities for **CONSULTATIONS**
-  **12,836 CHILDREN** were **IMMUNIZED**
-  **2,898 CHILDREN** received **MEASLES VACCINATION**
-  **1,026 DELIVERIES** at health facilities




**IOM opened a new maternal and child health care clinic for IDPs in Kabasa. Read [press note](#)**

### MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (MHPSS)

IOM is the technical lead for the PSS Pillar in the COVID-19 National Preparedness and Response Plan. Early September, IOM trained and coached 11 psychosocial workers based in Mogadishu, Hargeisa and Bossaso on MHPSS programme and basic PSS skills, like Psychological First Aid, communication skills, social stigma and self-care. The psychosocial workers are deployed to provide psychosocial support to distressed stranded migrants and returnees. On World Mental Health Day, IOM conducted community mobilization activities through Live Radio Shows in Dollow and Baidoa with a livestream of the interviews with state level Ministry of Health staff on the topics of MHPSS support, youth, peacebuilding, and taking care of mental health during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

### EXPANDING NUTRITION PROGRAMME

IOM provided nutrition services through 19 Outpatient Therapeutic Programmes (OTPs) across Somalia. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health Development (MOHD), IOM will start with the provision of nutrition services in three health facilities in Sanag region. IOM and MOHD trained 13 health workers on nutrition guidelines who will provide high-quality nutrition services in the health facilities in Sanag.

-  **19 CLINICS** provided **OTP FOR MALNOURISHED CHILDREN**
-  **44,939 CHILDREN** under **5 YEARS OF AGE** were screened for **MALNUTRITION; 1,018** of them were **ADMITTED TO OTP SITES** for further treatment
-  **30,110 WOMEN** informed on Infant & Young Child Feeding practices

### CLINICAL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

With the clinical mentorship programme, IOM contributes to improved HIV and TB service provision in Somalia. In October, IOM facilitated a field visit of three international consultants to 21 national mentors across different hospitals in Hargeisa, Garowe, Galkacyo and Mogadishu. During this visit, the international consultants and mentors reviewed HIV/TB cases and clinical documents, and critically discussed recommendations in line with the national HIV/TB guidelines. The clinical mentoring supervision visit enhanced critical treatment skills of the national mentors and built the capacity of the medical institution through practical training of the national mentors by the three HIV/TB specialist, focusing on clinical protocols, case management and standardization of content of care.





## Shelter and Non-Food Items (S-NFI)

Depending on the affected community's vulnerabilities, assets, capacities, and preferences, IOM provides identified populations with transitional shelters or more permanent structures through in-kind and/or cash-based intervention.

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A comprehensive needs assessment was conducted in Baidoa. Through the data collected, IOM will be able to address the needs of the most vulnerable members of the IDP communities. Key findings of the assessment were:



**20%** of households had a **DISABLED, CHRONICALLY ILL** or **MENTALLY ILL** member of the household

**64%** respondents were living in an **EMERGENCY SHELTER**;  
**36%** respondents were living in a **TRANSITIONAL SHELTER**;  
No respondents were living in a permanent shelter

**52% ASSEMBLED THEIR SHELTER** from discarded material;  
only **34% RECEIVED MATERIALS** through humanitarian assistance;

**95% REPORTED DAMAGE** to their shelter

IOM is supporting IDPs with transitional shelters. The benefit of this type of shelter is that they are designed to be reused, relocated, recycled or upgraded into a permanent shelter. It has an element of an owner-driven approach, which will reduce the vulnerability of affected populations by building their capacity. As local materials are favoured for transitional shelters, it will strengthen local markets and the shelter can continue to be added to.

### CAPACITY BUILDING

Eight information centres in various IDP sites will be used to provide the community with information on how to construct or upgrade shelters. Ten construction supervisors were recruited and trained. They will support the most vulnerable beneficiaries that can't assemble, construct or upgrade their shelters.





## Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)

*IOM Somalia Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) strives to provide localized, up-to-date information on the basic needs of the target population, cross border mobility, displacement figures and trends in drought affected areas.*

### FLOW MONITORING SURVEY

In September, IOM launched a revised Flow Monitoring Survey through which information of travellers is collected at seven Flow Monitoring Points along the Somali borders. The new survey includes COVID-19 related indicators, such as collecting information about challenges encountered by the people on the move due to COVID-19 pandemic.

### DTM SUPPORTING CCCM CLUSTER

CCCM Cluster partners carried out a second round of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) assessment aimed at gaining insights into communities' understanding of COVID-19, their ability to prevent and respond to the virus and their preferred or most utilized channels for receiving critical COVID-19 messages. The objective of the second round of the CCCM RCCE assessment was to gauge progress in COVID-19 knowledge and behavioural change that has taken place since the first round of assessment in May, in addition to identifying areas for improvement. IOM provided support for the training of enumerators and the analysis of the findings.

### MOVEMENTS INCREASED BY 26% IN OCTOBER COMPARED TO AUGUST

 **24,916** ENTRIES INTO SOMALIA

 **11,094** EXISTS FROM SOMALIA

Movements tracked: **16,598** (September) and **19,392** (October)

Movements are monitored at

**7 FLOW MONITORING POINTS**

For additional information you can download a copy of the DTM Movement Trend Tracking 2019 Annual Report for Baidoa [here](#), Doolow [here](#) and Kismayo [here](#).

**VISIT DTM SOMALIA WEBSITE HERE** ([dtm.iom.int/somalia](http://dtm.iom.int/somalia))  
to find DTM latest reports, interactive maps, dashboards and data sets.



# STABILIZATION, TRANSITION & RECOVERY



## Recovery and Durable Solutions (RDS)

IOM works to bridge humanitarian, development and peace/state building efforts and operationalize a paradigm shift from aid-agency driven modalities to one where the government and community co-design and lead their nationally aligned and owned programming. IOM's activities promote: durable solutions for returnees and IDPs; increased social cohesion; improved government capacities to lead on durable solutions at Federal Member States and district levels in urban and peri-urban areas.



**4,990** individuals reached with  
**AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS**  
on COVID-19



**80** individuals supported  
with **CASH-FOR-WORK**  
in Hobyo and Baidoa

### CONSTRUCTION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

With the aim of bringing communities together and support stabilization and recovery, the community develops priorities for community development through consultations with communities, including local authorities. Following community consultations in Awdheegle, a town in Lower-Shabelle, the construction of a police post and health centre commenced, while in Hobyo in Galmudug state a community centre was rehabilitated. In Baidoa, the community consultations were launched in which representatives from host, IDP, returnees, youth and women groups participated.

### HOBYO CAMPAIGN

A community awareness raising and sensitization campaign was organized in Hobyo town. The campaign reached 4,990 beneficiaries across displacement affected communities (IDPs, returnees and host community areas) with information on measures against the spread of COVID-19 and stigmatization. The campaigners (20 men and 30 women) were trained in awareness raising skills and COVID-19 messaging by IOM staff. The campaigners were also supported through cash-for-work providing them with short-term employment opportunities for the duration of the campaign. The campaigners distributed 300 COVID-19 IEC materials, installed large posters in billboards and established 40 handwashing stations with soap.





## Disengagement, Disassociation, Reintegration and Reconciliation (DDRR)

IOM works with marginalized youth at risk in Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) and social cohesion, and supports the Federal Government of Somalia's National Programme for the Treatment and Handling of Disengaged Combatants.



**29 WOMEN** graduated from the Baidoa Female Transition Centre

**22 WOMEN** participated poetry in classes in Baidoa and Kismayo

**14 MEN** composed poems on themes around identity and peace

### CAREER COUNSELLING

The livelihoods team conducted workshops to better guide beneficiaries in the exploration of different livelihood avenues rather than entrepreneurship alone. This adaptation led to improved livelihood proposals targeting market gaps and leading to the development of new types of business opportunities such as a photography shop, a second-hand clothing shop, and a phone charging business.

### FIRST GRADUATES FROM THE BAIDOA FEMALE TRANSITION CENTRE

In October, the first cohort of 29 women beneficiaries graduated from the Baidoa Female Transition Centre. These women received gender-responsive rehabilitation services to support them in their reintegration process after disengaging from extremist groups. They went through a transformative change, gaining confidence, learning how to manage their livelihoods and support their families, and are determined to create a better future for themselves and their communities. These women will continue to receive essential supports and participate in reintegration activities while enrolling in the reintegration phase together with women-led community based organizations.

### ABAY-ABAY

Four traditional women gatherings were conducted through the female Community Based Organizations in Kismayo and Baidoa to bring women from the programme and the community together to discuss social issues within their communities. These gatherings are one of the favorite activities of the women, as they exchange knowledge and information, and meet new women from different districts. Around 20-30 women came together during Abay-Abay gatherings. IOM staff joined one of the Abay-Abay gatherings in Kismayo and spoke with the women on the importance of social reintegration and how the interaction between the beneficiary women and community women is vital in strengthening social links and creating a more cohesive community.

### POETRY WORKSHOP AND EVENTS

Poetry workshops and events were organized in Baidoa and Kismayo. In Kismayo, 14 men composed poems on themes around identity, trust, forgiveness and peace. Community members, religious leaders and government officials came together to see the performances of the poems and dances. Furthermore, 22 women participated in poetry classes developed by IOM.



"I drew a flower; it gives me happiness.  
I feel belonging in happiness.  
I can decorate my house with flowers."



# MIGRATION GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT



## Immigration and Border Management (IBM)

*IOM supports the Government of Somalia in promoting safe and orderly migration, securing borders and building the capacity of immigration officials.*

At Kismayo seaport and Dhobley and Doolow landposts, IOM installed fingerprint and passport readers to screen travelers entering the country. After the installation of equipment, IOM trained 12 immigration officers to use the equipment and IOM's Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS). The training will enable migration officers to verify traveler's biometric and biographic data and will contribute to increased border security in Somalia.

A total of 40 immigration officials and health care workers based at the Aden Adde International Airport and Mogadishu Seaport received a four-day training on COVID-19 and Humanitarian Border Management. The aim of the training was to provide the participants with the required skills to address the impact of COVID-19 in the areas of protection, infection prevention and control at the Points of Entry (PoEs). The training offered officials from both institutions the opportunity to identify and understand how their roles are interconnected when managing migration crisis situations during a pandemic. Read more about the training [here](#).



**12 IMMIGRATION OFFICERS** trained on the screening of travelers in Kismayo, Doolow and Dhobley



**40 HEALTH CARE and IMMIGRATION WORKERS** trained in Mogadishu on border management and COVID-19

IOM currently supports **22 Ports of Entry in Somalia**, and it includes 10 airports, 5 seaports and 7 land posts.







## Labour Mobility and Human Development (LHD)

*IOM promotes pathways of labour migration, enhancing coordination for diaspora engagement, strengthening institutional capacity and, mitigating the drivers of irregular migration.*

**78 DIASPORA EXPERTS** and  
**29 LOCAL INTERNS/EXPERTS**,  
placed in different institutions

- **14** diaspora experts and  
interns in **HOSPITALS** and  
**HEALTH INSTITUTIONS**
- **12** diaspora experts/  
interns in **EDUCATIONAL  
INSTITUTIONS**
- **68** diaspora experts/interns  
in **MINISTRIES**
- **2** diaspora experts/interns in  
**DIASPORA** Organizations

### CD4D PHASE 2

The second phase of the Connecting Diaspora for Development (CD4D2) project was launched. The project aims to promote the active role and knowledge transfer of diaspora through short-term assignments. Diaspora experts will be working at several government institutions and diaspora organizations in Somalia.

### NEW RECRUITED INTERNS AND DIASPORA EXPERTS

IOM recognizes the importance of building national capacity and contributing to sustainable development efforts. In this regard, IOM adopted a modality in which diaspora experts are paired with interns to ensure skills and expertise are transferred to the younger generation. Several interns were recruited at the Ministry of Health in Puntland, Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Somali National Library. Several diaspora experts were recruited and started working at the Banadir Hospital in Garowe, Bay Regional Hospital in Baidoa or at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Twelve newly recruited experts received a four-day Training of Facilitators through which they learned how to effectively transfer their skills and knowledge to colleagues at the institutions they will be working.



## Migrant Protection and Assistance (MPA)

IOM provides technical expertise in areas of migration policy, administrative and operational practices, procedures for countering human trafficking and smuggling, and direct assistance to migrants.

-  **123** **RETURNEES** from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supported with **ACCOMMODATION** and **TRAVEL ASSISTANCE** to their final destination in Somalia
-  **299** **SPONTANEOUS RETURNEES** from Yemen to Berbera and Bossaso were assisted to their final destination on Somalia
-  **31** **RETURNEES** in Borama and Burao received a **START YOUR BUSINESS TRAINING**
-  **19** **RETURNEES** followed the **SMALL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT** and **BOOKKEEPING TRAINING**
-  **12** **RETURNEES** received phone-based **PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT (PSS)** counseling

### HANDBOVER OF MIGRANT RESPONSE CENTRE IN MOGADISHU

The newly constructed Migrant Response Centre (MRC) in Mogadishu was handed over by IOM to the Benadir Regional Administration. The purpose of the MRC is to serve as one-stop point for vulnerable returnees and stranded migrants, including victims of trafficking in need of information and protection related services. The MRC will also play a role in promoting the sustainable reintegration of Somali assisted voluntary returnees. Read more [here](#).

### STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES TO ASSIST RETURNEES

In April 2019, a consultative process started to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for assisted voluntary return and reintegration assistance, describing the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders engaged in the return, reintegration and migrant assistance and protection in Somaliland. The SOPs were launched on 14 September in Hargeisa.

### SUPPORT TO ETHIOPIAN MIGRANTS

Ethiopian migrants continued to be affected by COVID-19, as many of them are stranded in and around Hargeisa and Bossaso. Through interviews in both towns, IOM collected crucial information on the impact of COVID-19 on the mobility and future migratory plans of Ethiopian migrants, their socio-economic situation, coping mechanisms, protection concerns and support networks. Based on this information, IOM will be in a better position to provide tailored assistance to the Ethiopian migrants.



### WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE SUPPORT TO MIGRANT AND RETURNEE COMMUNITIES

In Bossaso and Hargeisa, IOM started to provide water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in communities highly populated by migrants and returnees.

-  **10** **COMMUNITY LATRINES** constructed
-  **14** **HANDWASHING STATIONS** installed
-  **39,020** people reached in Bossaso and Hargeisa with **HYGIENE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES**

## FIRST MIGRANTS SUPPORTED TO RETURN AFTER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

On 5 September, IOM was able to support five Ethiopian migrants to return from Mogadishu to Addis Ababa. These migrants were the first to be supported back after the travel restrictions lifted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Also in October, 21 Ethiopian migrants returned from Bossaso to Addis Ababa.

### IN FOCUS



## Unaccompanied Migrant Children Finally Return Home

Seventeen unaccompanied migrant children and five women who were stranded in Somalia for months due to COVID-19 movement restrictions, have finally returned home in Ethiopia.

The 22 migrants left Bossaso on October 29 with support from the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa. All the children were due to be reunited with their families while the women were to be assisted with onward travel to their communities of origin. The most vulnerable in the group will receive further reintegration assistance, including the offer of support for the children to resume their studies.

Among the migrants was \*Hakim, a 17-year-old from Harar, a city in eastern Ethiopia and about 800km from Bossaso. The young migrant had originally planned to travel to Saudi Arabia in search of a better life for himself and his family, but was not prepared for the journey ahead.

“The smugglers used to threaten us with stabbing if one of us got tired from the long walk,” he said. The most difficult part of journey was going for three days with little food and water, as well as walking for 15 days to reach Bossaso. However, the long wait is over for Hakim, who has been reunited with his family.

\*Spayish, an 18-year-old woman from Ethiopia’s Amhara region who was also headed for the Gulf, used the time in limbo to think about her future. “When I arrived in Somalia over eight months ago I had no information about

the journey, I thought it was going to be easy. Now that I know about the difficulties, I decided to find a job in my country instead of going through an experience like this again,” she said.

Many of the migrants had been in Bossaso since March 2020 as they waited for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to resume its Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme which was temporarily halted due to the closure of borders. During this time, the EU-IOM Joint Initiative assisted migrants with psychosocial support, medical assistance, hygiene kits, clothes and information on safe migration as well as on COVID-19 prevention and control.

Recent findings by the IOM Regional Data Hub in the East and Horn of Africa, show that the share of unaccompanied migrant children among migrant children tracked at flow monitoring points on the Yemeni Coast has increased dramatically from 55 per cent in 2019 to 75 per cent in 2020.

Migrants face all manner of risks, including the possibility of being abandoned before reaching their expected destinations despite paying for their journey. Moreover, more women have reported rape and other acts of sexual violence. An increase in stigmatization and harassment has also been reported along the Eastern Route as migrants are often seen as carriers of COVID-19.

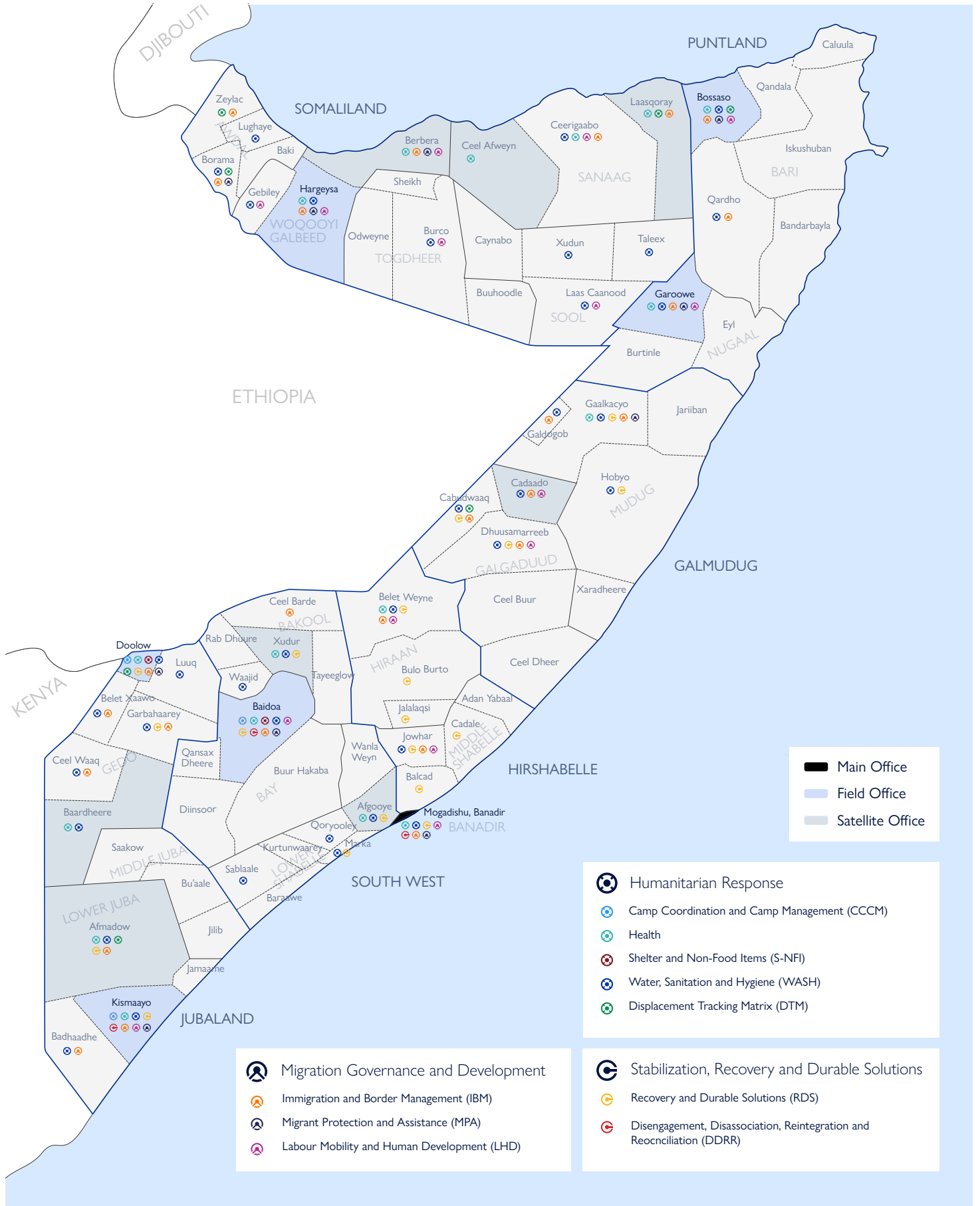
Read full press note [here](#)

\*Names have been changed for protection reasons.





# IOM Somalia Operations Map



## A Newly Displaced Family Finds a New Start in Doolow

Alia recently left her small village in Baidoa and took her five children to Kabasa, a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) that IOM supports in Doolow, Somalia. She agreed to share her story with Mohamedu-Salah and Hamaz, IOM Somalia staff members, one day at the site.

Life has not been easy for Alia, 32 years-old, as she has been disabled since she was a child. When her husband died nearly a year ago, she struggled to keep going. A violent extremist group started to impose restriction on her town and threatened their living conditions that worsened by the day. Moreover, the situation was compounded by recurrent floods followed by droughts that lead to a total crop failure in the area. With little support from her parents, she tried to raise her children despite difficulties until she reached her limit and decided to look for a safer place, "I wanted to move my family to Doolow IDP settlements, we heard that we might get humanitarian assistance from the aid agencies and secure resettlement," she told IOM.

The brave mother and her young children packed their few belongings and took a local truck from her old village to reach Doolow and escape their misfortunes. "I asked my mother to support me with transportation costs and she sold a goat from her livestock for me, which covered only transportation fees and food." The journey to Kabasa took them three days, but money ran out before they reached their final destination.

"We spent our second night in Luuq and I couldn't find anything to feed my children so I had to handover my personal mobile phone to a local shop-owner in exchange for food," she said. The next morning, Alia and her children travelled to Doolow and checked-in at the police station.

The officers interviewed her for a security clearance following the usual protocol for anyone arriving to Doolow. As night drew near, Alia needed to find safety and shelter for her children quickly, "I couldn't find any of my relatives and worried about where to sleep that night".

As she desperately looked for someone to help her, Alia stumbled across a local man by the name of Mohamed (her current IDP settlement block leader) who saw her at the scene and realized that she needed support. He kindly offered to take them to his section in Kabasa where he helped them to settle down on a piece of land with the approval of camp leaders. He also went a step further and appealed to other residents to provide materials for the family to build a makeshift house, locally known as a 'Buu' shelter.

Soon after Alia and her children settled into Kabasa, she eagerly went to the IOM hygiene kit distribution for much needed supplies. IOM staff member Mohamud-Salah saw Alia standing at the distribution point, "she seemed to me very distraught and silent. I started to interview her on whether she was amongst the registered individuals on the distribution list or not." She was on the list that day, and was provided with water storage containers and washing items such as soap bars and aqua tabs as part of the hygiene kit supplies that IOM normally distributed. IOM staff members noticed that she was by herself and was not able to carry the heavy hygiene kits to her home. Mohamed and Hamza supported her to carry her supplies home.

Before Mohamud-Salah and Hamza said goodbye to Alia and her children, she mentioned how greatly she appreciated the hygiene kits provided by IOM of which her family was in great need.

