

## Somalia Food Security Alert

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### Humanitarian crisis in Somalia persists, despite good rains

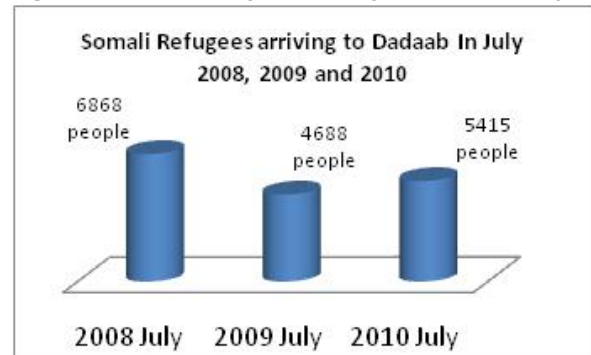
Findings from the recently concluded FSNAU/FEWS NET led post-*gu* seasonal assessment indicate that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has declined from 2.65 million to 2 million. But despite this improvement, a serious humanitarian situation persists in Somalia due to ongoing conflict, continued impacts of the 2007-09 drought, and a host of chronic issues. Very high levels of acute malnutrition continue, and the forecasts for the October-December *deyr* season are below-average. Poor *deyr* rains could push a higher number of pastoral and agropastoral households into crisis. Contingency planning and additional support to the 2010 consolidated appeal are needed.

Over the first half of 2010, livestock exports have increased and above-average April-June *gu* rains have led to improvements in pasture and water availability, helping pastoralists to recover from multiple failed seasons between 2007 and 2009. The good rains have also resulted in an above-average 2010 *gu* cereal harvest. However, armed conflict in parts of Bakool, Juba, Hiran, Mogadishu, the Central regions, and more recently in parts of Sanaag region, continues, and by affecting people's access to food and gainful employment opportunities, remains one of the key drivers of food insecurity. As a result, a serious crisis persists in central Somalia. Surveys in the central pastoral region report a GAM prevalence of 22.8 percent, well above the WHO emergency threshold of 15 percent, and a SAM prevalence of 7.1 percent (WHO). In addition, conditions in the region of Bari have deteriorated due to the combined effects of May 2010 cyclone, the lingering effects of hyperinflation, low production of frankincense, clashes between government and opposing factions, poor livestock conditions, and reduced term of trade.

An increased number of Somali asylum seekers in Yemen and a steady increase in the number of Somali refugees in the Somali region of Ethiopia and Kenya are an additional indication of the dire humanitarian situation prevailing in many parts of the country. For instance, the number of Somali refugees arriving in Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya increased by 16 percent in July this year compared to July 2009 (Figure 1) though the number remains below that of July 2008. In addition, the latest statistics from UN agencies in Dadaab, Kenya confirm that weekly arrivals reached their highest level (1,868 people) in 2010 during the second week of August. Apart from the continuous displacement from Mogadishu, this could be triggered by the increasing militia mobilization in southern Somalia. Given the difficult security and humanitarian situation on the ground, an even higher number of new arrivals is possible though exorbitant transport cost and restrictions on population movement are preventing the majority of poor IDP households from moving out from Somalia.

Looking ahead, IRI, ECMWF, and ICPAC seasonal forecasts all indicate an increased probability of below normal 2010 *deyr* rains (October-December) due to a developing La Niña. For vulnerable pastoralists, poor rains would adversely affect rangeland conditions, with implications for animal body conditions and reproduction. In southern and central agropastoral areas, poor rains would depress *deyr* crop production which provides roughly 30 percent of annual food needs in these areas. Thus, if a poor *deyr* season occurs, it is likely to push more pastoral and agropastoral households into high and extreme levels of food insecurity in central and southern areas, somewhat offsetting recent improvements. Given the poor current context in Somalia and the possibility of additional conflict and climate-related shocks, contingency planning and further support to the 2010 Consolidated Appeal for Somalia is urgently needed.

**Figure 1.** Somali refugees arriving to Dadaab, Kenya,



Source: UNHCR