

DROUGHT IN SOMALIA: A MIGRATION CRISIS

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INTRODUCTION

Although Somalia is prone to harsh climatic condition, distinguishing migration factors of Somali migrants is extremely difficult because of the strong inter-linkages between conflict and environmental condition. The drought that hit Somalia in 2011, after two years of rainfall interruption, was no exception, as it occurred in the context of the civil war that has been tearing the country apart since 1991. In fact, one of the reasons for Kenya's military intervention in Somalia in October 2011 was to stem the flow of Somalis entering the country and the Dadaab camps because of drought and conflict. In the Somali case, armed conflict and environmental conditions seem to be mutually reinforcing factors for migration. Today, the Somali population is weakened by past droughts and floods and the ongoing conflicts, which paralyze the country's activity. The lack of an effective Somali government, which could play a role as stabilizer in territory, has left populations alone to manage crises like diseases, droughts, and floods on their own. As a result, they are highly dependent on international assistance and struggle to have access to sustainable livelihoods. In particular, migrants inside the country form a very vulnerable group, one example of this being that in 2001, internally displaced persons constituted more than 60% of the food insecure (Gundel, 2002).

This case study concentrates on the 2011 drought in Somalia and the environmental migrations induced both internally, within the Somali borders, and internationally, in the neighboring countries. Since July 2011, it has been estimated that more than 1.3 million people were internally displaced and 290,000 forced to flee across the border (UNHCR 2011c).

Whether or not those displacements are direct consequence of climate change is difficult to assess. The frequency of droughts—currently one every two or three years, approximately, compared to one every seven years during the 1980s—could be a direct consequence of climate change.¹

Before describing the conditions and factors of the migrations that took place in the context of the 2011 drought, as well as the Somali migrants' profiles and trajectories, we will try to understand the reasons why such a humanitarian disaster could not be prevented in Somalia, in spite of the general awareness of the climatic situation and the high probability of droughts. Finally, we will discuss the role of national and international actors, trying to pinpoint the difficulties faced by humanitarian and development aid actors.

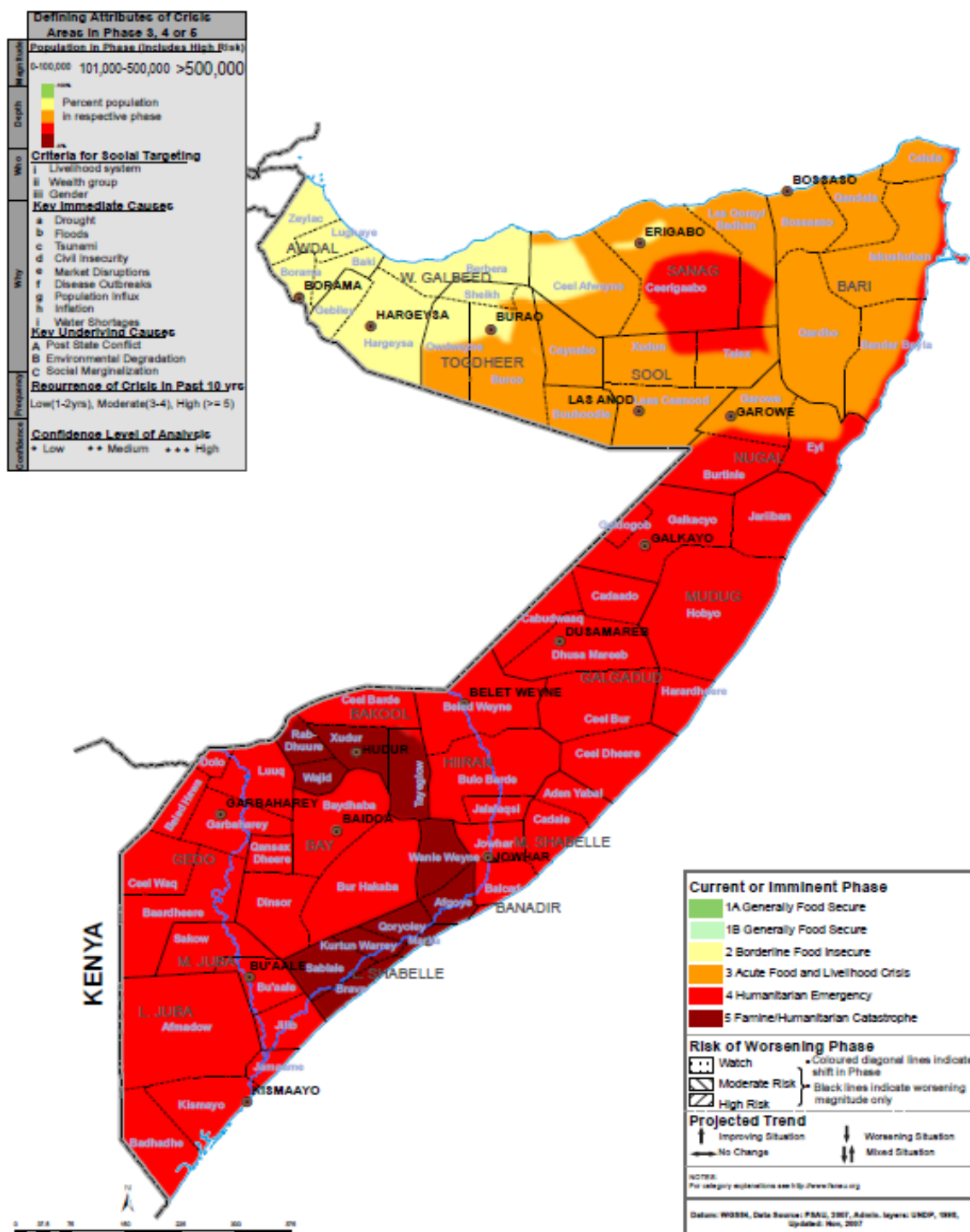
METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although we were able to gather different figures from available data, it is not certain that they encapsulate the totality of the phenomenon of migrations linked to the drought in Somalia. Two main methodological issues explain this acknowledgement.

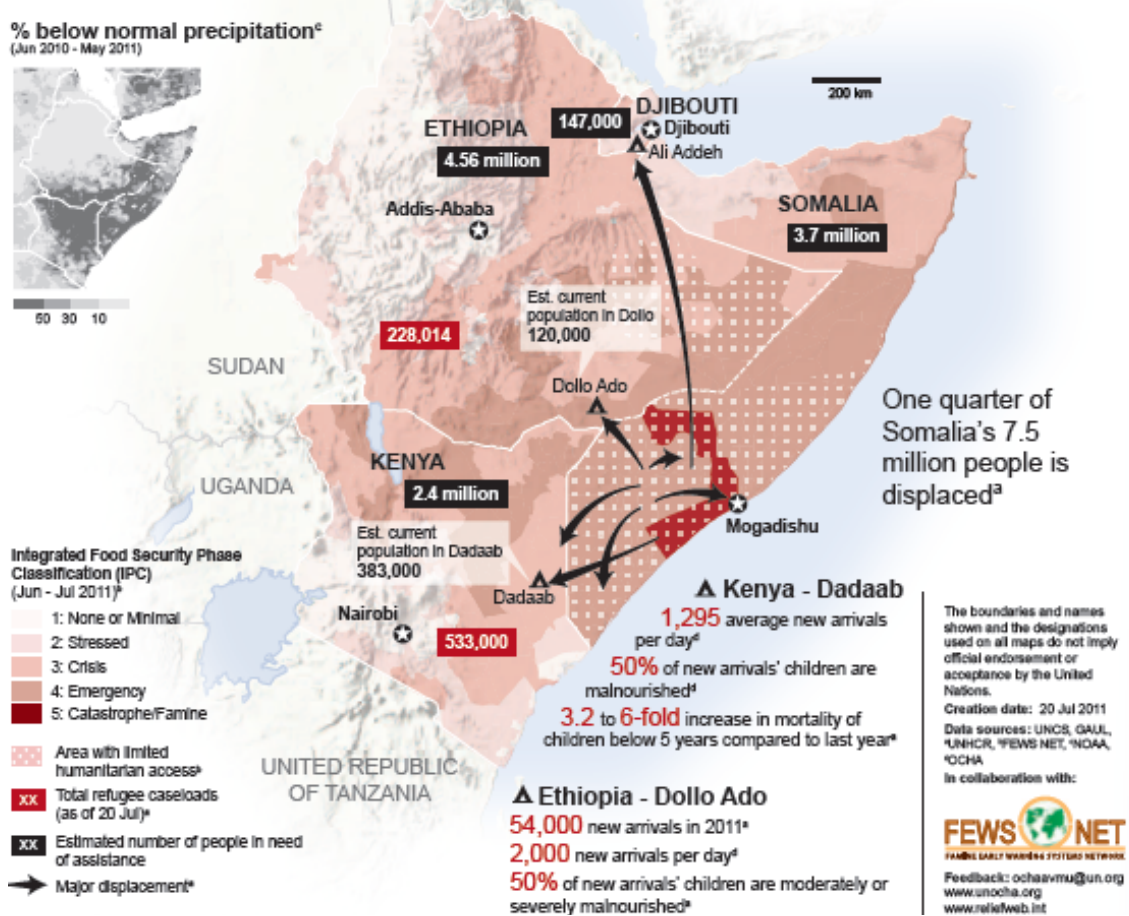
It is difficult to assess the number of migrants that moved because of the drought because distinguishing the migration factors in Somalia is no easy task. The complexity of the humanitarian crisis that developed in Somalia makes it difficult to separate persons fleeing the drought from persons displaced by the conflict or moving to improve their economic situation. According to a USAID report dated April, 2011, both drought-related

1. The last droughts in Eastern Africa took place in 2006 and in 2008-2009.

Map 1. Somalia Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, July 2011



Source: Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit—Somalia

Map 2. Food Security and Humanitarian situation assessment in the Horn of Africa, as of July 2011

Source: FEWSNET-OCHA, Eastern Africa: Drought – Humanitarian Snapshot (as of July 20 2011)

and conflict-related migrations were increasing at faster rates than usual during that period (USAID – FEWSNET, 2011). Accordingly, it seems reductive to explain the increase in the rate of migrations of Somalis in 2011 by the only drought: migrants affected by the drought could also be migrating because of the insecurity induced by the conflict, as well as to improve their socioeconomic situation. This does not support the idea that talking about “environmental migrants” in the aftermath of the 2011 drought is inadequate but rather that numbers should be used cautiously.

Indeed, numbers available from the UNHCR mention the increase in the total number of refugee, and not of migrants. As a reminder, we underscore here that the persons registered by UNHCR under the Refugee Status Determination procedure is restricted to those falling into the legal definition of a refugee, enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention. In many cases, category of environmental migrants and refugees are clearly distinguishable, which is yet hardly doable in the case of Somalia—as already argued. Accordingly,

if these figures capture the numbers of migrants who actually went through the registration process and obtain the refugee status, then it is likely that they give a low estimation of the number of migrants displaced by the drought. Yet, it seems reasonable to suggest that part of the huge influx in refugees in the spring and summer of 2011 was linked to the drought occurring at the same time in Somalia. This hypothesis is actually corroborated by elements developed below.

1. DROUGHT-RELATED MIGRATIONS IN SOMALIA IN 2011: QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

1.1. Droughts in Somalia and vulnerability factors

Somalia has experienced many disasters before the drought in 2011 and we can draw numerous similarities with past experiences. In 1974-75, 2001,

Moving from Somalia to Kenya



Photo credits : © IOM 2011 - MKE0406 (Photo: Lovorka Ilovac)

2006 and 2008, Somalia suffered droughts in different parts of its territory.

The food situation deteriorated in 2001 because of heavy rains in Ethiopia, which resulted in floods in Southern Somalia. Large migration flows were observed at the time and problems of food supply already existed. The 2001 flood was then followed by repeated droughts, limiting the future resilience of populations to stronger natural disturbances.

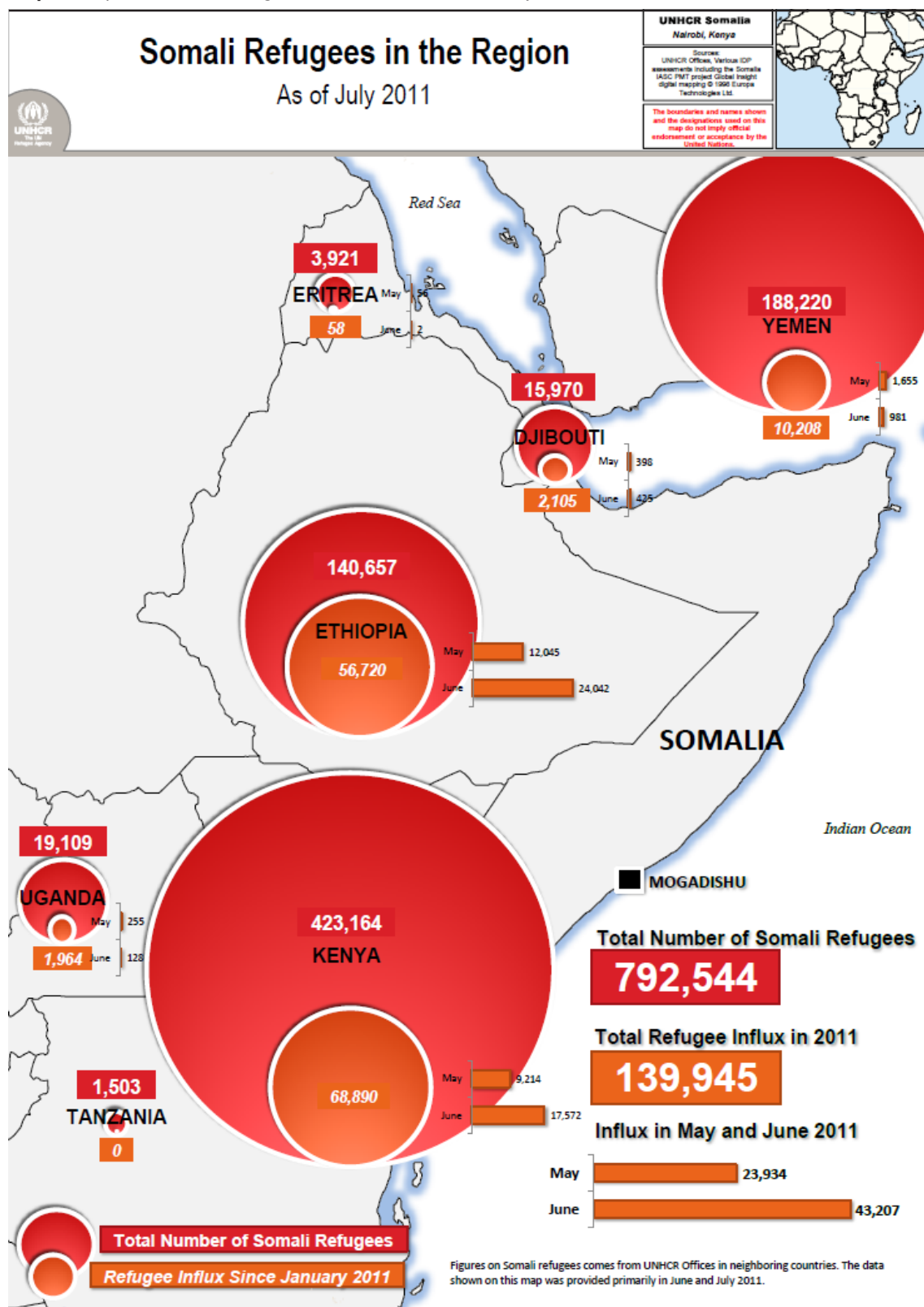
As 2011 was the driest year in decades, the Somali population was hardly able to face it. In the summer, the drought transformed into a major food crisis, as acute food insecurity developed in certain regions of South Somalia. On July 20th, the state of famine was declared by the United Nations in two regions, Lower Shabelle and Bakool (UN News Centre, 2011). By the beginning of August, the number of people needing urgent food assistance in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda had reached 12.4 million, twice the number of the beginning of year. The state of famine in Somalia extended to three other regions between July and August: some areas of Middle Shabelle, the Afgooye corridor refugee settlement and the internally displaced communities in Mogadishu. The UN considered the food crisis as the most serious one Africa had known in the last twenty years. (L'Expansion, 2011). The two maps below show food security and humanitarian situation assessments for the month of July. Somalia, as can be seen, presents the most serious humanitarian situation, as entire areas have only limited

humanitarian access while famine levels have developed in certain regions, and one quarter of the country's inhabitants are displaced.

The environmental situation on Somalia had strong impacts on the population, which, we argue, were partly predictable. The lack of environmental regulations and disaster risk reduction policy in Somalia, to be put down to the extremely turbulent political context and the lack of national government since 1991 with the end of Siad Barre's dictatorship, explains why civilians did not receive national support and assistance. All attempts to bring a solution to the policy vacuum and address the lack of administration that Somalia was experiencing were unsuccessful. Hopes were raised in 2004 with the establishment of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government, but the different parties of the civil war have been unable to bring peace, stability and protection. The conflict that has been concentrated in the South of Somalia since 2009 between the forces of the TFG, assisted by AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) to various Islamist factions, namely Al-Shabaab, have further complicated the political situation. This lack of effective and unified sovereignty from national institutions over the Somali population has impeded a proper management of the crises that has affected the country. As a result, populations are left even more vulnerable after each crisis, in a region (the Horn of Africa) that is already considered the poorest in the world.

Regional tentative to prevent drought and desertification impact yet exists. In 1996, six countries of the Horn of Africa decided to create the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which aims at reducing famine and starvation in the region by promoting development and drought control through the creation of plans to cope with future disasters. As a result, some countries in the Horn of Africa succeeded in implementing prevention systems. For instance, Kenya and Ethiopia, dependent of humanitarian aid, were able to determine their future needs and foresee the management of the crisis. The lack of stable political institutions in Somalia partly might explain the failure of the initiative in the country.

Other important factors explaining the vulnerability of the Somali population are the demographic changes that the country has gone through in the past decades coupled with the lack of food production improvements. If Somalia's population has more than doubled since 1970, the food production has not increased so as to satisfy the rising demand. Somalia attempted to respond to these growing needs situation by implementing development policies to enhance sustainable agriculture, but these policies were impeded by war

Map 3. Snapshot of Somali Refugees in the Horn of Africa, as of July 20th, 2011

Source: UNHCR Offices, Various IDP assessments including the Somalia IASC PMT project Global Insight digital mapping

expenses. Food shortages and the lack of economic opportunities from agriculture greatly increase vulnerabilities. Indeed, the livelihood of Somalia's rural population is greatly dependent on the agricultural sector, but it suffers from a lack of elementary tools to increase its productivity (machinery, fertilizers, etc.). Land aridity in the Horn of Africa has never been tackled, which explains the difficulty for farmers to produce enough yields to feed the population. Even in good years, farmers are unable to produce enough reserves to prevent future possible disasters.

Accordingly, it appears impossible to understand the impacts of the 2011 drought without addressing the linkages between the famine and previous socio-economic patterns. Not only farmers face extremely worrying threats to their livelihoods, Somali pastoral societies are also extremely weakened by environmental conditions. Because of the premises of drought witnessed in 2009 and 2010, with strong interruptions of rainfalls, nomadic pastoralists, who represent the major part of the Somali population, lost their livestock. Without any back-up resources, the pastoralist population did not have enough resources to prevent the effects of the 2011 drought nor to adapt to the new situation.

1.2. Quantitative assessment

The drought that hit the Horn of Africa in 2011 generated complex multi-directional flows of migrants, both inside the affected countries and outside. Prior to the drought, migrations were already a distinctive feature of the region's dynamics, as highlighted by IOM's Director of Operations and Emergencies Mohammed Abdiker, according to whom "drought related migration is exacerbating an already complex situation of displacement and movement, triggered by conflict and instability and the returns of many Ethiopians and Somalis from Yemen" (IOM, 2011). In fact, the power struggles taking place across the southern and central regions of Somalia have already caused mass displacement within the country. Drought appears as an additional migration factor, in a context where migration has been and remains the unique source of immediate security for Somali citizens (Thiollet, 2009:81).

The regions where famine was declared were pastoral areas. The effects of the drought in these areas included an increase in the price of cereal and water and higher livestock mortality rates. Pastoral families were left in a situation where their survival was threatened by lack of water, pasture and food, and they decided to leave their land, at least temporarily. Massive flows of Somalis arrived in Mogadishu during the peak of the

Table 1. Comparison of the number of Somali arrivals in Yemen, between 2010 and 2011, and between the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2011

Period	Number of Somali arrivals on the Yemeni shores	Percentage increase	Number of non-Somali arrivals on the Yemeni shores	Percentage increase
April-June 2011	4,415	103, 26%	15, 740	27, 89%
July-September 2011	8,974	NA	20, 130	
January-September 2010	10,051	92, 92%	NA	NA
January-September 2011	19,390	NA	NA	

Source: Own elaboration, from Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, July-September 2011 quarterly review

Table 2. Origin of registered Somali asylum seekers in Yemen, during the 3rd quarter of 2011

Origin of Somali asylum seekers in Yemen (July-Sept 2011)	Number of migrants	Percentage of total
Middle and Lower Shabelle	3,711	42,59%
Bay	1,977	22,69%
Banadir	1,653	18,97%
Other	1,372	16,75%
South-Central Somalia	NA	97%
Puntland	NA	2%
Somaliland	NA	1%

Source: Own elaboration, from Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, July-September 2011 quarterly review

crisis, but many others decided either because of connection abroad or geographical proximity to cross national frontiers and enter neighboring countries, such as Kenya and Ethiopia, or more faraway ones from Yemen to South Africa.

Although quantitative data on environmentally induced migration are scarce, numbers are available from different report published by humanitarian agencies, operating in Somalia and neighboring countries. Occasionally they were able to survey the number of migrants whose main reason for moving was the drought. According to the OCHA Somalia Situation Report issued on July 26th, the number of new internally displaced people (IDPs) in Somalia between

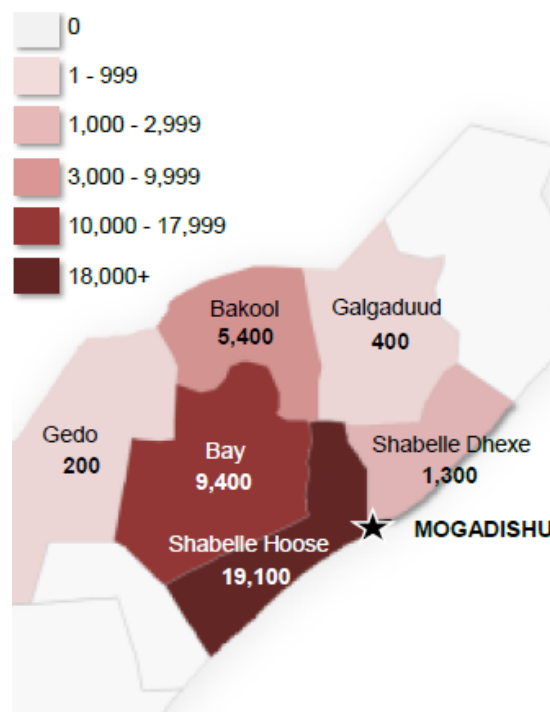
June 6th, 2011 and July 26th, 2011, amounted to 62,500, of whom 82% had moved because of the drought. The rate of migrants entering Kenya and Ethiopia during this period, considered as the peak of the crisis, amounted to 3,500 per day (UNOCHA, 2011).

The map below, constructed with data from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) offices in countries neighboring Somalia, gives an assessment of the numbers of Somali refugees registered by the agency in the region as for July, 2011. The map shows that the main countries that received Somali refugees during the drought were Kenya, Yemen and Ethiopia. Kenya received the biggest share of these migrants, with 68,890 new refugees coming in between January and July 2011. Ethiopia came second, receiving 56,720 refugees and Yemen third with 10,208 refugees. Between May and June, the number of new Somali refugees in the region increased therefore by 80%.

Finally, it is possible to know the number of migrants coming from Somalia who arrived in Yemen during the period of the drought. The numbers are presented in the table below, which shows the evolution of the number of Somali arrivals on the shores of Yemen from one period to the other during the year of the drought, and from one year to the other, comparing 2011 to the previous year.

Table 1 shows that the number of Somali arrivals on the Yemeni coasts more than doubled between the second and the third quarter of the year 2011, while at the same time the number of non-Somali nationals only increased by less than 30%. Data collected by the Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF) also shows that a large majority of Somali asylum seekers registered in Yemen during the period of July to September 2011 came from regions where famine or acute food insecurity was reported during the period. If the link establishing a direct causality between drought-affected areas and migration could be debatable on the sole analysis of origin of Somali asylum seekers, the Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force was able to assess for a 10% sample of the registered new arrivals, their main reason of departure. While insecurity was the main reason evoked during the April-June period, drought and the inability to access basic needs, as well as other economic factors, had become the primary reasons for fleeing by the July-September (Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, 2011).

Map 4. Source of displacement of Somali IDPs arriving in Mogadishu, July-September 2011



Source: UNHCR BO Somalia, Nairobi, July to September 2011

1.3. Migrant profiles and migration factors: who are the migrants, where do they go, why do they move?

Somali migrants moved from their homes to urban areas and other countries because the degradation of environmental conditions posed a threat to their livelihood and even their survival. For pastoralist communities, which represent more than the half of the Somali population, the consequences of the drought were the incapacity to find pastures to feed their livestock as well the lack of water. Somali nomadic populations have always used short-distance mobility as an answer to drought, mobility being one of the conditions for survival in this arid area. However, several factors including the growing population in rural areas, the competition for land and water, the ecological damage to resources and the restricted mobility across political boundaries have made it harder for them to continue to depend on this as a coping mechanism. Regions where the famine was declared in July 2011, Low Shabelle and Bakool, were areas where the armed conflict between the government troops and the Shebab rebels was taking place. Conflict prevented pastoralist families from getting access to assistance

during the food crisis, forcing them to migrate to more faraway places. Those who did not move from the areas worst affected by the drought were usually Somali families with too little economic resources to leave or the families of male migrants that stayed behind waiting for the return of the head of the family.

Some of the migrants headed for Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Others took the direction of the two northern regions of Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland, sometimes to settle temporarily there, or to head to other destinations, namely the Arabic Peninsula. Other migrants headed to neighboring countries, mainly Kenya and Ethiopia, where they could receive shelter and assistance by entering the refugee camps located next to the borders. For a fraction of the migrants, going to Kenya was only one step in a longer journey that was supposed to take them to Southern African countries, especially South Africa.

Internally displaced people (IDPs)

During the month of July, the number of IDPs migrating away from the South-Central region of Somalia started to decrease. Possible reasons for this decline include the arrival of Islamic NGOs distributing relief aid in some of the areas worst affected by the famine, such as the Bay and Bakool regions, but also the fact that internally displaced people also started heading for surrounding towns, such as Baidoa, Wajid, Berdale, Qasaxdhare and Bardera (not just to Mogadishu or the Northern regions of Somalia). Other possible reasons include the fact that after some time, those who could afford to move had already done so, while the situation of those who remained behind without sufficient means to move had not changed.

Mogadishu

According to a document based on IASC Population Movement Tracking data published by UNHCR on November 18th, 2011, the largest influx of IDPs coming into Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, occurred in January, 2011. However, starting in March, the rate of new IDPs arriving to the capital started increasing steadily. Here are the key numbers and features of these IDP flows, for each quarter of the year.

From January to March, 2011, the total IDP arrivals in Mogadishu amounted to 31,400. The highest number arrived in January. Sixty-six percent of the IDPs had been displaced because of the drought. Twenty percent said they had migrated because of lack of livelihood. These movements are actually likely to be related to the drought. Seven percent of the IDPs coming in had moved because of insecurity. Seven percent of the displaced had been

evicted from IDP settlements in the Afgooye corridor. Most of the IDPs arriving in Mogadishu during this period came from the Lower Shabelle region.

From April to June 2011, the total IDP arrivals in the capital of Somalia amounted to 8,500 (a significant decrease compared to the previous period). 83% of these arrivals were linked to the drought, while 16% were linked to insecurity. The IDPs mostly came from Bay region.

From July to September 2011, the total number of IDPs arriving in Mogadishu was 35, 800. Seventy-seven percent of these migrants arrived during the month of July when the state of famine was declared in Lower Shabelle and Bakool. Ninety-eight percent of arrivals during this period of time were drought-related, according to the UNHCR report.

From October to November, the reasons for displacement were reversed, as the effects of the drought disappeared and military conflict started again between government forces and Al-Shabaab rebels in the region of Mogadishu. Ninety-three percent of the total arrivals during that period were linked to insecurity.

The Afgooye corridor

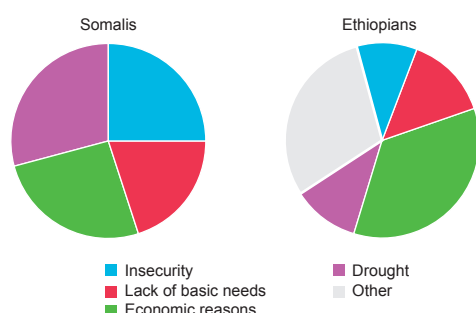
It is the main road between the cities of Mogadishu and Afgooye. This corridor is the area where Somali migrants go when intense fighting in Mogadishu creates serious safety risks. It is actually the largest single concentration of internally displaced people in the world.

In August 2011, the prevalence of acute malnutrition and the rates of mortality surpassed famine thresholds in the Mogadishu IDP community and in the Afgooye corridor IDP settlement (FN-SAU- FEWSNET, 2011). In fact, the UN declared on August 3rd that the famine had spread to three more regions of Southern Somalia since July 20th: the Afgooye corridor, Mogadishu, and the Middle Shabelle region.

Migration to Puntland and Somaliland

Migrations inside the country happened inside a context of growing securitization because of the conflict. Upon arriving in Somaliland and Puntland, migrants from the South of Somalia faced suspicion from the part of the local populations or police forces. In the semi-autonomous Puntland state, identity cards were handed out to IDPs from Southern Somalia in order to distinguish them from militia or criminals. Poor local communities in these regions have helped to settle unusually large numbers of displaced people, sometimes drawing on traditional and Islamic principles. Sufi brotherhoods that are known for linking people from different clans and origins played a role in this integration process.

Figure 1. Main reasons for flight among Somali and Ethiopian migrants arriving in Yemen between July and September 2011



Source: Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, 2011*

*Taken from a 10% sample of the 12,507 registered arrivals.

Entrance into other countries

Yemen

The majority of migrants arriving to Yemen were male. According to the Yemen MMTF, Somali males often left their families behind in Somalia, Kenya or Ethiopia to make the journey to Yemen. Their objective was to find employment in Yemen and to send back money to their families. Also, they were afraid of getting conscripted by the Al-Shabab insurgent groups or arrested by them on pretext that they were supporting the government if they stayed in Somalia.

Figure 1 shows the complexity of the reasons pushing Somali and Ethiopian migrants to the coast of Yemen during the period of July through September, 2011. The data reflect the importance the drought had as a primary factor for migration, especially for Somalis. Twenty six percent of new Somali arrivals during that period were caused primarily by the drought. The majority of the Somali arrivals were migrants coming from the South-Central regions of the two Shabelles, Bay and Banadir regions. In the previous quarter, encompassing April through June, 2011, insecurity had been the main factor of migration to the Yemeni coast.

Many of these migrants wished to move to Saudi Arabia after getting to Yemen. Yet, because of the ongoing conflict in Yemen, this was not possible. Work opportunities were also lacking for migrants from the Horn of Africa. The report explains that a part of the young migrants were disappointed and wished to go back to their country.

Kenya and Ethiopia

Both countries have had a leading role in welcoming Somali refugees during the 2011 drought, as

can be observed on the map in section I.2. Both Kenya and Ethiopia possess legal standards concerning refugees and have created government bodies geared to these issues, which work in close cooperation with UNHCR for refugee registration and status determination (Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, 2010). In Kenya, refugees from Somalia are accepted on a *prima facie* basis, which illustrates how normalized Somalia's humanitarian situation has become from the perspective of its main neighboring and host country². Yet in both countries, although Somali migrants enjoy recognition of the refugee status, they are only granted limited access to social protection and benefits, such as employment, education, health care and even freedom of movement, namely because of the difficulty they face in obtaining documentation in those countries. During the drought, although Kenya and Ethiopia were used by some migrants as transit countries when heading to the Arabic Peninsula or to Southern countries of Africa, the bulk of Somalis arriving in both countries was headed for the refugee camps, which played a crucial role in welcoming migrants affected by the drought and food insecurity.

Although there are several refugee camps inside Somalia, the camps that welcomed the most migrants during the drought were located in neighboring countries. The Dadaab complex, located in the North-East of Kenya, is by far the most important in terms of size. The camp features an important UNHCR base. The international humanitarian organisation CARE is UNHCR's partner for managing the camp. During the first eleven months of 2011, Dadaab received over 160,000 new refugees, most of them coming from the drought-stricken southern and central parts of Somalia (Dar and Khan, 2011). In July 2011, at the peak of the crisis, it was receiving 1,300 migrants per day. The second most important refugee camp is Dollo Ado, located in the South of Ethiopia, close to the frontier with Somalia. Although these complexes are relatively old, the intensity of the influx of migrants arriving during the drought led to the opening of new camps within these complexes. In Dollo Ado, three additional camps were opened between June and November, 2011, in order to relieve the congestion that increased everyday due to the arrival of new migrants. The last one, Bur Amino, was opened in November 2011, when the four existing camps at Dollo Ado had a total population of 137 000. After much negotiation, the Kenyan government agreed to open two additional camps, Ifo-2 and Kambioos in the context of the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the drought.

2. This is also the case in Yemen (Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, 2010).

South Africa

Migration of Somalis to South Africa during the drought is revealing on this issue. Since 1994 South Africa has prided itself on having officially welcoming arms for all migrants. According to Loren B. Landau, Director of the African Center for Migration and Society, South Africa's refugee law guarantees freedom of movement, access to numerous social services, and rights to compete in labor and housing markets. It is intended to maximize the refugee's freedom and protection and to promote their temporary integration into local communities (Landau, 2006). South Africa's refugee and asylum seeker policy was lauded in 2007 by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Gutierrez, for its progressiveness and commitment to ensuring access to basic services to refugees.

However, the reality experienced by Somali migrants arriving at the South African border in the wake of the drought was very different. Since they were coming from a country experiencing a military conflict, they could legitimately ask for asylum and refugee status in the country. Yet, according to the Chairperson of the Somali Community Board, a local organisation defending the interests of Somalis in South Africa, a new unofficial policy restricting entrance for Somali and Ethiopian asylum seekers developed starting in May 2011, as the level of migrants coming into the country from the Horn of Africa to seek asylum began to increase rapidly (IRIN News, 2011a). A June 2011 issue brief by Roni Amit from the African Center for Migration and Society suggests that the justification used by the Home Affairs Department for refusing asylum to migrants was that they should have sought asylum in the first safe country they reached. According to the researcher, not only does South Africa's use of the 'first safe country' principle lack any basis in international or domestic law, but it also fails to consider claims individually before turning asylum seekers away, as demanded by international law (Amit, 2011). Its implementation thus deprived migrants arriving from the Horn of Africa as a result of the drought and/or the civil war of any legal or effective protection, forcing them to remain in a situation of physical insecurity, whereas they could have asked for asylum given the political situation of Somalia.

The South African policy had effects on other countries in the region, for instance Zimbabwe, which closed its borders to migrants unable to present an identity document. One of the reasons for the strengthening of Zimbabwe's immigration policy was that migrants coming into the country and seeking asylum would just stay long enough to receive material assistance, and then

go away again, before their case was adjudicated. For Zimbabwe, this meant extra administrative and social costs and a weakening of the refugee procedure.

This change in the South African immigration policy also caused a reaction by Mozambique, one of the transit countries for migrants heading to South Africa. Border authorities started restricting the movements of asylum seekers outside of the country's only refugee camp (the Maratane refugee camp, in Nampula Province). In June, 2011, because of the large influx of migrants, border officials and police started intercepting migrants arriving at Palma and deporting them back across the border to Tanzania, regardless of their status. In August 2011, 833 Ethiopian and Somali migrants were detained in Mtwara prison in the south-east of Tanzania.

2. PROTECTION AND SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Migration and security issues

Internal migration related concerns

The absence of efficient administration services led to a lack of control over refugees and migration flows in the south and the center of the country. The conflict increased the risks as well as the benefits associated with migration. Indeed, very striking migrant behavior has been observed, especially migration flows in areas directly affected by the conflict. The location of IDP camps requires Somali migrants to move inside rebel zones, even when these zones are witnessing episodes of violence. Sometimes, migrating to an IDP camp does not guarantee improved living conditions, because these settlements, located near the capital, are affected by violence, poverty and disease. However, the lack of information led to huge migration flows toward these areas.

The other choice, moving from conflict zones to neighboring regions or countries, is a risky. By exiting stable zones migrants and refugees expose themselves to other dangers including insecure roads and security checkpoints demanding illegal payments.

Puntland and Somaliland proclaimed foreigner expulsion policies in 2011 concerning migration flows toward the the Gulf of Aden. This worsened migration conditions, despite strong condemnations from international actors, especially the UN. The need to move away from the area of conflict can be seen as a push factor which explains these long distance migrations. Besides, Somalis can often

rely on transnational networks and communities abroad.

Some attempts have been made to improve Somali migrants' conditions in Puntland. The Danish Refugee Council worked on the customaries with traditional elders, representing a legitimate authority without an effective state administration. The reform of Xeer (unwritten traditional rules) was promoted to recognize minorities' and foreigners' rights. But there are no measures of behavior improvements which have followed the decision of the elders.

Regional migration

The environmental migrations caused by the drought in the Horn of Africa confronted countries with the problem of mixed migrations. According to IOM, mixed migrations are "complex migratory population movements including refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants and other migrants" (IOM, 2004). They constitute a policy issue for welcoming countries since these countries are compelled by international law to accept asylum seekers, but do not want to bear the costs of large numbers of other types migrants flowing into their country. Part of their dilemma is that it has become increasingly difficult to separate refugees and asylum seekers from other types of migrants. There have been growing concerns about letting people abuse national asylum systems. Moreover, migrants from the Horn of Africa are seen as a threat to national security.

The huge flows of migrants coming from the Horn of Africa during the period of the drought have thus revealed the challenge faced by certain African countries who experience large influxes of "mixed migration", as well as the many threats imposed to migrants, in this case Somali, arriving in these circumstances: even as asylum seekers, they risk being refused entrance into the country. The shift in policy that took place in South Africa had a knock-on effect on other countries in the region. As a result, many migrants, including environmental ones fleeing drought and famine, were forced to seek help elsewhere or enter countries illegally. In these cases they remained in a situation of deprivation and physical and legal insecurity.

The deportation and imprisonment of several hundred migrants coming from Somalia during the drought casts light on the dangers resulting from the lack of a coherent immigration strategy among countries in the region and more generally the absence of any kind of law aiming at taking care of environmental migrants. This case highlights how relevant an international law for environmental migrants could be. For one part, it would not leave the fate of environmental migrants in the hands

of States, which tend to shun the responsibility of welcoming large flows of foreign "refugees", especially during a humanitarian crisis and when these refugees come from a fragile country like Somalia. Secondly, it could provide environmental migrants with more protection and security than what they are receiving today.

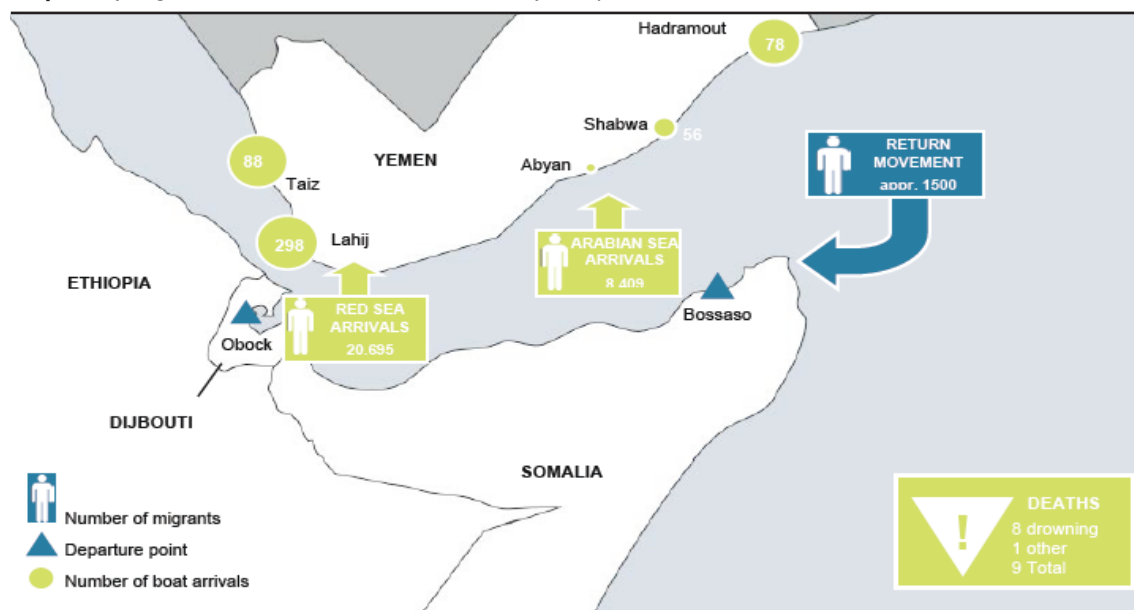
2.2. Safety conditions of regional displacement

One of the particularities of the migrations due to the drought in Somalia is the harsh safety conditions they took place in. These conditions epitomize the vulnerability of part of the Somali population during the period of the drought, deprived of legal protection by the absence of an effective national government, deprived of assistance because of the conflict and the presence of Al-Shabaab, weakened by the drought and famine, and exposed to the threats existing in the region. To give an example, a mapping technique commissioned by IOM showed that 85% of drought-affected Somali refugees and host pastoralist communities were using nearly 1,230 kilometers of unofficial border routes to reach Kenya's Dadaab refugee camp in the second half of 2011. The migrants faced dehydration, lack of access to health services, rape, theft and extortion. Only 10% of official routes were being used to reach Dadaab. Yet even the official routes lacked essential infrastructure, such as mobile water points, medical facilities and resting points.

Crossing the Gulf of Aden to go to Yemen was another path taken by Somali migrants fleeing the drought. It is an extremely dangerous journey. Cases of drowning on the way to Yemen are not rare. The maps below, taken from the Yemen MMTF Report for the period July-September 2011, illustrate the geography of the flows of migrants between the Horn of Africa and the Yemeni coast and also the risks inherent to the journey of migrants fleeing drought and conflict in the most risk-exposed parts of the Horn of Africa.

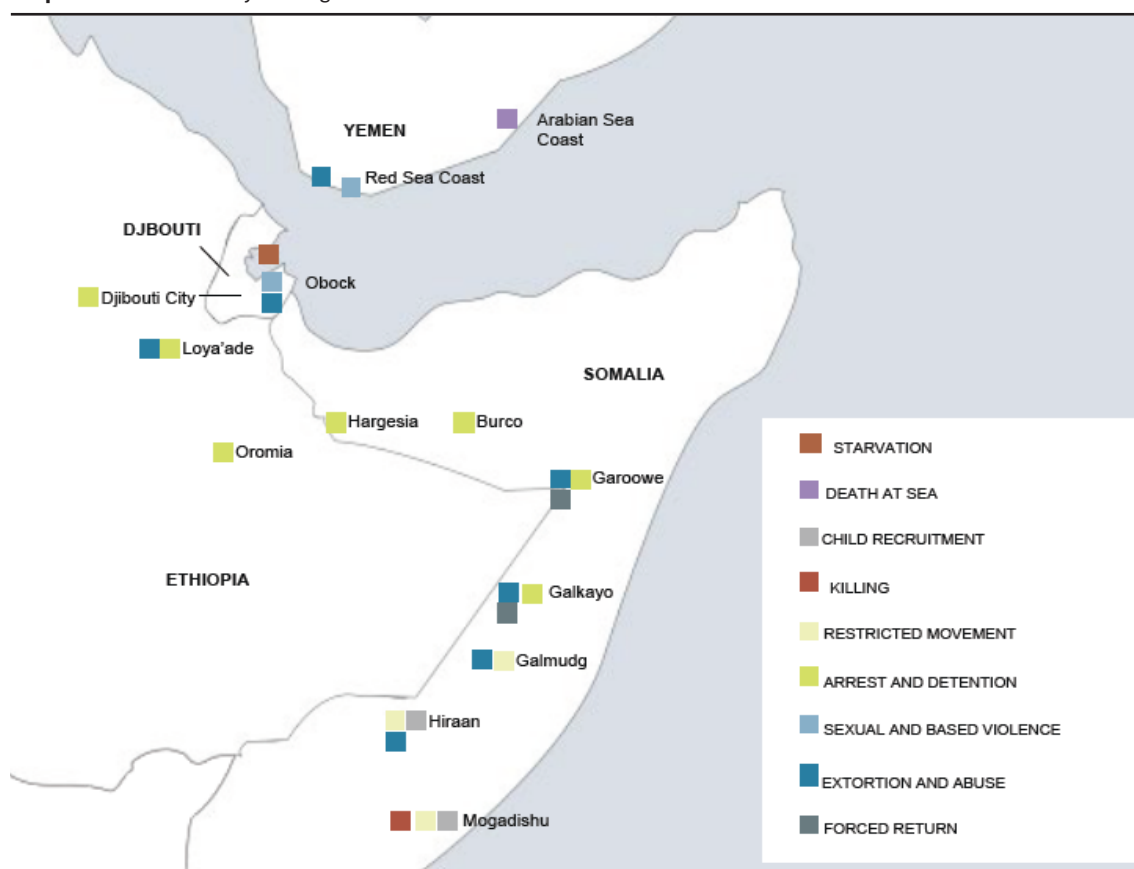
Smuggling appears a necessary part of most of the environmental migrants' journey. Migrants are smuggled by boats, sometimes carrying several thousand, from Somalia to Kenya, and then from Kenya to Mozambique, or from Somalia to Djibouti and then to Yemen. Migrants often do not know how to swim. They can also get robbed and physically assaulted when they arrive at their destination. According to Sheikh Amil of the Somali Community Board in South Africa smugglers charge up to \$3,000 to bring Somalis from Kenya to South Africa. Migrants have to pay half before they leave

Map 5. Key migration flows from Somalia to Yemen (July to September 2011)



Source: Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, 2011.

Map 6. Risks incurred by the migrants



Source: Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force, 2011

and half when they arrive. If they fail to do so they can be held as hostages.

Another serious threat known by Somali environmental migrants, especially women and children, is human trafficking. In fact, there have been reports of women and children fleeing drought in Somalia being trafficked into Kenya and sold into prostitution or forced labour. Generally speaking, according to Jean-Philippe Chauzy, Head of Communications at IOM, the huge influx of refugees into Kenya during the drought increased the vulnerability of people to trafficking, smuggling, and exploitation (Guardian Development Network, 2011). Nairobi appears as the central market for girls who are distributed to Kenya and other countries, where underage girls are frequently trafficked for sex tourism in other parts of the country. Hence drought, poverty and conflict represent a windfall for the economy of smuggling and trafficking in the Horn of Africa.

2.3. The particular case of refugee camps

The humanitarian challenges faced by these complexes increased significantly as a result of the drought and subsequent famine, which translated into overcrowding, extremely high malnutrition levels and disease prevalence. Overcrowding of the camps had several negative implications: it placed greater strain on existing resources, while increasing the risks of disease spreading among refugees, and creating more insecurity for fragile groups within the camps. Another problem raised by the existence of these refugee camps is the relationship between the refugees and the local population living next to the campsite. For example, Somali refugees outnumbered Kenyan locals in Dadaab by a quarter of a million at least during the drought crisis. The unequal access of locals compared to refugees to basic needs, as well as the pressure exerted on resources in the region by the camps, created tensions between the two groups at a time when food insecurity was generalized in the region (IRIN News, 2011b).

What will be the future of the “refugees” who have fled the drought? Will their situation converge with that of the political refugees, fleeing the civil war in Somalia, some of whom have been living in Dadaab since its creation in 1991-92? The lack of a long-term plan or exit strategy in a refugee camp such as Dadaab appears as a crucial problem because the situation of the complex is no longer sustainable.

3. POLITICAL ANSWERS TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS

Apart from the migrants’ profiles and trajectories which explain the higher vulnerability of Somali migrants during the drought crisis, it is indispensable to look at other explanatory factors for the lack of support and of adequate policy responses that might be particularly relevant to explain the difficulty of defining the impact of the environment on Somali migrations.

3.1. Somalia’s “failed state”, acute human insecurity and consequences for international assistance

The livelihood crisis reached its peak in the areas controlled by the Shebab rebels. The presence of these armed groups impeded the mobility necessary for people to have access to water and food when drought strikes. In 2011, 1.7 million people suffered and still do not have access to humanitarian aid because of al-Shabaab control of the regions in the south. The absence of a state translated into the absence of disaster risk prevention linked to droughts in the country, as well as the lack of implementation of any adaptation strategy at the national level (migration or other). Hence, it increased the need for these populations to migrate along greater distances to Somaliland, Puntland, to neighboring countries and to more far away countries, as this article described.

The transitional government has been recognized internationally as the only actor able to take charge. With the support of the African Union, the Transitional Federal Government took back the capital Mogadishu from al-Shabaab troops in 2011. However, Somalis consider this effort to stabilize the country as an attempt of one militia to surpass the others. Moreover, the international support for the TFG is seen as interference in the conflict and not always understood. This intervention of other countries has raised the suspicion upon international aid and especially NGOs. In January 2012, the Islamic group Al-Shabaab banned the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from South Somalia after accusing the organisation of attempting to poison food that was past its use by date (Mahmoud, 2012). In addition, al-Shabaab denied access to the World Food Program, UNICEF since 2010. The introduction of the political struggle into the context of humanitarian crisis has worsened the possibilities of international assistance agencies to work among the internally displaced and the populations in need.

3.2. What is at stake for international organisations?

As was described before, political and security issues in Somalia make the conditions of international intervention harder. Nevertheless, UN agencies and other international organisations are present on the field, and have played an important role in trying to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees in the region, despite more difficulties since the drought. This non-exhaustive list will present major actors and programs which have contributed to providing assistance to the environmental migrants in Somalia during the period of the drought.

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has set up aid programs to provide shelter and emergency relief to drought victims and environmental migrants. Two monitoring systems, the Population Movement Tracking and the Protection Monitoring Network, have been designed to inform agencies on IDP migrations paths and to list violence against Somali population. Moreover, UNHCR works in cooperation with other UN agencies and NGOs to ensure more support for the IDPs.

UNHCR action aims to prevent conflict due to drought: the analysis of the Commissioner highlights a strong risk of violence emerging on competition for the control of resources. Furthermore, UNHCR is working on IDP integration in host regions to reduce xenophobia towards migrants and refugees. A revision of the legislation in Somaliland and Puntland that considers IDPs as foreigners is in discussion. This intervention is part of the Regional Protection Program designed by UNHCR to enhance cooperation of neighboring states (Yemen, Ethiopia and Somalia) for the protection of refugees.

UNHCR intervention also concerns refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya, especially the Dadaab camp. Recently with the increase of arrivals, UNHCR has tried to implement other ways of assisting refugees. For instance, the Commissioner tried to involve communities in the management of the camp, ensuring training for volunteers. Services are maintained with more efficiency to detect needs and respond to them thanks to this involvement of the local population and of migrants. UNHCR is also improving sanitation use by creating sanitation committees who are acting at the household level. Other services have gained by this new implication of refugees in the camp management: teachers have been recruited from the refugee population and schools have remained open (UNHCR, 2012).

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is also working with the Somali Transitional Federal Government to implement capacity-building in migration management. Precisely, the office is trying to improve the management of migration to facilitate the work of international agencies and NGOs. The creation of IOM migration desks and migration data centers has helped to provide more precise information of the situation. IOM is also working with migrants to improve their conditions or remediate their situation. Examples include assisting the voluntary return of Somali willing to come back to their origin region and counter-trafficking projects to tackle human traffic development.

Initially proposed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the **African Union Mission in Somalia** is a peacekeeping mission created by the African Union Peace and Security Council and approved by the UN Security Council. Its mandate has been extended until 2013. This mission of peace enforcement aimed at the reassurance of TFG's control area and the liberation of Mogadishu.

Thanks to the contribution of the UNHCR and IOM, a **Somalia Mixed Migration Task Force (MMTF Somalia)** was created in 2007. UN OCHA, the Danish Refugee Council and the Norwegian Refugee Council are also involved in this task force designed to "respond to protection and humanitarian needs of migrants and asylum seekers transiting through Somalia" (Mixed Migration through Somalia and across the Gulf of Aden, June 2010). In addition, another task force has been created in Yemen to build planning of the migrants' reception in the region. The main role of this program is to reduce negative impacts often associated with migration in promoting coordination and diffusing information. Moreover, the program supports the development of infrastructure designed to respond to the causes of migration, especially food insecurity. This second objective is dedicated to tackle migration by giving Somali populations the possibility to avoid taking the risky choice of economic migrations. The MMTF is co-chaired by UNHCR and IOM.

Despite this situation of cooperation, there is a lack of detailed information on these organisation's activities in Somalia. Furthermore, the intervention of UN agencies is limited by rebels groups such as al-Shabaab who are unwilling to open strategic areas of control to international actors.

With regard to NGOs, their leverage of action has been considerably reduced for two reasons: some areas under the control of rebels have been closed to international humanitarian actors and the

violence against NGO staff has increased. For instance, **Doctor Without Borders (Médecins sans frontières, MSF)**, which had returned in the country in 2007, left Somalia at the beginning of 2008 because of the murder of 3 volunteers. Despite the lack of international staff on the field, MSF carried on its activities thanks to local personnel. MSF is still involved in Mogadishu with an emergency surgery service and continued temporary missions to help against malnutrition and cholera.

Some NGOs still remain in the countryside regions and in Mogadishu: **Action Against Hunger (Action contre la faim, ACF)** continued its action despite the danger and the increase of the needs since 2011. The organisation programs reached nearly 300,000 people and provide help against malnutrition and famine. However, ACF has been expelled from some regions, like Majid, leaving populations without solutions to their basic needs.

3.4. What is at stake for international diplomacy?

In February 2012, a major conference took place in London, gathering representatives from over 40 governments and multi-lateral organisations, in order to increase understanding on the Somali crisis. Several recommendations were asserted by the participants. Regional actors should use their influence to reach an agreement and build a strong state which will be able to face the different needs of the Somali population. However several criticisms have followed this conference.

First of all, the official Somali actors refuse to engage negotiations with al-Shabaab, despite a strong representation in the country. Secondly, policies aiming at security in the Gulf of Aden have been reaffirmed. Some observers have highlighted the fact that the funds devoted to the reassurance of maritime traffic could answer much more easily to the issue if they were devoted to humanitarian aid and Somalia's development.

Finally, a lack of determination for developing the resilience of populations has determined some actors, like Oxfam, to criticize the conference results due to not accounting for the Somali population's true needs. Indeed, the occurrence of the drought in Somalia suggests that the phenomenon will happen again, destroying attempts to bring stability to the country and leading to more environmental migrants in the future.

Moreover, the many security issues faced by environmental migrants from the Horn of Africa during the period of the drought have confirmed the need to broaden legal migration channels in order to avoid problems of smuggling, trafficking and illegal crossing of borders.

CONCLUSION

The 2011 drought has exacerbated pre-existing problems in Somalia. Relative to the civil war, the issue of famine and environmental migration received more attention but was less likely to be addressed by policy responses, because of the complexity of national and international actor interactions.

As a consequence, the drought, which particularly affected poor populations dependent on agriculture and pastoralism, raised the question of the vicious circle of uncontrolled violence and poverty. National policies designed by the Transitional Federal Government have aimed at promoting international aid and the interference of UN and AMISOM. But the lack of recognition of this administration as a legitimate one, the lack of control over the national territory and the lack of resources explain the difficulties of enforcing efficient policies towards migrants.

As for now, there are major uncertainties about the future of those displaced: should they be resettled or can they return? Many families who had gone to Mogadishu to flee the drought decided to return in November, 2011, to take advantage of the rainy season. To a certain extent they were helped to do so by aid agencies, like the United Arab Emirates Red Crescent Society, who helped resettle drought IDPs. Helping these environmental migrants resettle required addressing their needs in food, transportation, shelter material, and money. For agropastoralists to start afresh and resume their livelihood, some kind of livestock was needed. Some displaced families decided to send back the most capable in order to start again and left behind the elderly, women and children temporarily. In the refugee camps of Ethiopia and Kenya, families who wanted to go back also started doing so when the rain began to fall again, in spite of the conflict, in order to start over again.

Along with the protection of displaced population, one of the most important challenges today is probably to ensure the emergence of a true national union government which would have enough support to facilitate reconciliation and manage the consequences of disasters such as the 2011 drought.

Somalia is locked in a vicious circle of disasters contributing to instability and conflicts. The mix between refugees, economic migrants and environmental migrants is huge and the region is in deep need of better tools and data on the migration nexus. Above all, Somali populations need to develop their resilience against drought, especially in a climatic, demographic and social context that has greatly changed and which impedes the

traditional responses from being fully effective. A regional adaptation strategy in the Horn of Africa, which would include Somalia, could help answer

this problem, but this option is dependent on the degree of cooperation that regional actors are ready to foster. ■

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