



SOMALIA

Floods and locusts arrive after years of conflict

KEY FACTS

Population: **15.9 million**

5.9 million people in need of humanitarian aid

2.1 million facing crisis or worse levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+)

2.6 million people internally displaced

12.2% under-five mortality rate, the highest in the world

194th (of 195 countries) for capability to prevent and mitigate epidemics

154th (of 167 countries) for women's equality

179th (of 181 countries) for resilience to climate change

4/5 score for severity of access constraints

78% of funding received for 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan

Above: Meymun fled her hometown to escape violence when she was just 14. Now 18 and the mother of two children, she is determined to give her children a better life. The IRC provides support to Meymun and her family through comprehensive malnutrition services.

PROBABILITY

- 9** HUMAN THREAT
- 7** NATURAL THREAT

IMPACT

- 10** CONSTRAINTS ON COUNTRY RESPONSE
- 10** EXISTING PRESSURES ON POPULATION

Somalia's humanitarian situation is characterized by a protracted crisis that could well worsen in 2021 as the country faces active conflict, the largest desert locust invasion in decades, worsening climate-related disasters, the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and deepening food insecurity.

Somalia enters 2021 amid a delayed election process that could trigger greater conflict and crisis over the course of the year. While conflict remains the key driver of instability in the county, climate-related disasters are increasingly driving needs and displacements. COVID-19 has compounded the existing economic and food insecurity crises in the country. Somalia's ability to withstand additional shocks was already limited, as evidenced by the country's extremely low coping capacity and the population's high vulnerability, due to decades of conflict and instability.

"Somalia needs the world's attention as it faces increasing conflict, flooding, COVID-19 and desert locusts. These crises are exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. The economy is deteriorating, leaving many Somalis unable to feed themselves and their families. I am proud that the IRC has been able to use quick, flexible cash transfers and employment programming to help the most vulnerable families survive during this particularly trying time."

- Ali Farah
Senior Program Officer, IRC Somalia



HUMANITARIAN RISKS IN 2021

- ▶ **Conflict between government forces and al-Shabab will continue to drive new needs and displacement.** The country saw 189,000 new displacements due to conflict in the first half of 2020 - one of the top five increases in the world ([IDMC](#)). Ongoing conflict between government forces and al-Shabab is likely to persist in 2021 and remain the major driver of insecurity in the country. Moreover, tensions around delayed elections could set the stage for wider crises. Parliamentary elections are now planned for December 2020 and the presidential election for February 2021. In the run up to both elections, al-Shabab is likely to increase its attacks to disrupt the process and exploit the distraction of the government.
- ▶ **The cumulative shocks of natural disasters, locust invasions and COVID-19 are deepening needs. Somalia ranks in the top five countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change ([ND-GAIN](#)).** In the first half of 2020, displacements due to natural disasters were more than twice the number of conflict-driven displacements ([IDMC](#)). Flooding affected nearly 1.6 million people ([OCHA](#)) and displaced over 840,000 people in 2020 - a doubling compared to the previous year ([OCHA](#)). At the same time, desert locust infestations affected 685,000 and were declared a national emergency by the Somali government ([OCHA](#)). Efforts to contain locusts were undermined by conflict and COVID-19 restrictions, which could enable more swarms to occur in 2021.
- ▶ **Food insecurity is likely to rise in the next year as locusts and natural disasters destroyed farmlands and this year's harvests.** In an IRC assessment in September 2020, 70% of people reported they did not have access to enough food. Food insecurity is expected to be even worse in 2021, as the 2020 harvests in southern and northwest Somalia are estimated to be 40% and 45% lower, respectively, than their long-term averages ([OCHA](#)). La Niña is also very likely to occur in late 2020 or early 2021 and exacerbate food insecurity as Somalia would be one of the countries hit hardest by the subsequent drought ([WFP](#)). 849,900 children under the age of five are now projected to be acutely malnourished through mid-2021 ([IPC Info](#)).
- ▶ **Somalia's coping capacity for crises in 2021 is extremely limited.** Somalia is one of just two countries on Watchlist 2021 to score a maximum of ten for both the existing vulnerability of the population and the country's lack of response capacity. These scores reflect the impacts of decades of insecurity, economic under-development and political instability.

THE IRC IN SOMALIA

The IRC first began assisting Somalis in 1981. The IRC supports Somalis' economic well-being through job training, food vouchers, direct cash assistance to farmers, shepherds and small business owners and village savings and loan groups and job-training programs that help women meet their families' needs and increase their decision-making power. We also help prevent and address health crises by building and rehabilitating water systems and other critical infrastructure, providing primary healthcare services via both static and mobile clinics to underserved people and training health workers. Learn more about the [IRC's Somalia response](#).



MOGADISHU