

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

November-December 2004



Tsunami hits Somalia

On 26 December 2004, the Tsunami that devastated South East Asia also struck the Somali coastline. Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') was the worst affected area particularly between Hafun (Bari region) and Garacad (Mudug region), a stretch of around 650 km.

The damage also extended to the Lower Jubba area. The effects of the Tsunami included the loss of life, destruction of shelters, houses and water sources and loss of productive assets. For Somalia already suffering from four years of consecutive drought and periodic floods in addition to chronic insecurity, this compounded an already precarious situation.

The livelihoods of many people residing in small villages along the Somali coastline, particularly in the northeastern regions, were devastated. Reports suggest that between 100 and 300 lives were lost. UNICEF has been targeting some 8000 of those affected in its relief work. A large number of fishing boats and equipment was also lost. The fact that at that time of the year coincided with the peak of the fishing season increased the number of those affected. Within days UNICEF and other UN agencies including WFP, WHO and MSF-Holland, mobilized immediate assistance, including food, non-food items, and medical assistance, water and shelter materials. As part of the global appeal sent out by the UN to assist those affected, the UN in Somalia sought just over \$10m to provide assistance.



Devastation: Scene from Hafun in Northeast Somalia which has hit by the tsunami. UNICEF relief efforts in Somalia have targeted about 8,000 tsunami victims in Hafun and other areas. Credit: SOM05/001/UNICEF Somalia.

Due to the limited logistical capacity of the Somali authorities, the UN facilitated an interagency aerial assessment on December 30 2004 to explore the magnitude of damage, flying over the three worst affected areas, Hafun, Bander Beyla and Garacad.

Political developments

Initial political uncertainty eased after the new Somali cabinet endorsed the appointment of Mr Ali Mohamed Gedi as Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government. Mr Gedi whose appointment had been rejected was reappointed by Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and proceeded to consult various clans with a view to having an acceptable cabinet.

The President of Northeast Somalia (also known as Puntland, a semi-autonomous region within Somalia)

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UNICEF has supplied blankets, jerry cans, plastic sheeting, cooking sets, mosquito netting and soap to the most vulnerable victims of the tsunami. In addition, it has through partners supported chlorination of drinking water and digging of latrines.

UNICEF-supported activities initiated in the aftermath of the tsunami included: Rehabilitation of damaged wells; construction of new water sources; vaccination of children against measles; the provision of Vitamin A to prevent disease outbreaks and boost children's immune systems and supporting resumption of schooling to ensure children gain a sense of normality as quickly as possible.

Mohamed Abdi Hashi and traditional leaders discussed the legal term for the Puntland Parliament and set the Presidential elections for January 2005.

War crimes suit: The former Vice-President of Somalia during the military regime of Siad Barre, now a resident of Virginia, United States, was sued on Thursday November 11 for war crimes and other human rights abuses committed in the 1980s. A similar law suit was filed by survivors and relatives of tortured people against a former Somali Army commander who allegedly carried out and supervised killings, torture and beatings. The officer is a colonel was deported from Canada in the 1990s as a result of a law suit by Somalilanders living in Canada.

Security developments...

Killings: In Bossaso two brothers were shot dead at their HF radio communication facility. The killer is yet to be arrested. In Mogadishu masked men shot and killed Mohamed Hassan Takow an aide to Mohamed Dhere leader of the administration that controls Middle Shabelle region. Mr Takow was shot as he walked out of a mosque near his home in an apparent assassination. On the same day that Mr Takow was shot, a former military general, Mohamed Abdi Mohamed died in Nairobi from injuries sustained in a similar attack in Mogadishu.

Intermittent clashes between rival militia and banditry led to loss of life in various locations in Central/Southern Somalia.

In one of the banditry incidents a 19-year-old girl was raped by militia on the tarmac road between Baidoa and Daynuunay.

An attempt to re-open the main Mogadishu sea port was made in December by a group of businessmen. However a vessel which docked in on 20 December was forced away by gunfire from some renegade militia.

Health programme update...

Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI): Immunization drives were carried out in Somaliland and Central/Southern Somalia. The drives focused on vaccination of children against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and polio. Women of child-bearing age were also immunized against tetanus.

Training: UNICEF in collaboration with the Somaliland administration trained 10 midwives from Sahil, Sanaag and Awdal regions in life saving skills. Another 235 staff of health centres were trained in the treatment and prevention of vitamin A and iron-folic acid deficiencies. Members of 15 regional health teams were trained in nutrition and its role in the reduction of childhood deaths and illnesses.

A total of 192 community health workers from Somaliland and Puntland were trained in basic community health issues. Sixty chairpersons of village

UNICEF Operational Areas...

Northwest Zone – Hargeisa Office

Awdal
West Galbeed
Togdheer
Sahil
Sool
Sanaag

Northeast Zone – Bossaso Office

Bari
Nugal
Mudug

Central and Southern Zone – Baidoa, Jowhar, Mogadishu and Kismayo Offices

Galgaduud
Hiran
Middle Shabelle
Lower Shabelle
Benadir
Lower Juba
Middle Juba
Gedo
Bay
Bakool

health committees were trained in management of health services.

Nutrition programme update...

Breastfeeding: UNICEF in collaboration with the Somaliland Red Crescent Society trained 60 members of youth and women's groups in breastfeeding. In Bossaso, Puntland, UNICEF and WFP distributed one-month's supplementary food rations to families with malnourished children. In Central Somalia, UNICEF distributed supplementary feeding supplies to MSF-Belgium and International Medical Corps.

Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

Projects: Construction and rehabilitation of water projects was undertaken for Aroori, Loyado, Shalcow, Kalabaydh and Abaarso in Somaliland, Gardo, Goldogob and Rako in Puntland and Addow Oul, Isgoys, El Burale, El Cher, Harradhere, Doonka and Bulalow in Central/Southern Somalia..

Sanitation: Wheelbarrows, rakes and shovels were donated to schools in Burao and Borama in Somaliland. In Puntland, construction of sanitation facilities for Bandar Beyla, Galkayo and Gardo primary schools was completed. In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF trained 120 members of women's groups in Rabdhure, Elgarass and

Tiyeglow in Bakool in soap production, hygiene and sanitation.

Twenty-five people in Gololey, El Muluq and Bur Dacar villages, Middle Shabelle were trained in hygiene. In Mogadishu members representing various communities including IDPs were trained in chlorination and hygienic water use. Another 52 people were trained in hygiene and sanitation in Jowhar.

Education update...

Policy development: UNICEF gave input at a workshop to draw up a national education strategy for Somaliland. In Puntland, UNICEF organized two workshops to disseminate the new education policy to head teachers and education sector officials from the local administration and NGOs.

In Central/Southern Somalia, UNICEF staff assessed levels of attendance/enrolment of girls and teaching methodology in 16 schools in Middle Shabelle, Bay and Bakool regions. In some of the schools girl attendance was higher than that of boys though enrolment was lower.

HIV/AIDS prevention and control update...

World AIDS Day: The Day was marked in major urban centres in Somaliland, Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia. Activities that were used to enhance awareness of HIV/AIDS

Visiting missions

Mr Jan Egeland the UN under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs visited Somaliland on December 4. Mr Egeland appealed to the international community to show solidarity with the Somali people. Dennis McNamara, Special Adviser to the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator/Director Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division also visited Somalia to ascertain the status of internally displaced persons (IDPs) there.

Relief supplies

UNICEF distributed supplies for about 2400 people in Lasqoray and coastal areas of Sanaag region affected by drought. Supplies included high protein biscuits and chlorine for treatment of drinking water.

during the day included discussions/debates, football matches, processions, radio and TV programmes. The Day was marked around the global theme of “HIV/AIDS and Women and girls” and a local theme that emphasized the importance of voluntary counseling and testing for the prevention of HIV. UNICEF distributed 60 rapid testing kits during the occasion. In Mogadishu a voluntary counseling and testing demonstration was held at the Hayat Hospital and some 19 people were voluntarily tested.

In Somaliland, “Circus Hargeisa” staged performances that highlighted control and prevention measures for HIV/AIDS. Participation of community leaders in the events organized in all locations was high. UNICEF is the lead UN agency in HIV/AIDS interventions in Somalia.

“Youth week” was marked alongside World AIDS Day to help highlight HIV/AIDS issues among young people. Participants included school children, youth groups, women’s groups, religious groups, local NGOs, HIV/AIDS technical committees, ministries and local elders. Information materials on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases were distributed during Day.

Training: As part of peer education, life skills training was conducted in

Hargeisa, for educators from Central/Southern Somalia

Child Protection update...

Gender issues: Seventy-six people from Somaliland, Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia participated in workshops on gender-based violence. Among issues discussed were rape and female genital mutilation. Participants were drawn from international NGOs, women’s, youth and human rights organizations and child protection and youth networks. In December UNICEF observers attended the trial of 11 boys accused of sexually molesting a girl in Hargeisa. The observers’ aim was to ascertain that international standards of juvenile justice were upheld by the court.

Court case: On December 15, a 16-year-old girl Zam Zam Ahmed Dualeh was sentenced to five years in prison for alleged espionage. In response, the UNICEF Somalia Representative Jesper Morch appealed to Somaliland President Dahir Rayale Kahin to pardon Zam Zam. Earlier in November, four defence lawyers representing Zam Zam were released after having been sentenced to three years in prison.

Youth update

Support: UNICEF distributed sports supplies to the Puntland Ministry of Youth and Supports on the occasion of World AIDS Day. The supplies included uniforms, footballs, whistles, shoes, trophies and stop-watches which were used in sports activities that coincided with the Day.

Training initiatives in peace-building and conflict resolution were carried out during the reporting period in Belet Weyne and Merka in Central/Southern Somalia.

Special events: Somali children's Day was commemorated on 24 December in Mogadishu, Merka, Baidoa, and Belet Weyne towns in Central/Southern Somalia. It was marked on 24 December. Activities undertaken include peace rallies by children, sports tournaments, radio debates, and drama shows. The Day commemorates a day in December 2002 when at least 10 children were killed in an attack on a bus in Mogadishu.

World Day for the Disabled was marked in Somaliland on 4 December. Speaking during the occasion, Somaliland Vice President Ahmed Yusuf Yasin announced that the administration had waived duty for all aid meant for the disabled passing the port of Berbera.

Child soldiers: The Elman project continued in Mogadishu, Merka and Kismayo. The project is currently carrying out rehabilitation and reintegration of 180 former child soldiers

Communication for Development update...

Youth broadcasting: As part of UNICEF support to the Youth Radio Broadcasting initiative in Puntland, UNICEF assisted three youth groups in producing radio programmes. In Central/Southern Somalia UNICEF supported the training of youth group members in the use of digital cameras and voice recorders.

Staying Alive Competition: UNICEF provided technical assistance to two

youth groups that entered the One World/Staying Alive World AIDS Day 2004 Competition. The groups produced public-service announcement on the theme: "Women, girls and HIV/AIDS". The competition was part of a global initiative organized by one-world TV.

Health awareness: Six radio and television stations in Central/Southern Somalia facilitated debates on safe use of drinking water, hygiene education and environmental sanitation for prevention and control of cholera.

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Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.

For this month's report, special mention goes to the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) for information on Political Developments.