

UNICEF in SOMALIA:

Questions & Answers for the Media

UNICEF Somalia Support Centre
P.O. Box 44145, Nairobi, 00100 Kenya
Tel: +254 20 7623862, 7623950/53/55/70, 521218
Fax: +254 20 7623965, 520640

COMMUNICATION SECTION

Head of Section: Denise Shepherd-Johnson

Assistant Communication Officer: Robert Kihara

Emails: dshepherdjohnson@unicef.org

rkihara@unicef.org

Cellphone: Denise Shepherd-Johnson: + Tel: 254-722719867
OR Robert Kihara + 254-721244800/722206883

Website: <http://www.unicef.org/somalia>

Where does UNICEF have a presence in Somalia?

The UNICEF programme in Somalia is undertaken through three main offices in Somalia, each covering a distinct zone:

Hargeisa, "Somaliland" - the Northwest Zone (NWZ)

Bosasso, "Puntland" - the Northeast Zone (NEZ)

Jowhar - the Central South Zone (CSZ).

In the CSZ, there is an office in Jowhar and liaison offices in Baidoa and Mogadishu. The Kismayo office is currently closed. .

The three main offices have full complements of international and national UNICEF staff members, coordinated by a Resident Programme Officer (RPO).

What are conditions like generally?

Somalia remains volatile, beset by internal political crisis and conflict, a country severely affected by the repercussions of more than ten years of war, economic decline and destruction. Already one of the poorest countries in the world at the onset of the nineties, conditions of extreme poverty now largely prevail, with very few services and grave health risks experienced by the most vulnerable groups, children and women.

What aspects do UNICEF programmes cover and what can I visit?

The UNICEF country programme covers interventions working through families and communities in the fields of health and nutrition, water and environmental sanitation, and education, and also covers activities for social mobilisation, advocacy and support to policy development.

Examples of what a media visit might take in include:

- ❖ immunization for children and mothers
- ❖ mother and child health clinics
- ❖ supplementary feeding programmes for malnourished children
- ❖ water provision through borehole sinking
- ❖ urban water system development
- ❖ support to the education system with teacher training, school books and equipment provision
- ❖ sports and youth group leadership

- ❖ work with women's groups
- ❖ advocacy and public education campaigns - using a variety of media - addressing issues such as breastfeeding, gender equity and the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM), HIV/AIDS, child protection, among others.

A key motive for UNICEF in facilitating journalists to travel into Somalia is to expose them to the range of activities the organisation carries out in pursuit of its mandate on behalf of children and women. Consequently to encourage better informed coverage in the media: of both the pressing needs and of the actions communities and the international humanitarian agencies are taking together to improve the situation.

How can I get there?

How to arrange a media visit to Somalia

Journalists wishing to travel to Somalia can use the **United Nations Common Air Services (UNCAS)** which flies in and out of Somalia as a joint operation catering for UN and partner NGO staff.

Priority is given to UN personnel but media can purchase their own tickets if there's availability. Travelling on these flights journalists are not "sponsored" or travelling in any way under the aegis of the UN – i.e. they do not come under any UN security protocol - while en route to or from, or while in, Somalia. **Prior to travelling they are required to sign a waiver form releasing the UN from any liability, including for evacuation.**

Note: Journalists wishing to travel to Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') or Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') need to forward scanned image of passport page with key details for visa processing. In addition they should also send the following details by fax/email to confirm the following details on passport: name, nationality, number, place of issue, date of issue, profession and date of birth. **Please send these details at least 20 days before travel to Somalia from Nairobi to give time for processing.**

To get current rates for an itinerary and make a booking contact the UNCAS Coordinator, based at the office of the World Food Programme (WFP) Somalia.
Tel + 254 20 7622091

At UNICEF's Nairobi office the booking can be made for you through our Flight Coordinator (Contacts: Rachel Muaka/Rose Kore), who will take payment from you to UNICEF in form of cash or US dollar cheque.

A round trip from Nairobi into southern Somalia has a cost of \$1000-1500 depending on number of destinations. Return trip to Somaliland is closer to \$2200.

Departure is from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi, Terminal 1. Look for the UNCAS sign on the check-in desk. Check-in is at 6.00am – usually for a 7.00 am departure timing (**NB:** check this with a phone call on evening before flight)
 Airport departure tax is payable at UNCAS check-in (US \$20 cash)

The flights are on small Beechcraft planes which do not provide toilet facilities. Bottled water is normally available but no meal service provided. Flying time to Jowhar, the location of the main UNICEF Office in Central Somalia is 2.5 hours approx, and the same time approx onward from there to Hargeisa, the capital of Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland'). Jowhar is 90 km north of Mogadishu which is served by UNCAS through K-50 which is about 50km south of Mogadishu. Maximum allowed free luggage is 20 kg as of June 2006.

UNCAS flight schedule (as of 01 July 2006)

<u>Day</u>	<u>Itinerary</u>
Sunday	Hargeisa/Belet Weyne/Wajid/Nairobi Bossaso/Conoco/Hargeisa
Monday	Nairobi/Wajid/Belet Weyne/Hargeisa/ Conoco /Bossaso
Tuesday	Hargeisa/Belet Weyne/Wajid/Nairobi Bossaso/Conoco/Hargeisa
Wednesday	Nairobi/Wajid/Belet Weyne/Hargeisa/ Conoco /Bossaso
Thursday	Hargeisa/ Belet Weyne/Wajid/Nairobi Bossaso/Conoco/Hargeisa
Saturday	Nairobi/Wajid/Belet Weyne/Hargeisa/Conoco/Bossaso
Sunday	Hargeisa/Belet Weyne/ Wajid/Nairobi Bossaso/Conoco/Hargeisa
Major flight destinations in summary	
Sunday/Tuesday/Thursday	Hargeisa/Nairobi
Monday/Wednesday/Saturday	Nairobi/Hargeisa/Bossaso
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/ Saturday/Sunday	Wajid/Baidoa/Jowhar/K50

What happens when I arrive?

If you are on a UNICEF-facilitated press trip (ie you have a pre-arranged visit programme coordinated through UNICEF Somalia Communication Section – in Nairobi) you will get assistance on arrival through airport, and transport / accommodation arrangements will have been organized prior to your arrival, along with outline programme for the visit.

If you are travelling independently you will need pre-arranged transport at all locations. For car hire, see “Contacts” section towards the end of this document.

Travel in most parts of Central Southern Zone requires armed guards. These are usually hired together with the vehicle.

When visiting parts of the zone UNICEF staff can advise and pre-arrange your vehicle and security guard hire. This will cost about US \$50 per day and will be settled by you directly. An interpreter costs about US \$20 per day.

When visiting Mogadishu you can pre-arrange for a “Fixer” to get your car hire, security, interpretation and hotel accommodation organised. This – including fuel – will be about US \$250 per day. The hotel will cost about US \$70 per day including 3 meals. **See “Contacts.”**

Since July 2006, the onset of the Council of Somali Islamic Courts (COSIC) as political force shifted the political equation in Central/Southern Somalia as it became pitted against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) which with Ethiopian support took over Mogadishu from COSIC in late December 2006. Given the transient nature of Somali politics, it is crucial that media/travellers seek latest information from UN or existing local authorities on travel guidelines, modalities and notices required.

Visitors should liaise with a Fixer to work out travel modalities in conformity with any existing/new rules. Contacts for some Fixers are included in this document.

In the NWZ, a visa costing US \$20 and arranged on arrival is required – you will need to organize this directly if you are travelling independently.

In Northeast and Northwest Somalia you will need to pay \$20 at each departure and entry at local airports. In Jowhar, Central Somalia, foreign passport holders will need to pay \$50 entry tax.

Are there other flights?

Yes – there are some Somali airlines (not recognised by IATA) and a few private ones flying between Somalia/Ethiopia/Djibouti/Yemen/Dubai.

From Addis Ababa there is a commercial flight schedule on Ethiopian Airlines to Hargeisa, Somaliland.

From Nairobi Daallo Airlines fly into Mogadishu (**Contact: Tel: +254 20 31 73 18**)

From Nairobi it is also possible to fly into Somalia on a “khat” flight (flights that deliver *khat*, a widely chewed amphetamine akin to the coca leaf of South America). These depart daily from Wilson Airport in Nairobi taking deliveries from Kenya. Flights go to various locations in Somalia especially in the South/Central zone. These flights are usually unregulated and travellers taking them do so at their own risk.

Ethiopian Airlines flight schedule to Hargeisa, Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland')

NAIROBI – HARGEISA

MON/FRI/SAT/SUN	NAIROBI - ADDIS	1255 1455 ET 800
TUE/WED/THU	NAIROBI - ADDIS	1845 2045 ET 802
MON/FRI/SAT/SUN	NAIROBI - ADDIS	1915 2115 ET 802
TUE/THU/SAT/SUN	ADDIS - HARGEISA	1005 1210 ET 308

HARGEISA - NAIROBI

TUE/THU/SAT/SUN	HARGEISA - ADDIS	1230 1435 ET 309
DAILY	ADDIS - NAIROBI	0955 1155 ET 801
MON/FRI/SAT/SUN	ADDIS - NAIROBI	1615 1815 ET 803

***Please note that above schedules are subject to change.

What about accommodation?

In the Central and Southern Somalia UNICEF will arrange accommodation in its guesthouse for journalists whose trips it facilitates. Space is limited and journalists may be put up in guesthouses run by other UN agencies or NGOs.

For independent travellers who give prior warning, UNICEF can assist in making arrangements for staying in its or these other guesthouses.

The charge at the UNICEF and other guesthouses is US \$25 -35 a day, at UNICEF this includes all meals. You settle the bills yourself direct with the guesthouse in US \$ cash.

In the north there are guesthouses in Hargeisa (Northwest) Bosasso (Northeast) and accommodation can be available for journalists with prior arrangements. The rates here are the same as Jowhar.

In Hargeisa comfortable accommodation can be found at the Mansoor and Ambassador Hotels at a cost of US \$30 per day including breakfast. Similarly, in Bossaso accommodation is available at the Panorama Hotel. See "[Contacts](#)".

What about going to Mogadishu?

In June 2006, Mogadishu came under the control of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) later known as the Council of Somali Islamic Courts, which kicked out a loose alliance of factional leaders who previously had the city under their grip. A period of relative calm came to fore but in December, the TFG with Ethiopian support took over the city.

Given the transient nature of Somali politics, it is vital for visitors to maintain caution while travelling within Mogadishu/Central Somalia. The city is open for business, has a rapidly developing commercial and communications base with more potential if the international airport and seaport remain open given that for the first time in more than a decade they reopened in 2006.

UNICEF has a liaison office in Mogadishu manned by national staff. This office will help to arrange a programme for media to visit UNICEF projects if requested in advance through a 'Fixer'. Transport with fuel, accommodation, security, interpretation, cameraman should all be pre-arranged by the journalist prior to arrival and payment made in US \$ direct to the 'Fixer'.

See “**What happens when I arrive?**” above and “**Contacts**”.

Advice: think safe, act safe, be safe... Do not go out after dark... Be guided by and follow what your local contact person/fixer tells you

This information is given without prejudice on behalf of UNICEF and/or its agents as to its accuracy or reliability. Journalists using this information are asked to make independent verifications of it.

CONTACTS:

UNICEF ZONAL OFFICES:

If you are interested in seeking assistance directly from the Zonal offices for arrangements regarding a visit, please first contact the UNICEF Somalia Support Centre (USSC) Communication Section in Nairobi to discuss what you want to do.

Making this prior contact will:

- ease your way to getting what help you need in Somalia
- give you a chance to get latest update on programmes
- ensure you're aware of other media missions
- help in better planning for your visit

Zonal offices' contacts:

1.Hargeisa: Tel: +252 252 213 4600 Fax: +252 213 4501.
Other numbers: +252-828-5044

2.Jowhar: Tel: +252 1 613501/8. Other numbers: 252-1-211158/211058

3.Bossaso: Tel: +252 52 32687 Fax: +252 582 4125. Other numbers: + 252 52 36198

Mogadishu: UNICEF Liaison Office: Tel: 252 210178 Fax: +252 1 658500

“FIXERS” in Mogadishu:

Abdullahi Farah Duguf (cameraman):

Tel: +252 59 61004

+252 1 271616

Email: duguffarah@hotmail.com

Ahmed Abdisalam Adan, Director, Centre for Research and Dialogue

Tel: +252 59 60800

+252 1 658666

FLIGHTS:

UNCAS Flight Coordinator: Tel: +254 20 622091

UNICEF Flight Coordinator: Tel: +254 20 623952 (again, prior contact with Communication Office required)

Daallo Airlines: Tel: +254 20 31 73 18

Ethiopian Airlines: Tel: +254 20 217558/211986/330837/330857

HOTELS:

- Ambassador in Hargeisa - Contact: Khader Aden Hussein (CEO) Mob: +252 24 28511

Tel: +252 21 38895

+ 2522 526666

Fax: | +252 21 36026

Email: ambassadorhotelhargeisa@hotmail.com

Facilities: Business Centre with Fax and Internet. Rental for car hire arranged at \$10 per hour inclusive of driver and fuel.

- Maansoor in Hargeisa: Tel: +252 225 3638
+252 225 3639
- Panorama in Bossaso: Tel: +252 523 5774
- International Village, Bossaso: Tel: UNICEF Bossaso office can provide contacts.