

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

Communication Officer: Iman Morooka

Communication Officer: Robert Kihara

Emails: dshepherdjohnson@unicef.org

imorooka@unicef.org

rkihara@unicef.org

Cellphone: Denise Shepherd-Johnson: Tel: + 254 722 719 867

Iman Morooka: + 254 714 606 733

Robert Kihara: + 254 722 206 883

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 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 18 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, sanitation and hygiene, education, community-driven development, HIV/AIDS, empowerment and protection of children. It 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 travel into Somalia is to expose media and donors 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 Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS)** 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. Note however, there are rules governing travel on UNHAS for journalists either travelling on UN-organized trips or trips organized by themselves. 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. They are also required to undertake a security briefing prior to travel.**

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 14 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 UNHAS Coordinator, based at the office of the World Food Programme (WFP) Somalia, Tel +254 20 7622091/7622930 or try the numbers +254-20-7202170-5.

At UNICEF's Nairobi office the booking can be made for you through our Flight Coordinator (Contact: Rachel Muaka), 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 UNHAS sign on the check-in desk. Check-in is at 5.30am to 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 UNHAS 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 approximately, and the same time approx onward from there to Hargeisa, the capital of Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland'). Jowhar is 90 km north of Mogadishu. Maximum allowed free luggage is 20 kg.

UNCAS flight schedule (as of 1 March 2009)

<u>Day</u>	<u>Itinerary</u>
Sunday	Nairobi/Wajid/Hargeisa/Wajid/Nairobi Hargeisa/Conoco/Bossaso/Hargeisa
Tuesday	Nairobi/Wajir/Wajid/Hargeisa Hargeisa/Galkayo/Conoco/Hargeisa
Wednesday	Hargeisa/Wajid/Nairobi/ Hargeisa/Conoco/Bossaso/Hargeisa/ Erigavo/Hargeisa
Thursday	Nairobi/Wajir/Wajid/Hargeisa/Wajid/ Wajir/Nairobi Hargeisa/Bossaso/Conoco/Hargeisa/ Bossaso/Hargeisa
Saturday	Hargeisa/Wajid/Belet Weyne/Dusmareb/Conoco/Hargeisa
NB: Flights of Wajid-based Caravan are not included in above schedule	

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.

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.

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.

For Ethiopian Airline schedules, please contact the airline directly.

***Please note that UNHAS schedules are subject to change without notice.

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) Bossaso (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 and International Village. See "[Contacts](#)".

What about going to Mogadishu?

Mogadishu continues to experience sporadic conflict. Should the situation change to enable media visits in collaboration with the UN, journalists identified for travel would be notified.

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

FLIGHTS:

UNHAS Flight Coordinator: Tel + 254 20 7622091/7622930 or try the numbers +254-20-7202170-5.

UNICEF Flight Coordinator: Tel: +254 20 7623950/55/70 (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: *seek contacts from UNICEF Bossaso*