



Somalia Protection Cluster

Protection October to November 2016

Protection in focus: Military Withdrawal

Military withdrawal, a phenomenon that is arbitrary and repeated across South and Central regions of Somalia, exposes the civilian population to a myriad of protection and rights violations. Since 2014 troop withdrawals have occurred in three regions and seven towns, Galgaduud region; Budbud and Galcad, Hiraa region; El Ali, Moqol Kori and Halgan, Bakool region; Garrass Weyn, Rabdhuure, Burdaxunle and most recently Tiyeglow. In each of these withdrawals the impacts of the civilian population have been almost identical, the withdrawals result in immediate displacement, over-running of the town by Al Shabaab, destruction of civilian property and the extrajudicial killing of those deemed to support the government efforts along with the killing of civilians.

Protection Facts



Core Group in need

1.1 million IDPs +

refugee returnees, other civilians affected by armed conflict, violence, insecurity and disaster.



110,801 reached through protection activities in October and November 2016 including:

25,162 girls

22,486 boys

42,488 women

20,665 men



US\$ 89.9 million required /**15.5 million (17%)** received

Why are troop withdrawals so problematic? Troop withdrawals are not uncommon, however, in the aforementioned instances it is the nature of the withdrawal that is fundamentally problematic. Withdrawal of troops are sudden and the civilian population have no warning. In every instance the town is surrounded by Al Shabaab and they are in direct opposition to the remaining civilians of the troop protected towns. This opposition is underpinned by clan grievances and power imbalances created by the incumbence of the troops. A deadly cocktail of AS and pro-government grievances, in addition to clan grievances topped by power imbalances, means that when troops suddenly withdraw from a town they abandon a civilian population that has been dependent on them for material and physical security to an incoming force that have multiple layers of grievances. The manifestation of these grievances are brutal and violate the basic rights of the civilian populations.

The case of Moqol-Kori: In mid-September, the Ethiopian troops based at the outskirts of Moqol-Kori town in Hiraa district, an area that hosts IDPs from Galcad and Bud Bud, withdrew abruptly, leaving the town to immediately fall under the control of AS. The conflict that ensued saw the town ransacked by AS and demands made from loud speakers mounted on vehicles for the local population to join the fighting and to identify and locate those who were perceived to have collaborated with the Ethiopian troops, including government actors and members of the local clan militia. The aftermath of this withdrawal and subsequent occupation led to the massive displacement of civilians who fled on foot towards Maxaas town, 35km north east of Moqol-kori town. Currently, hundreds of displaced people from Galcad, Bud Bud and Moqol-kori are living in Maxaas under deplorable conditions.

Protect! The sudden withdrawal of troops results in rampant protection violations. Both AMISOM and Non-AMISOM troop contributors have measured some of their success through the liberation of AS controlled towns, however success is also measured through of a comprehensive exit strategy, something that these operations have fallen short on. It is also evident from the withdrawals that the protection of the civilian population and the sustainability of the liberation efforts are not high on the agenda. The military actors along with the Somali Federal Government need to assume responsibility of towns until such a time when the Somali National Armed Forces are able to assume this role and ensure the protection of civilians.

IHL accountability concerns: All parties to the conflict – government forces, AMISOM, ENDF and KDF as well as AS – are reminded of their fundamental obligation to protect civilians, to spare civilians from the impact of the armed conflict and to undertake all efforts to minimize collateral civilian damage, including arbitrary displacement.



PROTECTION At last quarter



SECURE HOME: Forced evictions – a hindrance to durable solutions

The protection of housing, land and property (HLP) rights has featured in every major protection needs assessment as a critical imperative for the realization of reintegration and durable solutions potentials for displaced affected communities in Somalia. In the last quarter of 2016, the HLP sub-cluster placed special emphasis on and scaled up response interventions in two thematic areas: Eviction prevention and response, and the development of local capacity on HLP.



Forced evictions: As part of a UNHCR-funded initiative to systematically track population movements in Somalia, NRC, through an extensive network of local organizations and community volunteers, documented an alarming rate of forced evictions across Somalia occurring primarily at the household level. Just over 6,800 households consisting around 41,500 individuals, predominantly IDPs, were forcefully removed from their homes between October and November. Amid ongoing refugee returns and widespread tenure insecurity, this trend is likely to continue into 2017. While NRC will continue to monitor, document and report incidents of forced evictions in order to ensure that the subject receives appropriate attention and support, a more direct prevention approach is being envisioned, effective 2017, as part of a broader HLP sub-cluster strategy to address forced evictions.



CIVILIANS EXPOSED: Freedom of movement and protection of civilians at risk

Armed groups have used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) as a weapon of choice in Somalia for over 10 years, having acquired substantial technical skills. During 2016, the vast majority of casualties from explosive incidents were caused by IED's (308 killed and 812 injured). Continued explosive hazard mitigation interventions therefore remain essential to enable humanitarian responses and the recovery of communities in terms of improving livelihoods and access. During October and November, members of the Explosive Hazards sub-cluster cleared 508,222 sq m of land that was contaminated by landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW), 5,299 explosive items were found and destroyed and over 10,000 people participated in mine risk education sessions. 126 civilians were killed and injured (41 killed, 85 injured) as a result of IED incidents.



CHILDREN, NOT DETAINEES: Child rights violations steeply on the rise!

CHILDREN, NOT DETAINEES

Over 400 children are enrolled in UNICEF supported reintegration programmes in Baidoa, Beletweyne and Mogadishu

The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (MRM) documented 552 grave violations against children in southern central Somalia effecting 383 boys and 100 girls. The majority of the violations were abduction (169) followed by recruitment and use by armed groups (164). The MRM continues to advocate with the Puntland authorities on behalf of the 38 children (all boys) still in detention for their participation in hostilities between Al Shabaab and Puntland security forces in March this year.

Between October and November 2016, the Child Protection sub-cluster reached 22,345 beneficiaries (5,493 women, 3,610 men, 6,524 boys and 6,718 girls). The main child protection activities implemented by partners included awareness raising to ensure mitigation of child protection risks during emergencies, capacity building of child protection service providers, provision of specialized child protection services such as legal aid, medical support for survivors, psychosocial services, family reunification, interim care, reintegration services and referrals to other sectors.



SAFETY & INTEGRITY: Gender-based violence unabated!

Incidents of gender based violence in Somalia increased during 2016 due largely to military offences, displacement primarily in south and central Somalia, forced evictions, drought and floods. During October and November, members of the GBV sub-cluster reached 22,632 individuals (4,423 girls, 1,831 boys, 12,756 women and 3,622 men) with GBV prevention, response and capacity building initiatives, including lifesaving medical assistance, temporary protection accommodation for GBV survivors, legal, psychosocial, material and livelihood assistance. During the reporting period, the GBV sub-cluster also facilitated trainings in Hargeisa on GBV mainstreaming and the clinical management of rape (CMR).

Sexual Offences Act: launched by the Puntland Government on 28 November in Garowe.

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Photo credit: T.Del-Ministro, UN Habitat, 2016. **Note:** Figures for December will be reflected in the 2016 Protection Cluster Annual Report