



# Somalia Protection Cluster

## Annual report 2016



## Somalia Protection Cluster: Annual Report 2016

## Protection Highlights: 2016

- **Second annual Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Forum held in Mogadishu:** Urban solutions to displacement through inclusive urban planning was discussed by members of the government and the humanitarian community. Participants agreed that urban planning as a participatory decision making process can help mitigate and prevent critical HLP rights violations such as forced evictions.
- **Centrality of protection:** The Somalia Protection Cluster plays a vital role in providing analysis and sharing information to ensure that protection remains at the centre of the humanitarian response: conflict dynamics in Lower Shabelle, displacement trends, the impact of airstrikes and military withdrawal on civilian populations were among themes examined in 2016.
- **Removal of explosive hazards in civilian areas:** The residual threat posed to civilians by explosive hazards remains a threat to their lives, physical integrity and inhibits their freedom of movement, which is often essential for survival. In 2016, Explosive Hazards (EH) sub-cluster members reached 50,000 persons through activities and 6,598 unexploded ordnance were safely destroyed.
- **Strides made in combating GBV:** Members of the GBV sub-cluster advocated for and provided technical support for the adoption of the Sexual Offences Act, criminalizing sexual violence, which was unanimously approved by the Puntland Parliament in August 2016.
- **Children protected:** Responding to child protection in emergencies was strengthened in 2016 through targeted trainings to implementing partners.



**Core group in need: 1.1 million IDPs + other civilians affected by armed conflict, violence, insecurity and disaster**

**Number of persons targeted in 2016: 959,200**  
men, women, girls & boys

**Number of persons reached: 529,183 (55%)**

**Required funding during 2016: US \$ 90 mill**

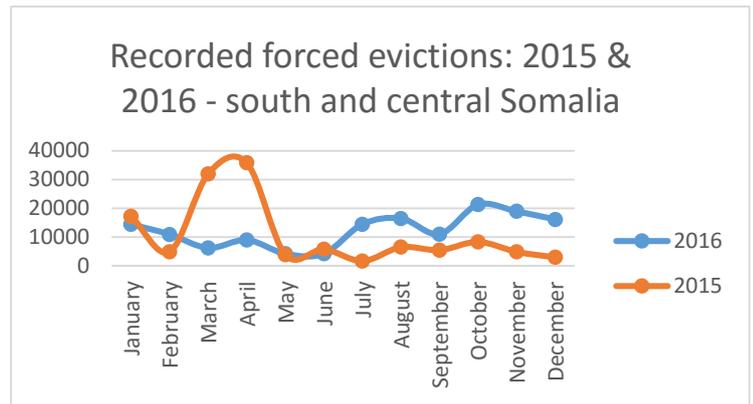
**Received: US \$ 15.5 mill (17%)**

### Protection needs persist

- Over 680,000 persons were displaced over the course of 2016. Conflict & insecurity accounted for the largest number of displaced (48 per cent) followed by evictions (24 per cent) and flooding and drought (17 per cent).
- Forced evictions of more than 162,000 persons across Somalia in 2016 resulted in a surge in protection needs. Loss of shelter, livelihoods, property and access to services made evictees exceedingly vulnerable.
- 7,293 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) were reported in the GBV IMS, a 24 per cent decrease from 2015. The real number of GBV incidents is likely to be considerably higher as many cases go unreported. Among the affected, 99 per cent were female and 73 per cent were from IDP communities.
- The country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (MRM) reported 2,242 incidents of grave violations of children's rights in 2016 affecting 4,057 children.
- Explosive hazards continue to be a threat to the civilian population, and in 2016 were responsible for the death or injury of 793 civilians (776 casualties due to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and 17 casualties due to explosive remnants of war (ERW) and landmines).
- Restrictions on freedom of movement faced by civilians due to airstrikes and military withdrawals persist; 49 publically recorded airstrikes from June 2015 - July 2016, troops have withdrawn from three regions and seven towns since 2014.
- With over 33,000 refugees returned to Somalia from Kenya in 2016, and this increased trend expected to continue into the future, the potential to exacerbate an already dire displacement situation is a real consideration.
- Durable solutions continue to remain distant for most of the 1.1 million IDPs living in protracted displacement in unplanned and informal settlements across the country. Given the limitations of humanitarian response, IDPs are left to live in dire conditions, particularly vulnerable to rights violations.

## Increase in forced evictions

The protection of HLP rights is a critical imperative for the realization of reintegration and durable solutions for displaced affected populations across Somalia. During 2016, over 146,000 persons; a 12 and 78 per cent increase than in the previous two years respectively, were forcible evicted in major towns in southern and central Somalia, and over 15,000 persons more in towns in Puntland and Somaliland. Forced evictions were the second main cause of displacement in 2016 following conflict and insecurity. This frequently violent phenomenon dismantles the great efforts that IDPs have made over considerable time, in an attempt to achieve some level of stability necessary to their integration. Toward the end of 2016, a spike in the recorded number of forced evictions was noticed. The strategic support and attention given to forced evictions in 2016 will continue; response and prevention of violations of housing, land and property rights remains a priority for the Protection Cluster going into 2017.



## Armed conflict, airstrikes & military withdrawal

The incremental **growth in airstrikes** over the past three years has been catastrophic for rural communities; destroying livelihoods, ruining grazing patterns, death and injury of civilians and most critically the psychological trauma of being subject to indiscriminate attacks. When airstrikes occur, the affected communities are both unable to move as this is interpreted as Al Shabaab (AS) movement, and are unable to stay in their location as it is the target of an attack. **Military withdrawal**, a phenomenon that is arbitrary and repeated across south and central regions in Somalia, exposes civilians

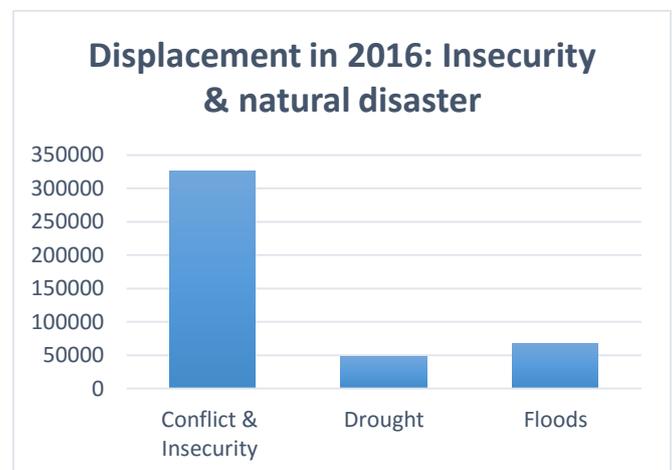
**49: The number of airstrikes to hit Jubaland alone over a one year period from June 2015 to July 2016**

to a myriad of protection and rights violations. There have been military withdrawals in three regions (Galgadudd, Hiraan and Bakool) and seven towns since 2014. The nature of military withdrawal is problematic as they are sudden and the manifestation of grievances between various parties including AS, clans and pro-government groups are brutal and violate the basic rights of the civilian population. The **conflict dynamics in Lower Shabelle** have gradually escalated over the past four years. At the beginning of 2016, particular districts in the region experienced frequent and substantial armed clashes between the Interim South West

Administration (ISWA) and AMISOM supported by clan militia against Al Shabaab, escalating further in September. In October 2016, renewed **armed conflict broke out in Galkayo** causing over 160,000 people to flee from their homes over the course of the conflict. Key protection concerns that emanate from the armed conflict affecting south and central regions of Somalia include displacement, restriction of movement, checkpoints, destruction of civilian property and control of water points.

## Floods and drought: natural disaster amid ongoing conflict

Both at the beginning and at the end of 2016, Somalia faced the impact of cyclical drought. The Protection Cluster stresses the importance of maintaining an interconnectedness between drought and conflict; in a protracted situation of conflict, natural disaster is merely an exacerbation of the humanitarian situation, not a cause in and of itself. Insecurity continues to be the main cause of displacement in Somalia, followed at a distance by drought; in 2016, conflict and insecurity accounted for over 325,000 displacements, whereas drought was responsible for just over 47,000. The Protection Cluster recognizes the devastating impact that drought has on the country, and emphasizes that without looking at the link between conflict and natural disaster a substantial gap will be created in fundamentally responding to drought and other natural disasters.



## 2016: Despite many challenges, a successful year for protection response

In 2016, despite only receiving 17 per cent of the required funding, Protection Cluster members still reported to have reached a total of 529,183 people. This represents 55 per cent of the target set for 2016. Out of the 529,183 reached, 38 per cent were women, 25 per cent were men, 19 per cent were girls, and 18 per cent were boys.

**Hazardous areas & risk awareness:** The explosive hazards sub-cluster provided protection to nearly 50,000 beneficiaries in 2016 through clearance, surveys and awareness raising. 6,598 explosive remnants of war (ERW) and landmines were safely destroyed; 40 villages were surveyed; 21 hazardous areas were identified and recorded; and 18,669 individuals received explosive hazard risk education.

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*41.7 square kilometers of land was released from the threats of explosive hazards in 2016*

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*IDP youth painting their future in Mogadishu; paintings displayed at 2<sup>nd</sup> annual HLP forum (Aug '16)*

**Advances in the protection of housing, land and property rights in Somalia:** In 2016, the HLP sub-cluster achieved vital milestones in efforts to promote and protect the HLP rights of displacement affected and host communities. The sub-cluster successfully prevented a number of serious forced eviction threats against IDPs and returnees settling on private land in Kismayo and Garowe; negotiated access to land and facilitated land tenure security for IDPs and returnees in Kismayo, Baidoa, Luuq and Galkayo; ensured free access to essential information and specialized counselling and legal assistance services for more than 15,000 IDPs and returnees across the country; and provided training to local authorities, traditional leaders, and other influential community seniors from more than 250 communities across the country on Collaborative Dispute Resolutions skills and techniques - in 2016, around 900 cases of conflict were resolved using these skills. Furthermore, the HLP sub-cluster secured funding to pilot a rental subsidy project in Mogadishu in 2017. Even with achievements made, the issues underpinning the violation and deprivation of HLP rights persist and are complex.

**Gender-based violence curbed and child protection enhanced:** The availability of GBV data has increased due to more service providers using GBV IMS, improved monthly reporting and the conclusion of a comprehensive GBV survey; service providers using GBV IMS increased by 100 per cent in Somaliland, 133 per cent in Puntland and 7 per cent in south and central zones. More than 110,000 GBV service providers received capacity building training in case management, psychosocial support and GBV guidelines throughout the year, and GBV provision in emergencies was improved through capacity building with inter cluster coordinators. Over 50,000 children were supported with IDTR services, interim care services, access to basic services, psychosocial and legal aid support. The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (MRM) advocated successfully for the release of 70 boys detained by Galmudug and Puntland authorities due to association with Al Shabaab, and 824 children were supported with reintegration services in south and central Somalia.

***The Protection Cluster continues to face funding shortages for coordination, essential for a more effective and strategic humanitarian protection response, as well as for protection activities by our members.***

## Outlook & strategic focus for 2017:

The outlook for 2017 is not overly optimistic. 2017 is expected to continue in the trajectory set by political process and conduct of armed conflict in 2016, meaning continued destabilization, an exacerbation of the protection of civilians, and new internal displacement. If unaddressed, these trends will result in a deterioration of the broader humanitarian situation and undermine development and peacebuilding prospects of communities' country wide.

**Cover credits photo:** Protection Cluster/UNHCR Somalia, displaced girls in IDP settlement in Galkayo, Puntland

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## **Building upon the priority areas of action in 2016, the Protection Cluster will focus on the following priorities in 2017:**

1. Protection and prevention of rights violations to humanitarian crises and timely and effective responses and services to persons affected;
  2. Improvement of safe and dignified freedom of movement of IDPs and other civilians;
  3. Advocate and support protection sensitive durable solutions interventions for IDPs in line with the National Development Plan;
  4. Strengthen the prevention and response to HLP rights violations and improve access to mechanisms to restore HLP rights for IDPs;
  5. Build upon community protection capacity to prevent and respond to rights violations;
  6. Strengthen the capacity of civil society, formal and informal authorities.
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