

Almost half-million affected as devastating floods inundate central Somalia – UN mission

United Nations agencies in Somalia have stepped up their response in the wake of devastating flash floods across large parts of the country that have impacted nearly 500,000 people and displaced close to 175,000 from their homes.

According to the UN [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO), current floods are some of the worst the region has seen in recent times and the current water level [exceeds](#) a 50-year return period in most locations.

[“Internally displaced people remain the most vulnerable](#) to the impact of the flooding with many camps located in low-lying areas,” Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, said at a regular news briefing in New York on Monday.

“Humanitarian partners on the ground have prioritized water, sanitation, hygiene, [health,] shelter and food response in their interventions.”

The heavy rains and flash floods come only months after a devastating drought left over six million people in need of humanitarian assistance last year.

Floods worse than anticipated

The magnitude of rainfall has been much worse than anticipated, said Yngvil Foss, the deputy head at the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) (OCHA) in Somalia.

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– *Yngvil Foss, UN aid official*

“Initially, [all humanitarian actors started responding with the means and assets they had available](#),” she said, noting that UN relief agencies have been able to raise some money over the past week to scale up critical interventions.

The UN [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), for instance, delivered 4.5 million metric tons of medicines and other medical supplies to Belet Weyne, the capital of the hard hit HirShabelle province, on 29 April.

Peacekeeping troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) also evacuated more than 10,000 residents of Belet Weyne from inundated parts of the city as well as provided tarps and water to the flood affected.

More funding urgently needed

However, [more funds are urgently needed](#) to cater to the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons.

Yesterday, Somalia's President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" visited flood affected areas and [appealed](#) to the international community for urgent humanitarian assistance.

Somalia's Humanitarian Response Plan for 2018, totalling \$1.5 billion (before the floods), is only 19 per cent funded. Launched by UN agencies and humanitarian partners, the Plan aim to reach some 5.4 million people with assistance.