

## UN agency sounds alarm as drought-stricken herders in Ethiopia face massive livestock losses

11 August 2017 – Drought has devastated herders' livelihoods as it exhausted pastures and water sources, the United Nations agriculture agency said today, stressing that supporting them to get back on their feet and prevent further livestock losses are crucial in the Horn of Africa country, where hunger has been on the rise this year.

The drought has led to a significant number of animals dying or falling ill, particularly in the southern and south-eastern regions of the country, as other areas recover from previous seasons' El Niño-induced drought, [warned](#) the Food and Agriculture Organization of the [\(FAO\)](#).

FAO pointed out that drought-hit pastoralists face reduced milk production, rising malnutrition, and have limited income-earning capacity and severely constrained access to food.

Some 8.5 million people – one in 12 people – are now suffering from hunger; of these, 3.3 million people live in Somali Region, said the UN agriculture agency.

The current food and nutrition crisis is significantly aggravated by the severe blow to pastoral livelihoods. For livestock-dependent families, the animals can literally mean the difference between life and death – especially for children, pregnant and nursing mothers, for whom milk is a crucial source of nutrition.

With up to two million animals lost so far, FAO is focusing on providing emergency livestock support to the most vulnerable pastoralist communities through animal vaccination and treatment, supplementary feed and water, rehabilitating water points, and supporting fodder and feed production.

It is crucial to provide this support between now and October – when rains are due – to begin the recovery process and prevent further losses of animals. If we don't act now, hunger and malnutrition will only get worse among pastoral communities, said Abdoul Karim Bah, FAO Deputy Representative in Ethiopia.

By providing supplementary feed and water for livestock, while simultaneously supporting fodder production, FAO seeks to protect core breeding animals and enable drought-hit families to rebuild their livelihoods.

In addition to FAO-supported destocking and cash-for-work programmes to provide cash for families, animal health campaigns will be reinforced to protect animals, particularly before the rain sets in – when they are at their weakest and more susceptible to parasites or infectious diseases.

## *Funding appeal*

FAO urgently requires \$20 million between August and December to come to the aid of Ethiopia's farmers and herders.

FAO has already assisted almost 500,000 drought-hit people in 2017 through a mix of livestock feed provision, destocking and animal health interventions, thanks to the support of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund, Switzerland, Spain, Sweden through FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund, as well as FAO's own Early Warning Early Action fund and Technical Cooperation Programme.

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## [Iraq: UN refugee agency steps up humanitarian support for families returning to Mosul](#)

11 August 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency has been stepping up its assistance for people, including thousands of returnees, in the Iraqi city of Mosul, which had until recently been the scene of a fierce battle for control between terrorist fighters and the Government forces.

'Our field assessments show that the returning population of Mosul needs assistance of every kind, but the shelter needs are the most pressing, particularly in the western part of the city,' said Andrej Mahecic, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), at the press regular briefing in Geneva.

Many neighbourhoods in the west have been extensively damaged or totally destroyed during months of fighting,' he added.

Mosul was liberated from control by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist organization in July.

UN partners say that of the 54 residential districts in west Mosul, 15 suffered destruction or heavy damage, another 23 areas are moderately damaged, while further 16 neighbourhoods sustained light damage.

Mr. Mahecic said that mines, unexploded ordnance and related devices pose massive risks for the city's residents, especially children, welcoming the ongoing mine clearing efforts by the authorities and the UN Mine Action Service.

Returning families also face challenges in accessing basic services and utilities – accessing water, electricity or fuel in parts of Mosul can

be difficult and very expensive, he added.

So far, according to government figures, some 79,000 people returned to battered west Mosul – one out of every ten people who were forced to flee from this part of the city. Also, the government says, more than 165,000 people have now returned to the considerably less damaged east Mosul, where day-to-day life is gradually resuming.

However, managers in the camps for internally displaced persons in east Mosul estimate that at least 200 families have moved back to the camps after finding living conditions difficult in Mosul.

Reasons cited for their return include lack of shelter; high rental prices; a lack of livelihood opportunities and limited basic services such as electricity and water.

Since the end of the military campaign to retake the city, UNHCR has distributed shelter kits to more than 3,200 families in east and west Mosul while also providing cash assistance to some of the most vulnerable displaced Iraqi families.

Large numbers of IDPs and returnees are also missing key civil documents. UNHCR and partners are providing legal assistance and supporting local authorities to reissue civil and identity documents to displaced families in the camps, including birth and marriage certificates.

Given the scale of the destruction in Mosul, particularly in the western sector, humanitarian needs will remain high, the spokesperson said.

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## [Over 600,000 displaced Syrians returned home so far this year – UN agency](#)

11 August 2017 – More than 600,000 displaced Syrians returned home in the first seven months of 2017, the United Nations migration agency and partners have found.

Findings by the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) and partners [indicate](#) that 84 per cent of the people returning had been displaced within Syria, and the rest returned from Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq. Refugees returning from Turkey and Jordan reportedly returned mainly to Aleppo and Al Hasakeh Governorates.

An estimated 27 per cent of the returnees stated that they did so to protect

their assets or properties and 25 per cent referred to the improved economic situation in their area of origin.

Other factors included the worsening economic situation in the place where they were seeking refuge, at 14 per cent; social or cultural issues such as tribal links, political affiliations or any obstacle preventing integration in their area of displacement, at 11 per cent; and the improvement of the security situation in their area of return, at 11 per cent.

Half of all returns in 2016 were to Aleppo Governorate. The report shows that similar trends have been observed in 2017. Consequently, an estimated 67 per cent of the returnees, or 405,420 individuals, returned to Aleppo Governorate, with 27,620 returning to Idleb Governorate, and 75,209 to Hama Governorate, 45,300 to Ar-Raqqa Governorate, 21,346 to Rural Damascus and 27,861 to other governorates.

Aleppo city received the most returnees.

Reports also find that 97 per cent returned to their own house, 1.8 per cent are living with hosts, 1.4 per cent in abandoned houses, 0.14 per cent in informal settlements and 0.03 per cent in rented accommodation.

About 83 per cent and 80 per cent of returnees said they have access to food and household items, respectively. But only 41 per cent have access to water and 39 per cent to health services – a dangerously low level – as the country's infrastructure has been extremely damaged by the conflict.

While trends of returns increase, Syria continues to witness high rates of displacement. From January to July 2017, an estimated 808,661 people were displaced, many for the second or third time, and over 6 million in total currently remain displaced within the country.

Returns have mainly been spontaneous but not necessarily voluntary, safe or sustainable. As such, they cannot, at present, be considered a durable solution.

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## **Smugglers throw hundreds of African migrants off boats headed to Yemen – UN**

10 August 2017 – A total of 300 migrants have reportedly been forced from boats over the past two days by smugglers off the coast of Yemen – many feared dead or missing, the United Nations migration agency has reported.

– The survivors told our colleagues on the beach that the smuggler [pushed](#)

[them into the sea](#) when he saw some 'authority types' near the coast,&#8221 said Laurent de Boeck, the Yemen Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

&#8220They also told us that the smuggler has already returned to Somalia to continue his business and pick up more migrants to bring to Yemen on the same route. This is shocking and inhumane. The suffering of migrants on this migration route is enormous. Too many young people pay smugglers with the false hope of a better future,&#8221 Mr. de Boeck added.

According to IOM, up to 180 migrants were reportedly thrown into the sea from a boat today by the smugglers. Five bodies have been recovered so far, and around 50 are reported missing.

This latest incident comes barely 24 hours after smugglers forced more than 120 Somali and Ethiopian migrants into the sea as they approached the coast of Shabwa, a Yemeni Governorate along the Arabian Sea, resulting in the drowning of around 50 migrants. The migrants had been hoping to reach countries in the Gulf via war-torn Yemen.

Shortly after yesterday's tragedy, IOM staff found the shallow graves of 29 migrants on a beach in Shabwa, during a routine patrol. The dead had been quickly buried by those who survived the smuggler's deadly actions. The approximate average age of the passengers on the boat was 16.

**AUDIO:** IOM spokesperson Olivia Headon says that people traffickers often dupe their predominantly teenage victims into making the perilous sea crossing. Credit: UN News

"The Secretary-General is heart-broken by this continuing tragedy," his Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric told reporters at the daily briefing in New York.

"This is why he continues to stress that the international community must give priority to preventing and resolving a variety of situations which both generate mass movement and expose those already on the move to significant danger," he added, underscoring the need to increase legal pathways for regular migration and offer credible alternatives to these dangerous crossings for people in need of international protection.

Since January of this year, IOM estimates that around 55,000 migrants left the Horn of Africa to come to Yemen, most with the aim of trying to find better opportunities in the Gulf countries. More than 30,000 of those migrants are under the age of 18 from Somalia and Ethiopia, while a third are estimated to be female.

This journey is especially hazardous during the current windy season in the Indian Ocean. Smugglers are active in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, offering fake promises to vulnerable migrants. IOM and its partners operate across the region to support these migrants and provide lifesaving assistance to those who find themselves abused or stranded along the route.

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## Investing in women key to sustainable peace in DR Congo and Nigeria – UN deputy chief

10 August 2017 – Investing in women and girls must be central to global efforts towards sustainable peace and development in both Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations deputy chief said today.

“Both have dismayingly low levels of women’s political participation and are experiencing conflicts marked by extremely high levels of sexual- and gender-based violence,” said Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed as she updated the Security Council on [her recent trip](#) to the two African countries.

The trip, from 19 to 27 July, was “the first of its kind” because it focused entirely on the role of women in peace, security and development, she said.

The [joint AU-UN high-level mission](#) was undertaken by four African women, namely Ms. Mohammed, the UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, and the African Union (AU) Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop.

The mission’s goal was to advance peace by advancing the equality, empowerment and well-being of women, which is in line with the Secretary-General’s vision and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

In both countries, Ms. Mohammed noted, the mission met with Heads of State, ministers, donors, diplomats, faith leaders, parliamentarian and the respective UN mission and country teams, spending the lion’s share of time with the women and girls most affected by conflicts, including through visits to camps for internally displaced persons.

The international community needs to better understand the role of women in development and peace building alongside the gender dimensions of conflict if our responses are to be effective UN deputy chief Amina Mohammed

While each country is unique, the situations share some commonalities, she said, noting that sexual violence is widespread in the DRC, and abductions, forced marriage and the use of women as suicide bombers have taken a terrible toll in northern Nigeria, where in the camps sexual exploitation, including

in the form of [sex for food](#) is a new and alarming trend.

The international community needs to better understand the role of women in development and peace building alongside the gender dimensions of conflict if our responses are to be effective," she said.

Turning to country-specific matters, the UN deputy chief said that the mission was touched by the meeting with the schoolgirls, who were abducted in Nigeria's Chibok and then released, after years in captivity, by the Boko Haram group.

Their remarkable strength as survivors rather than victims is inspiring. Many are receiving education and psychosocial support to prepare them for reintegration," Ms. Mohammed said, noting that thousands of other young women who have been subjected to sexual violence and affected by conflict in other ways are still to receive adequate support.



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed visited the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of her joint AU-UN high-level trip. During her visit to the Mugunga camp for internally displaced persons (IDP), she said that she is committed to ensuring that women can return in "dignity and humanity, which is not a favour but a right." UN Photo/Myriam Asman.



The Mugunga camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) is located in Goma, North Kivu Province, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed's visit to the camp was part of a four-day trip focused on the fight against sexual violence and the advancement of women. UN Photo/Myriam Asman



In Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed was received by President Joseph Kabila at the presidential pavilion of N'djili International Airport. Photo: UN Photo/John Bompengo



At the airport, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed was welcomed on arrival by Maman S. Sidikou, Head of the UN stabilization mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, known as MONUSCO. UN Photo/John Bompengo



The UN has a long standing presence in the Muganga camp. This photo is taken in 2007, as internally displaced persons (IDPs) line up for food distribution, supplied by WFP. UN Photo/Marie Frechon



Prior to Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed's visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), she spent several days in Nigeria. In this photo, she is pictured in Abuja with Nigerian women leaders, as well as women and girls affected by conflict in the north-eastern part of the country. On the same day, the UN deputy chief told reporters that action is needed now towards the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, as well as ensuring their voices are heard in all aspects of society. UN Photo/Lulu Gao



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed participates in a meeting with women leaders, as well as conflict-affected women, in Nigeria. Photo: UN Photo/Lulu Gao

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### ***Beyond theoretical debate, humanitarian-development nexus requires tangible resources***

In the DRC, the mission emphasized the need to respect and implement the 31 December agreement, which provided a clear path towards democratic elections, she noted.

At the time of her visit, Ms. Mohammed said the electoral commission had registered more than 80 per cent of voters. That number now stands at more than 90 per cent. Of those registered, 48 per cent are women, placing the country in the same bracket as more established democracies such as Solomon Islands and Paraguay.

The mission also met with women who have no choice but to cook with coal in their tents, at great risk to their health and that of their children.

“While we may debate the humanitarian-development nexus philosophically here in New York, without resources flowing to both sectors simultaneously and a real investment in early recovery, we can neither sustain peace nor prevent future gender based violence,” she said, encouraging donors to respond to the DRC's reintegration challenges based on need alone.