



KENYA AND SOMALIA: DROUGHT AND HUNGER RELIEF



A lack of rains has devastated the lives and stability of millions of families. Grazing land is becoming scarce, rivers are drying up and livestock—a valuable asset for many—is wasting away. With higher food costs and loss of family income, a hunger crisis is growing.



Mano Hassan waits during water distribution at a camp on the outskirts of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. Photo by Mohamed Sheik Nor for CRS

CONTEXT

The governments of Kenya and Somalia have each declared a national emergency in response to the drought.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia has deteriorated rapidly. In a February statement, United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia Peter de Clercq said, "Unless a massive, urgent scale-up of humanitarian assistance takes place in the coming weeks, famine could soon be a reality in some of the areas most affected by drought." The number of people in need has risen to 6.2 million, or half of the population. Stunting, caused by inadequate nutrition and repeated infection in early life, is largely irreversible and has long-term effects. As many as 363,000 children under 5 are acutely malnourished, and 71,000 are at risk of dying. Nutrition support is urgently needed to keep them alive.

The drought has also heavily hit neighboring Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands; these are home to 30 percent of the country's population (14 million people), as well as to most of its national parks—the foundation of a thriving wildlife

tourism sector. This area is also the least developed, with limited services and poor infrastructure, leaving communities especially vulnerable in times of drought. The water in boreholes and shallow wells has run low, and pastoralists are migrating in search of water and pasture for their livestock. A growing demand for water and the overuse of pumping at community boreholes has led to increased pump breakdowns. People are now resorting to desperate coping mechanisms: skipping one or more meals a day, migrating to find work, and selling their deteriorating livestock at low prices to buy food. An estimated 2.7 million people are in need of emergency relief.

CRS RESPONSE

CRS is providing an integrated package of immediate, lifesaving support to 18,000 drought-affected pastoralist families, or more than 100,000 people, in Kenya's northern semi-arid counties and South Central Somalia. CRS will also ease people's need to sell their livestock or migrate elsewhere by preparing them for a longer-term recovery. CRS is able to reach and scale up in especially vulnerable areas in Somalia and Kenya, thanks to our local Catholic and other faith-based partners. CRS will also coordinate closely with government ministries, as well as actors providing agriculture, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Goals

1) Repair vital water infrastructure at the community level; 2) spur coordination of local emergency WASH responders; 3) promote the health of livestock weakened by drought; and 4) support small-scale hygiene promotion activities to safely use available water.

Activities

Access to water

- Rehabilitating shallow wells and boreholes. This includes water points that have failed due to operational challenges, as well as newly drilled underground water sources that remain undeveloped because of funding constraints.
- Installing additional water points, making them more accessible, to reduce lines for water and improve drainage.
- Employing residents to maintain dams, thereby infusing cash into households and the local economy, while preparing local water infrastructure for future rains.
- Supporting the creation of county borehole maintenance teams to respond to pump breakdowns with the proper tools and better pumps, and helping local officials recruit more pump mechanics and electricians.
- Helping communities prepare for rainwater harvesting during October rains by repairing and rehabilitating surface water points.
- Supporting small-scale hygiene promotion activities that will help the community safely use available water.
- Providing emergency cash grants or vouchers to families to help them meet their nutritional and water needs.

Improve livestock health

- Making water for livestock more available by adding separate animal-watering points near those for people.
- Supplying high quality livestock supplementary feed and fodder to communities where animal feed is scarce.
- Facilitating disease control and prevention through vaccination and deworming, and collaborating with the government to survey disease and migration patterns.
- Helping families secure veterinary services and fodder provision for vulnerable livestock, boosting a vital source of family resilience that women often rely on for consumption and income.



Residents of Shukurow village in Somalia examine damaged local irrigation systems. CRS is working in these regions to aid families affected and uprooted by the drought. Photo by Mohamed Sheik Nor for CRS

Restore livestock production/livelihoods

- Providing small livestock, allowing families that lost animals to rebound.
- Educating community members on preventive health care practices for their livestock.
- Using animals that have been left behind by migrating families to provide food, including milk for children.

HOW TO HELP

To support activities in Kenya and Somalia:

- Donate online: donate.crs.org
- Donate by phone: 877-HELP-CRS
- Donate by check: Catholic Relief Services
P.O. Box 17090 Baltimore, Maryland 21203-7090

SOUTH SUDAN FAMINE

In South Sudan, famine has been declared in three counties in Unity State, and a hunger crisis is affecting nearly 5 million people across the country. CRS is providing food aid to some 800,000 people in Jonglei State in the central part of the country, where levels of hunger and malnutrition are not far below the areas where famine has been declared. CRS provides food in exchange for work on building community infrastructure such as dikes and roads, as well as by supplying direct food aid when violence prevents such work. In partnership with the UN World Food Program, CRS airdrops food supplies into areas that are difficult to reach due to insecurity or a lack of infrastructure. CRS staff hike for days to reach those locations, and coordinate the distribution of the food on the ground.