



AS IT IS

Millions of Somalis Need Lifesaving Assistance

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The United Nations estimates that half of Somalia's population, about 7.7 million people, will require humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022.

The U.N. is asking for \$1.5 billion to assist 5.5 million of those considered most at-risk.

Many years of conflict, severe weather, disease and increasing poverty have badly harmed the lives of people in Somalia. Many are facing severe hunger. The country faces a famine because of a lack of rainfall for a third year straight.

Adam Abdelmoula is the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia. He says 80 percent of the country is affected by **drought**.

He told VOA that 169,000 people have left their homes in search of water, food, and land for their farm animals.

"When I visited the countryside, I saw many dead animals," he said. "The people I met with...and the **elderly** people I met with, told me they had not seen this level of drought since the 1970s and 80s."

Abdelmoula said Somalia has been overlooked because of developing crises in other parts of the world, especially in the Tigray area of northern Ethiopia and in Afghanistan.

He added that the international community would be making a big mistake were it to overlook Somalia.

Abdelmoula said that in the 1990s, Somalia faced similar mass migration, starvation and famine. He also noted the rise of the al-Shabab militant group, political unrest and widespread illegal trade during that time.

Recent estimates suggest that drought could force up to 1.4 million Somalis to leave their homes in the next six months. That number is addition to the nearly 3 million people already **displaced** by conflict and natural disasters.

Abdelmoula says at least 1.2 million children under the age of five are likely to be severely **malnourished** in 2022. He warns that about 300,000 children are at risk of dying without immediate assistance.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Lisa Schlein reported on this story for VOA News. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Ashley Thompson was the editor.

Words in This Story

drought – *n.* a long period of time during which there is very little or no rain

elderly – *adj.* old or rather old; past middle age

displace(d) – *v.* to force people or animals to leave the area where they live

malnourished – *adj.* not eating enough food or not eating enough healthy food; poorly nourished