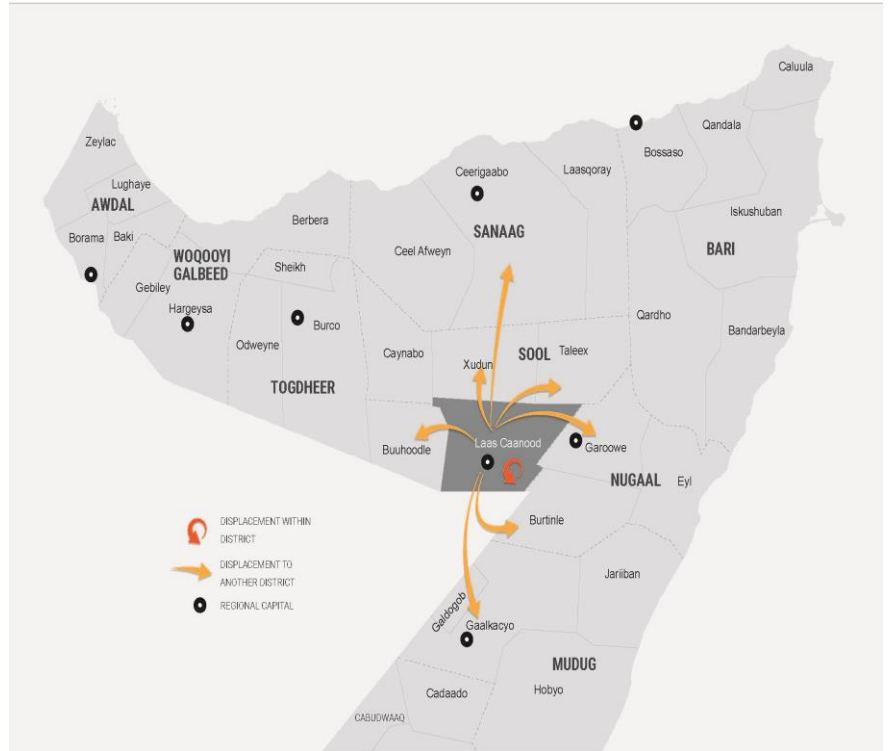


Key Highlights

- Renewed fighting was reported in Laas Caanood on 1 April. The recurrent fighting continues to displace people, with between 154,000 and 203,000 people estimated to have been displaced since December 2022.
- An estimated 100,000 displaced people have crossed into the Somali Region of Ethiopia. Partners are appealing for US\$116 million to provide life-saving assistance to the refugees.
- The situation in Laas Caanood has escalated at a time when people in Sool Region are experiencing unprecedented water shortages due to severe drought and facing an elevated risk of disease outbreaks.
- Humanitarian partners and authorities are coordinating closely to ensure a coherent and effective response and have stepped up assistance in accessible areas.



Situation Overview

Renewed fighting broke out in Laas Caanood on 1 April, after several days of uneasy calm. According to partners, the recurrent fighting continues to displace people from their homes. On 2 April, about 56 families (336 people) who had just been displaced from Adhicadeeye, Guumays, Yagoori and Tuulo Samakaab areas west of Laas Caanood district, reportedly arrived at the outskirts of Kalabeydh village, 28Km southwest of Laas Caanood town. The families reportedly lack safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, shelter/non-food items, food, health and nutrition, and have exerted pressure on already overstretched basic services. While some are staying with relatives, others are living in public places like schools and mosques.

Since the start of fighting, an estimated 100,000 people have crossed into neighbouring Ethiopia, according to UNHCR. On 22 March, humanitarian partners in Ethiopia [appealed](#) for US\$116 million to provide life-saving assistance to the refugees who are now living in harsh conditions in Ethiopia’s Somali Region. The refugees are mostly women, children and older people as well as unaccompanied and separated children. Partners report that the situation on the ground is dire, with moderate acute malnutrition observed in many of the children under 5 and in pregnant and nursing mothers. There is a high risk of disease outbreaks with worrying reports of measles cases.

Humanitarians are continuing to verify locations and the numbers of people displaced, with various sources estimating that between 154,000 and 203,000 people have been displaced by the fighting since late December 2022. Those displaced within Somalia have reportedly moved into villages in Sool, Togdheer, Nugaal and Mudug regions. An inter-agency assessment mission to Buuhoodle from 11 to 13 March, estimated that over 11,700 families (more than 70,200 people) had been displaced from various places including Laas Caanood, to the 12 assessed villages in the town and surrounding areas. The mission found a limited presence of humanitarian partners in Buuhoodle. Partners are planning another inter-agency needs assessment mission to ten villages located west of Laas Caanood town on 4 April.

Humanitarian Impact and Needs

The internally displaced people (IDPs) in areas where assessments have been carried out have limited access to adequate safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter/non-food items, food, education and health facilities. In addition, partners report that some of the IDPs from Laas Caanood have been evicted from sites that they had settled in: 87 families (about 522 people) were evicted from a school and community centre in Widh Widh and Buuhoodle, and 42 families (about 252 people) were evicted by village committees from private land in Adhicaadeeye and Yagoori within Laas Caanood.

According to WASH Cluster partners, the situation has escalated at a time when people in Sool Region were experiencing unprecedented water shortages due to severe drought and are facing an elevated risk of disease outbreaks. The fighting also comes at a time when about 214,000 people in the region are experiencing crisis or worse levels of acute food insecurity due to severe drought, according to the latest [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\) analysis](#).

Humanitarian Coordination and Response

Humanitarian access to Laas Caanood town is limited, but humanitarian partners have significantly stepped up response efforts in accessible areas. On 22 March, authorities distributed food to 1,000 families (about 6,000 people) in Guumays, Tuulo Samakaab, Yagoori and Kalabeydh. Partners are conducting joint assessments in accessible areas to identify needs and plan immediate responses.

Coordination

OCHA has reinforced capacity in the region and partners are coordinating closely to ensure a coherent and effective response. In collaboration with the State-Inter Cluster Coordination Groups, a task force has been established in Hargeisa, though IDPs have settled in areas beyond its reach or where aid would be refused based on the dynamics of the situation. Area-based coordination mechanisms have been established in Buuhoodle, Xudun, Kalabeydh, Boocame and Taleex. National and state cluster focal points are advocating for more resources to respond.



Partners during an assessment mission to Buuhoodle. Photo: UNOCHA

Cluster Responses

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster partners verified 15 IDP sites in Buuhoodle in March, hosting 7,307 families (about 43,800 people). Five sites were verified in Xudun hosting 930 families (5,580 people). There was an increase in the population in Xudun IDP sites by 1,768 people, reflecting new arrivals who may have recently been displaced from Laas Caanood District. A total of 94 families (564 people) that arrived in mid-March to CCCM-managed sites have received orientation sessions on accessible services and have had their data collected as part of the New Arrivals Tracker.

Education Cluster: Schools that were previously used as shelters by IDPs in the districts of Buurawadal and Widh Widh have reopened, providing affected children with an opportunity to resume their studies. Authorities are offering financial support to some of the affected students in the two districts, allowing them to complete the current academic year. Children are at risk of missing the school year with 85 per cent of those affected still unable to resume education. Partners' capacity to respond is limited by a shortage of funding.

Health Cluster: A partner donated biomedical equipment to establish a triage corner in Kalabeydh and trained health staff on triage management. A total of 24 community-based surveillance teams are supporting case detection, testing, management and referrals to health facilities in Xudun and Buuhoodle Districts. A partner is supporting 17 health facilities to provide integrated lifesaving and basic health services in displaced and affected communities. An international organisation started basic health interventions in Kalabeydh health center, including prepositioning emergency medical supplies and sexual and reproductive health services. Another partner is providing integrated health and nutrition services in 12 health centers in Laas Caanood and Buuhoodle Districts as well as one mobile team supporting ten villages. Partners are also supporting Boocame health center and have provided a mobile team for integrated health and nutrition services, including child, maternal and reproductive health, immunization, and outpatient consultations in Karinkarfood, Fardhidin, Hadhwanaag, Buurowadal,

Buulal, Dan, and Falayryaale; supporting Falayryaale, Awrbogays and Saax Dheer health centres to provide maternal, reproductive and child health services in Boocame and Taleex Districts; and deployed two mobile teams with essential medical supplies to Kalabeydh and Buuhoodle.

Nutrition Cluster: Nutrition partners in the Sool Region screened 1,967 children under the age of 5 in March, 96 of whom were admitted to the Outpatient Therapeutic Programme and 359 supplemented with micronutrients. Approximately 170 families with children in the nutrition treatment programmes were referred to and assisted through a relief assistance programme. Partners are providing nutrition services using mobile teams in the following hard-to-reach locations in Sool: Tukaraq, Tuulo Samakaab, Shululux, and Higlo Fulaan.

Protection Cluster: Provision of first-line emergency response through cash assistance is ongoing, including cash-based individual protection assistance to new arrivals facing critical medical needs (62 cases). Emergency protection desks have been established within Kalabeydh town and health center, with dedicated protection monitors to identify and support referrals of individuals facing protection risks, support inclusion and targeting of unassisted minority families in multi-sectoral response, and provide dissemination of protection messaging. Protection monitoring efforts are ongoing, including monitoring of forced evictions. Community-based paralegals and focal points have been identified in Widh Widh and Yagoori IDPs sites in Sool. Legal counselling and assistance services on housing and land property disputes are being provided, including collaborative dispute resolution. Registration for the second distribution of non-food items (NFIs) for protection outcomes for 500 families in Yagoori has been completed and 600 families in six sites in Sool have been registered for protection assistance. NFIs have been distributed for protection outcomes in Gumays, including 200 multipurpose household solar lights, installation of three street solar lights and distribution of 80 wheelbarrows. In Buuhoodle, 110 families benefited from protection/NFIs distribution, 70 per cent of them female-headed.

Gender-Based -Violence (GBV): A total of 200 families in Falidhyaale, Burawadal and Kalabeydh received dignity and menstrual hygiene kits. Over 3,000 dignity and 2,000 hygiene kits have been distributed to date. A total of 700 women and girls were reached with integrated gender-based violence (GBV)/sexual and reproductive health (SRH) mobile services: medical care, GBV case management, referrals and sharing key messages while holistic GBV services were offered at the Women and Girls Safe Spaces in Kalabeydh, Xudun and Oog. Five hundred women and girls benefited from integrated SRH/GBV outreach in Oog village while 300 families (1,800 people) received cash assistance in the villages of Adhicateeye, Tuulo Samakaab, and Yogori.

Child Protection: The arrangements for relocation of 27 children associated with armed groups that were identified last week were completed as all the children were transferred to Garowe after screening. Of the 27, some 16 were admitted to the interim care center for service provision. Mobile-based interventions are ongoing to remotely support children facing protection risks in Sool Region while mental health and psychosocial support services continue to support children and families affected by the fighting.

WASH Cluster: Since the beginning of the fighting, over 12,000 people have been reached with hygiene supplies and promotion activities, while over 25,000 people have received water through temporary supply by water trucking, water vouchers and household water treatment. Another 2,000 people have benefited from sustained water supply through rehabilitation of strategic water points. As WASH humanitarian needs remain worryingly high and resources are considerably limited, delivery of urgently needed assistance is a key priority, along with provision of sanitation services, hygiene kits and promotion activities.

Shelter Cluster: Partners distributed NFI kits to 950 families (about 5,700 people) in Kalabeydh and 500 to IDPs in Gumays. Partners have registered 600 families (3,600 people) in six sites in Sool Region for cash for NFIs and emergency shelter kits and are distributing cash and plastic sheets in Widh Widh (500 sheets) and Buuhoodle (200 sheets). Partners further plan to distribute 3,300 plastic sheets in Buuhoodle and 1,000 in Kalabeydh.

For more information please contact:

Ogoso Erich Opolot | Head of Communications | ogoso@un.org | Tel. +254 720766587/ +252 61 6548007.
Mursal Ali | Public Information Officer | mursalali@un.org | Tel: +252 61 5679998/ +252 61 9150457

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