



Security Council

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Letter dated 5 October 2021 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator pursuant to paragraph 36 of Security Council resolution 2551 (2020) on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia and any impediments to the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia.

I would appreciate it if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Geraldine **Byrne Nason**
Chair

Security Council Committee pursuant to
resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia

* Reissued for technical reasons on 14 October 2021.



Letter dated 15 September 2021 from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia

In accordance with paragraph 36 of Security Council resolution 2551 (2020), I have the honour to transmit herewith the report on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia and on any impediments thereto.

The humanitarian community working in Somalia wishes to advise that, as in the previous 15 reports, it maintains the definition of “implementing partner” pursuant to paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 1916 (2010), which is as follows:

“Implementing partner” – a non-governmental organization (NGO) or community-based organization that has undergone due diligence to establish its bona fides by a United Nations agency or another NGO and that reports when requested to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia on mitigation measures. Implementing partners have one or both of the following characteristics:

- (a) The organization is part of the Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia (or the Somalia Humanitarian Fund) process;
- (b) The organization is represented in a cluster’s 3W matrix (*Who* does *What* and *Where*).

I remain available should you have any questions on the content of the report or need further clarification on the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

(Signed) Martin **Griffiths**
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and
Emergency Relief Coordinator

Report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2551 \(2020\)](#), the resolution succeeding resolutions [1916 \(2010\)](#), [1972 \(2011\)](#), [2060 \(2012\)](#), [2111 \(2013\)](#), [2182 \(2014\)](#), [2244 \(2015\)](#), [2317 \(2016\)](#), [2385 \(2017\)](#), [2444 \(2018\)](#) and [2498 \(2019\)](#), in which the Council established the reporting requirement. It is the sixteenth submission pursuant to the above-mentioned resolutions. The Council, in paragraph 36 of its resolution [2551 \(2020\)](#), requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator to report to the Council by 15 October 2021 on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia and on any impediments thereto.

2. The present report covers the period from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021. It is focused primarily on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected people in areas under the control or influence of Al-Shabaab, which was included on the sanctions list pursuant to paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution [1844 \(2008\)](#), by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [751 \(1992\)](#) and [1907 \(2009\)](#) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, on 12 April 2010. As in the previous 15 reports ([S/2010/372](#), [S/2010/580](#), [S/2011/125](#), [S/2011/694](#), [S/2012/546](#), [S/2012/856](#), [S/2013/415](#), [S/2014/177](#), [S/2014/655](#), [S/2015/731](#), [S/2016/827](#), [S/2017/860](#), [S/2018/896](#), [S/2019/799](#) and [S/2020/1004](#)), in the present report, constraints to humanitarian access and operational implications are outlined. In addition, mitigation measures established to address the risks of the politicization, misuse and misappropriation of humanitarian assistance are summarized. The report is based on information synthesized in consultation with relevant humanitarian organizations active in Somalia and information from the Risk Management Unit in the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia.

Humanitarian situation

3. Somalia remains one of the most complex, acute and protracted crises in the world. During the reporting period, the humanitarian situation in the country worsened owing to climate shocks, protracted conflict, the impact of diseases (most notably coronavirus disease (COVID-19)) and the worst desert locust infestation in decades. Nearly half the population, 5.9 million people, need life-saving humanitarian or protection services, a 6 per cent increase compared with 2020 and a 14 per cent increase since 2019. Among this group, 3.1 million people are in acute need, a nearly 30 per cent increase since 2020.

4. A double climate disaster in April and May 2021 aggravated the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. More than 80 per cent of the country was facing moderate to severe drought conditions when the *gu* rainy season began, in late April. The rains did little to alleviate the conditions; instead, they triggered a new wave of severe flooding that affected 400,000 people in 14 districts, of whom more than 100,000 were displaced from their homes. The combined impact of drought conditions and floods is likely to exacerbate the already critical food security situation in Somalia.

5. COVID-19 continues to pose a threat to Somalia. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 20 per cent of the country's population (3.5 million people) will suffer from direct and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Between 16 March 2020, when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed, and 31 August 2021, the country recorded 14,156 cases and 872 deaths. Somalia has extremely limited testing facilities and, where testing is available, stigma often prevents people from obtaining access to it. Moreover, Somalis who lack adequate

social protection, in particular internally displaced persons and the urban poor, are more susceptible to contracting COVID-19 and suffering its worst consequences. COVID-19 vaccine availability is limited, and vaccine coverage in Somalia was below 2 per cent at the end of the reporting period.

6. Somalia experienced several other disease outbreaks apart from that of COVID-19. Cholera is endemic, spiking during rainy seasons along riverbanks and in locations with a high number of internally displaced persons and limited access to clean water and sanitation. A total of 4,756 cases of acute watery diarrhoea and cholera, including 57 deaths, were reported between 1 September 2020 and 30 August 2021. Access to health services is limited for many Somalis, with 21 per cent of the population having no access to a nearby functioning health facility. Measles outbreaks in many parts of the country are attributed to suboptimal routine immunization services. Children in inaccessible areas do not get vaccinated as required.

7. The desert locust upsurge that began in late 2019 continued into 2021. However, drier-than-normal conditions in the first quarter of 2021, combined with concerted control actions by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Somalia and the Government, contributed to the decline of the upsurge. A total of 332,860 hectares were sprayed, using ground and aerial assets. By August 2021, remnant swarms of desert locusts remained in isolated parts of Puntland and “Somaliland”. The control operations targeted bands of young hoppers and immature adults while still in their breeding grounds, thereby preventing their migration to crops. While the destruction of crops and pasture was largely averted by the effectiveness of the control operations, desert locusts still pose a risk to food security in Somalia, as breeding continues in neighbouring Djibouti and Ethiopia.

8. While the current level of desert locust infestation in Somalia is manageable, continued vigilance is required. Forthcoming seasonal rains in October 2021, as well as inaccessibility of regions of Ethiopia where swarms are currently reproducing and may subsequently return, are both cause for concern.

9. During the reporting period, 2020 *deyr* and 2021 *gu* season cereal crop production was 20 per cent to 60 per cent lower than the long-term average. The decrease was attributable mainly to the combined effects of poor rainfall in agropastoral areas, flooding in riverine areas, desert locusts and insecurity. Crisis-level food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3) has been reported in many areas and is expected to persist through the end of 2021.

10. According to the findings of the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit of FAO in June and July 2021, nearly 3.5 million people across Somalia are expected to face food consumption gaps or depletion of livelihood assets indicative of crisis-level outcomes (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3) or worse through the end of 2021 in the absence of humanitarian assistance. Approximately 1.2 million children under 5 years of age are likely to be acutely malnourished, including nearly 213,400 who are likely to be severely malnourished, through the end of 2021.

11. Humanitarian assistance in terms of food security and nutrition, as well as government support, assisted more than 1.3 million per month on average during the reporting period, which likely prevented the worsening of food security and nutrition outcomes across many parts of Somalia.

12. Nutrition surveys conducted by the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit and partners in November and December 2020 indicated that the overall median global acute malnutrition in Somalia remained serious, as indicated by a weight-for-height z-score of 10 per cent to 14.9 per cent or by a mid- to upper-arm circumference below 125 mm of 5 per cent to 9.9 per cent. The drivers of acute malnutrition include high morbidity, low immunization and vitamin A supplementation, reduced access to

milk and food insecurity. Urgent treatment and nutritional support are required for the approximately 1.2 million children under 5 years of age (the total acute malnutrition burden) who will likely face acute malnutrition through December 2021, including 213,400 who are likely to be severely malnourished.

13. The 2.9 million internally displaced persons in Somalia face serious protection risks associated with cyclical displacement owing to conflict and natural disasters, coupled with recurring human rights violations. Between September 2020 and August 2021, nearly 975,000 people were displaced, with conflict as the primary driver of displacement. Once displaced, families lose their socioeconomic safety nets and the capacity to cope with repeated shocks. Displaced women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons and persons with minority clan affiliations face the greatest protection challenges and are thus considered the most vulnerable members of society.

14. Political instability also contributes to displacement. In April, 63 civilians were killed and 207,000 people were displaced as a result of armed confrontations that had ensued between government and opposition forces in Mogadishu after national elections were delayed.

15. Over 1,100 families were displaced in April as a result of armed confrontation between Al-Shabaab and Somali National Army soldiers in Bacadweyne, in Hobyo district, Mudug region. Fifteen civilian casualties were reported. During the same month, another 8,303 families were displaced as a result of armed conflict in Bardaale district of Bay region, South-West State. Ninety-five casualties were reported during that displacement. The main driving factors of the displacement were forced taxation, recruitment of children, kidnapping and destruction of property. Between June and August, over 42,000 people were displaced in Galguduud and Mudug regions of Galmudug state owing to fighting between Al-Shabaab and Galmudug forces backed by the national army. The offensive against Al-Shabaab is continuing and could result in further displacement.

16. The continuing trend of forced evictions, fuelled by increasing population density and property prices, as well as by a lack of secure land tenure, results in the fact that, even where access to services is established, it is often fragile and inconsistent. In addition to depriving internally displaced persons of essential services, forced evictions from established settlements destroy significant investments made by humanitarian partners, including in water points and other water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, maternal and children's health centres and education facilities. Evictions are often carried out with little or no notice and at times with the complicity of uniformed armed security personnel enlisted by landowners.

17. An estimated 133,300 internally displaced persons were forcibly evicted during the reporting period. The number is lower than the 196,000 people reported to have been evicted during the previous reporting period. Successful advocacy with the local authorities in Baidoa by the Somalia Protection Cluster led to the issuance of eviction moratoriums during the COVID-19 pandemic, which were extended until November 2021. Local administrations in other towns, including Boosaaso, Garoowe, Gaalkacyo, Dhuusamarreeb and Cadaado, also agreed to the evictions moratorium, but no official written directives were issued. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, more than 100,000 of those evicted were in Banaadir region, where Mogadishu is located. Over 64,000 evictions were prevented during the reporting period. However, measures to prevent or mitigate the risk of forced eviction remain considerably low compared with needs.

18. Families and internally displaced persons are the most vulnerable to accidents caused by explosive remnants of war because they frequently traverse vast tracts of land in search of pastures or while seeking suitable settlements. Over the past

12 months, a total of seven explosive ordnance accidents have occurred, affecting 50 individuals. Children represent more than 70 per cent of the casualties. With regard to improvised explosive devices, civilians record the highest number of casualties because they are often more vulnerable to the impact of large explosions that most likely target security forces or installations.

19. Women and girls in Somalia face challenges as a result of inequality and social norms that exclude them from opportunities and decision-making platforms. Maternal and infant mortality rates are some of the highest in the world, and child marriage is prevalent. Sexual and gender-based violence is compounded by overcrowding and lack of privacy. In multifamily temporary shelters and multi-household dwellings, a lack of doors and partitions for sleeping and changing clothes can increase exposure to sexual harassment and assault. Tensions linked to overcrowding often lead to an escalation in resource-based conflict, intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence. During the reporting period, the Somalia Protection Monitoring System task force identified 6,148 cases of sexual and gender-based violence, of which 4,190 cases were related to domestic violence, most with a family member as the primary perpetrator. That was followed by 1,395 cases of rape and 1,364 cases of attempted rape of girls and women.

20. Somalia is among the countries that have recorded the highest number of grave violations against children, including recruitment and use of children. While many parties to conflict in Somalia, including the Federal Government and Member States, recruit and use children, Al-Shabaab remains the highest perpetrator. In the first eight months of 2021, the country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 1,797 grave violations affecting 1,392 children (1,062 boys and 330 girls), of which the majority were attributed to Al-Shabaab, followed by the regional forces of the national army and clan militias. Between January and June 2021, 631 children were recruited and used by parties to conflict, representing a 15 per cent increase compared with during the same period in 2020. Child recruitment and the use of children increased, with a monthly average of 105 cases in 2021 compared with 89 in 2020. Children were used in support roles (255) or in combat (165).¹

21. Recruitment and use of children are also related to ongoing military offensives and operations in the country. Juba Hoose continues to report high numbers of recruitment owing to ongoing offensives with non-State actors recruiting children, including forcibly, to counter State actors. There are several initiatives, including action plans to end and prevent the recruitment, use, killing and maiming of children and the 2019 road map, including at the federal member state level. Between 1 September 2020 and 31 July 2021, 1,431 children, including 37 girls, were reportedly used or recruited by armed groups, according to the country task force on monitoring and reporting mechanism, with Al-Shabaab accounting for 1,180 (82 per cent) of the cases and clan militias and security forces making up the remainder. Humanitarian partners continue to support children who were subjected to forced recruitment by armed groups. During the reporting period, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partners supported the reintegration of 671 children (592 boys and 79 girls) formerly associated with armed forces and groups, including 141 at-risk children (124 boys and 17 girls).

Humanitarian response

22. Humanitarian partners continued to deliver critical humanitarian support to vulnerable populations throughout the country during the reporting period. The sustained humanitarian response has prevented further deterioration and achieved measurable progress. In July 2021, Food Security Cluster partners assisted nearly

¹ See [A/75/873-S/2021/437](#), para. 136.

2.4 million (85 per cent) of the 2.8 million people targeted. Notably, people who are assisted with unconditional cash transfers are for the most part those in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or worse who experience significant consumption gaps.

23. Since February 2021, more than 1 million people have been assisted with farm inputs, animal restocking, community animal health workers, training in good agricultural practices, livestock treatment and vaccination, which translates to 81 per cent of the seasonal target of over 1.2 million people.

24. From September 2020 to July 2021, the Nutrition Cluster assisted 858,673 people with nutrition treatment, 228,372 of whom were severely acutely malnourished children, 475,772 moderately acutely malnourished children and 154,529 pregnant and lactating women. In addition, 288,926 children 6 to 59 months of age and 79,146 pregnant and lactating women were assisted with nutrition preventive services. From January to July 2021, the cluster assisted 288,521 boys and 339,937 girls aged 6 to 59 months and 150,173 pregnant and lactating women with nutrition treatment and preventive services, covering 56 per cent of the targets of the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia.

25. In response to COVID-19, six polymerase chain reaction laboratories have been established in Somalia (in Mogadishu, Garoowe, Boosaaso, Hargeysa, Burao and Berbera) since March 2020, three of which WHO is fully supporting (in Mogadishu, Garoowe and Hargeysa). However, in the light of low capacity for polymerase chain reaction testing, the introduction of antigen rapid diagnostic testing is expected to allow more people to be tested in hard-to-reach areas and to improve detection rates.

26. The aforementioned progress has been made despite significant funding shortfalls. As at 31 August, the 2021 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan had received only \$446 million of the \$1.09 billion required (41 per cent). Moreover, funding has been uneven across clusters, with several, including Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Education, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, and Protection and Shelter/Non-Food Items receiving less than 15 per cent of the required funds.

27. The impact of underfunding on response and humanitarian outcomes is tangible. Food assistance levels have fallen by 25 per cent since January owing mainly to inadequate funding. Against a target of over 2.1 million people per month, actual levels of assistance decreased, from 2.05 million people in January to a monthly average of 1.52 million people from March to May. Without additional support, millions of Somalis will face terminated health services, food ration cuts, acute water shortages, reduced protection against gender-based violence, worsened conditions in sites for internally displaced persons and curtailed access to education.

28. To mitigate the impact of limited funding, in July, humanitarian agencies in Somalia agreed on a prioritization framework. They also agreed to prepare a three-month implementation plan focused on life-saving/first-line response with a clear overview of what can and cannot be done. An emergency preparedness and response plan covering the May to December 2021 period was focused on four shocks: conflict, drought, flooding and locusts.

29. The United Nations and its partners continue to support the urgent provision of assistance to people who have been displaced or otherwise affected by drought and floods. In February, the Somalia Humanitarian Fund made the first standard allocation of 2021 in the amount of \$13 million to focus on water shortages in areas facing pre-drought conditions. On 31 August, the Fund allocated another \$26 million to scale up life-saving assistance for about 1.2 million people in Banaadir, Bay, Galguduud, Gedo, Hiraan, Juba Hoose, Shabelle Dhexe and Mudug regions. The Central

Emergency Response Fund has allocated \$27 million in 2021 to address drought conditions, including \$20 million for anticipatory action.

Humanitarian access constraints and operational implications

30. Somalia continues to face many challenges associated with the delivery of humanitarian assistance. They include insecurity, bureaucratic and administrative constraints and environmental challenges that lead to movement restrictions, disruptions to imports and domestic supply chains and the unavailability of basic commodities.

31. Insecurity continues to hamper the ability of humanitarians to reach people in need and to sustain operations for the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance and protection services, impeding the ability of those in need to gain access to basic services and assistance. Outside major urban centres, accessibility to some districts, in particular in southern and central regions, remains limited owing in large part to insecurity along main supply routes. The presence of non-State armed groups across parts of Jubbaland State, South-West State, Hirshabelle, Galmudug and Puntland limits the ability of humanitarian partners to assess needs and deliver assistance in rural areas and restricts the ability of civilians to safely seek assistance. Clan conflict in Galmudug and Hirshabelle escalated in November 2020 and continued into the second half of the reporting period, hindering humanitarian movement and operations, as did armed clashes between local militias in the disputed areas of Sool and Sanaag.

32. A multiplicity of local armed actors with varying command structures and geographical presence, rapidly changing national and regional forces and the presence of various bilateral support missions and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops, along with regional interventions, result in an operating environment in which territorial control by loosely allied groups shifts regularly and chains of command and control are not always clear. Establishing and maintaining relations with those who have influence over humanitarian access to people in need is both challenging and uncertain. About half a million people are estimated to live within territory controlled by Al-Shabaab, and they remain largely out of reach. The most vulnerable populations are the least likely to reach the relative safety of neighbouring districts or regions where humanitarian actors are responding. Retaliatory violence, reports of harassment and extortion at checkpoints, restrictions on the movement of goods and people, forced taxation and child recruitment underline the severe challenges and difficulties faced by affected people in gaining access to safety and assistance in a safe, timely and unimpeded manner.

33. Access to areas under the control of the Federal Government of Somalia and allied non-State armed groups remains largely possible, although bureaucratic and administrative challenges continue. Access to areas recovered by the Government and its allies is hampered by ongoing insecurity, including the presence of improvised explosive devices along key supply routes. Extortion and other forms of violations are common occurrences at the numerous illegal checkpoints manned by both State and non-State-affiliated armed actors. Security checkpoints, many of which are fee-bearing, hinder safe, timely and unimpeded access. Incidents continue to be reported at the authorized checkpoints along all major access roads in southern and central Somalia, with the following access roads most affected: Mogadishu-Afgooye-Baidoa, Mogadishu-Balcad-Jawhar and Beledweyne-Gaalkacyo. Operations to remove unauthorized checkpoints along other main access roads continue, however, armed actors adjust by creating non-static checkpoints. A lack of State authority beyond major population centres, as well as bureaucratic impediments, including interference by authorities in the selection of beneficiaries and the distribution of assistance, in addition to temporary suspension of programmes, impede humanitarian activity.

Therefore, notwithstanding milestone commitments made by the Federal Government of Somalia and some federal member states, including Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Puntland and South-West State, the general civilian population and humanitarian organizations continue to experience severe logistical challenges. Aid organizations continue to urge the authorities to build on the milestone commitments and efforts initiated in 2017 to prioritize the securing of the major supply routes.

34. Humanitarians operating in the above-mentioned areas face risks associated with unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. Displaced people returning to areas recaptured from Al-Shabaab face a lack of basic infrastructure and services, resulting in heightened vulnerability. Serious protection concerns remain in many areas, including unexploded ordnance, ongoing and renewed fighting and retaliatory violence by armed actors, as well as interference with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the ground and forced recruitment of adults and children. In some areas, such as Shabelle Dhexe, Galmudug and parts of Kismaayo, assistance, including for marginalized communities, continues to be limited as a result of insecurity, even where access is possible.

35. Access to populations under Al-Shabaab control remains extremely limited owing to concerns for the safety of humanitarians, opposition from other parties to the conflict and the reported unwillingness of Al-Shabaab to accept principled humanitarian operations in areas under its control. Heavy restrictions and retributions are imposed by Al-Shabaab for those refusing to comply with illegal taxation requirements, including the forced recruitment of children. Those seeking to leave Al-Shabaab-controlled territories and those who have fled to Government-controlled areas are often subjected to retaliatory attacks. However, increased flexibility on the part of Al-Shabaab to allow people to leave Al-Shabaab-controlled areas temporarily to seek services has been observed during the reporting period. Information on the humanitarian situation in those areas, as well as in areas controlled by the Da'esh faction in Somalia, is difficult to verify. Da'esh in Somalia is present in the mountainous Galgalo areas of Puntland, but its ability to conduct activities has been impeded by Puntland Security Force operations and ongoing rivalry and conflict with Al-Shabaab.

36. Areas controlled by Al-Shabaab include those that are contested and where civilian movement is nearly impossible as a result of regular and active hostilities or military operations. Often in these areas, rural and civilian populations remain despite active hostilities or heightened insecurity owing to a lack of resources and transportation to flee and a fear of being discriminated against or even prosecuted for trying to reach safer areas on the basis of clan or other presumed affiliations. Subjected to violence and volatile security conditions, these populations are often more vulnerable and in greater need of assistance. However, increased flexibility has been observed with regard to allowing people to seek assistance in areas under government control before returning to the areas under Al-Shabaab control. Equally important, clan competition for the control of resources associated with humanitarian activities obstructs the implementation of principled humanitarian work, occasionally leading to violence and suspension of programmes. Humanitarian access in such areas is also hampered by ongoing hostilities, movement and security restrictions and poor infrastructure. Identifying safe access routes and obtaining assurances to enter remain important measures to mitigate the risk of major hindrances to humanitarian access, such as restriction of movement, denial of access and interference in the delivery of aid. Although local partners have been more successful in securing access to conflict-affected areas on the basis of their lower security profiles, much more needs to be done to ensure the safe, timely, unimpeded and predictable passage of humanitarian assistance, goods and personnel to affected zones.

37. Violence against aid workers, including abduction and arrest, harassment and forcible seizure of assets, as well as restrictions on road movement by parties to conflict continues to obstruct the ability of humanitarians to reach people in need. The heavy influence of gatekeepers – informal settlement managers who act as brokers between internally displaced persons, local authorities and humanitarian partners – continues to limit access to services, in particular for marginalized communities, minorities, women and children. Restrictions on the movement of national staff on the basis of presumed clan or other affiliations and targeting of particular groups, including intimidation and harassment, continue to affect the implementation of programmes in conflict-affected areas. Risk transfer to national staff, as well as to national NGOs and civil society, who are most frequently front-line implementers, must be considered. All stakeholders should renew their attention to the safety and security of national and local actors by implementing tailored risk mitigation measures, coordination and information-sharing with the humanitarian community to enable better situational awareness and common approaches, as well as appropriate training.

38. The safety of humanitarian operations remains a key concern. During the reporting period, 250 security incidents with humanitarian implications were documented, the majority in southern and central Somalia. In the incidents, five humanitarian workers were killed, seven were injured, two were abducted and six were detained. The humanitarian community continues to call upon all parties to allow and facilitate humanitarian action, including by ensuring the security of staff, supplies and facilities.

39. Abductions of humanitarian workers decreased significantly during the reporting period, with two humanitarian workers kidnapped and both released within 24 hours. The decrease may point to a shift in tactics, given that kidnappings previously provided a source of revenue when ransoms were paid. However, the threat of kidnapping remains a concern, and the impact of abductions is felt not only by the organizations affected but also by the people in need of assistance and protection, who are often left without that assistance when the organizations affected are forced to scale down or suspend operations. Al-Shabaab is currently holding one humanitarian worker, an international humanitarian member abducted in Mogadishu in 2018.

40. Siege-like warfare engaged in by Al-Shabaab in some government-held towns in Hirshabelle, South-West State and Jubbaland State continues to hinder the transport of humanitarian and commercial supplies. Humanitarian organizations are limited to the use of air transport to gain access to the towns, which significantly increases the cost of humanitarian activities. Among others, Buulobarde, in Hiraan, Hirshabelle State; Diinsoor and Qansaxdheere, in Bay; Waajid and Xuddur, in Bakool, South-West State; and Ceel Waaq and Garbahaarrey, in Gedo, Jubbaland State are the districts most affected by the dynamic. Local traders often resort to using donkey carts to smuggle commercial goods into the towns, at great risk to their lives and property.

41. With supplies becoming critically low, in February 2021, a convoy of 21 commercial vehicles was escorted by Ethiopian National Defence Forces troops from Baidoa to Xuddur. The convoy took 10 days to cover the 110 km and was subjected to improvised explosive device attacks along the route; 15 Ethiopian National Defence Forces soldiers were reportedly killed. In other towns, while commercial vehicles are able to gain access, humanitarian supplies with visibility are not being allowed through. Access to Bardaale and Qansaxdheere was re-established in February 2021; air operations had been suspended since May 2020 as a result of the shooting down of a humanitarian aircraft in Bardaale. Reliance on and the vulnerability of aircraft and aviation routes remain a concern.

42. Al-Shabaab continues to sustain its pressure on the Jawhar-Mogadishu and Mogadishu-Afgooye-Marka access roads by staging improvised explosive device attacks and coercing vehicles to pay “taxes”. Trucks using the main supply routes in Hiraan continue to be subjected to Al-Shabaab attacks, a long-standing situation owing to the group’s enforcement of its economic blockade on government-controlled towns. Road access along the Mogadishu-Afgooye-Baidoa route continues to be severely constrained owing to the mounting demands of and extortion by “State-affiliated armed groups” (that is, groups affiliated with the national Government), clan militia, criminal groups and Al-Shabaab. According to local communities, Al-Shabaab has continued to impose fees along some stretches of the Mogadishu-Baidoa and Mogadishu-Jawhar routes. Owing to clan tensions along the Beledweyne-Dhuusamarreeb-Gaalkacyo road, clan-affiliated militia set up additional checkpoints to accrue revenue, which resulted in further clashes and insecurity, hampering all movement along the road.

43. Throughout southern and central Somalia, civilians continue to face rigorous taxation by Al-Shabaab, forcing many into displacement and causing the loss of productive assets, thereby rendering those civilians more vulnerable. In Gedo region, Al-Shabaab reportedly created two parallel livestock markets in Ceel Cadde and Muudaale villages, requesting traders and herders not to utilize Baardheere and Ceel Waaq, which has affected livestock prices and sources of income. In many areas, traders are now forced to pay double taxation, both to Al-Shabaab and to the Government, which renders small businesses non-lucrative and has led to an increase in prices for consumers. Farming communities reportedly continue to be obliged by Al-Shabaab to pay “taxes” to tend to their fields after good rains, with both cash and livestock being provided as zakat or as a “voluntary jihad” contribution. It should be noted that some internally displaced persons were forced to abandon farming activities because of the “taxation” imposed by Al-Shabaab, those who cannot afford to pay being either forced or coerced into surrendering their children for recruitment.

44. The Panel of Experts on Somalia, in a letter dated 28 September 2020 to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia, noted that Al-Shabaab’s revenue sources were diversified across a “taxation” system, which ranged in complexity from basic checkpoint controls to financial assessments of businesses through the group’s access to information sources such as business registrations, property assets and shipping cargo manifests. The movement derived its domestic revenue from a number of sources, including checkpoint “taxation” across the country, business extortion, the “taxation” of imports at major seaports and forced zakat collection. The Panel noted that Al-Shabaab remained in a strong financial position and was generating a significant budgetary surplus, some of which was invested in property purchases and businesses in Mogadishu. Despite the taxation by Al-Shabaab, the Panel found no evidence of significant funds spent by the group on poor and vulnerable communities and underlined the importance of international support not only to military efforts but also in order to empower community resilience and to build local capacities for the protection of civilians.

45. Al-Shabaab continues to control key areas and to take control of towns after the withdrawal of the national army, AMISOM and other government-affiliated forces, resulting in the disruption of humanitarian operations and, in some cases, the complete suspension of programmes. During the reporting period, the seizure of control of towns and villages, at times temporarily, by Al-Shabaab was reported in areas in Galmudug and South-West State. In some areas, Al-Shabaab carries out retaliatory attacks on civilians whom it deems to be government supporters or collaborators, while in others it only talks or preaches to local populations without resorting to violence. Al-Shabaab continues to attack some newly recovered areas in

an attempt to regain control. In some cases, civilians have reported abuses and human rights violations by the national armed forces and AMISOM in the newly recovered areas.

46. Conflicts between “Somaliland” and Puntland over control of parts of Sool and Sanaag regions continues, with both sides maintaining troops deployed against the other along the front line. The heightened tensions and the level of preparedness demonstrated by both parties have elevated the risk of a full-fledged escalation of armed hostilities and continue to restrict safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to the area.

47. Clan conflicts remain a major concern, in particular in Hiraan, Galmudug, Shabelle Hoose, Shabelle Dhexe and Sool regions; they result in lost lives and livelihoods and displace families. Humanitarian programmes in the affected locations are often suspended until the conflict is resolved. On occasion, local humanitarian staff belonging to warring clans have been victimized or caught up in the conflict. Clan-related conflicts are mainly recorded in areas where pastoralist communities reside, owing to competition for scarce resources such as water and pasture, or in areas where farmers clash with nomads over farmland. Galguduud and Hiraan remain the areas most affected by prolonged clan conflicts, while Galguduud region is particularly notable for clan skirmishes owing to the harsh environment and competition for resources. While clan elders and the authorities continue to prioritize negotiations to address ongoing conflicts, the payment of blood compensation remains the key determinant of conflict resolution. Even after reconciliation efforts have been successful, conflicts have the potential to reignite quickly over small or perceived provocations. For that reason, humanitarian organizations operating in the areas make every effort to be kept abreast of all incidents that can lead to clan conflicts, including those that may have occurred in past months or years, to avoid falling prey to the revenge cycle.

48. Parties to the conflict have continued to carry out air strikes in some areas in Jubbaland State, Galmudug and Puntland. The targets have mainly been assets and personnel of Al-Shabaab and Da’esh located outside residential areas or within isolated areas under their control. Although the air strikes have had no direct impact on humanitarian operations to date, a risk to operations located in the affected regions remains, in particular for vehicles moving supplies and personnel, which might be targeted in error. As a secondary impact, aerial attacks have reportedly made Al-Shabaab more suspicious of humanitarian organizations on the basis that they could be collecting information to be used for air strikes.

49. Following the directive in September 2018 by the Federal Government of Somalia requiring NGOs operating in Somalia to have a country presence, and the subsequent relocation of many international staff from Kenya to Somalia, international NGOs have continued to reiterate their request to the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states to expedite the establishment of a centralized and enabling framework, an initiative that has been under way for the past five years. The NGO Act, which is aimed at regulating the operations, registration and oversight of NGOs through the Registrar General and registrars, remains in draft form. In the absence of a centralized regulatory framework, aid organizations have continued to face demands such as arbitrary or duplicative taxation, the involvement of authorities in contracting suppliers and service providers, interference in staff recruitment, including screening, interviewing, selection and vetting, and taxation on salary payments. The demands have continued to lead to disruptions, delays, intrusions into humanitarian facilities, arrests and deportation, the detention and expulsion of humanitarian workers and the occasional temporary suspension of humanitarian programmes.

50. The influx of international NGO staff relocating to Somalia has increased challenges owing to a lack of explicit laws on registration and income taxation between the national and subnational levels. While a draft law has progressed to the parliamentary level, the international community is concerned that it has done so without adequate consultation with the NGO community, which could undermine its ability to operate when the law is eventually passed.

51. In “Somaliland”, the Ministry of Planning and National Development implemented a directive promulgated on 1 September 2020 to facilitate a common understanding of the laws and regulations of “Somaliland”. Under the directive, national NGOs from the region are not permitted to operate in Somalia, and vice versa. Subsequently, visas have been denied to Garoowe- and Mogadishu-based national NGO staff travelling to Hargeysa, resulting in their deportation.

52. With COVID-19 restrictions limiting humanitarians present in the country, in particular in Mogadishu, from engaging directly with partners, authorities and beneficiaries, the humanitarian country team arranged for a United Nations Humanitarian Air Service Cessna Caravan aircraft to improve access to the field and to carry out joint assessment and monitoring missions. The aircraft has proved to be instrumental to enabling operations. Missions have allowed direct interaction between agencies, international NGOs, beneficiaries and government staff for the first time in months and have allowed international United Nations staff and the staff of international NGOs to reach a number of the harder-to-reach destinations for the first time in at least 18 months. The first-hand opportunity to engage with partners, local authorities and beneficiaries and to better understand needs, challenges and opportunities has resulted in issues being identified and/or resolved and in the reprioritization and delivery of aid, enabling a direct and rapid response. Inclusion of media has provided advocacy opportunities.

Risk mitigation measures

53. Managing risks in Somalia remains challenging. The challenges faced by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and their partners continued to evolve during the reporting period. This has become even more essential and challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic, when most programmes and activities require remote management, with limited monitoring capability.

54. The reporting period included further integration and planning on the part of the stakeholders involved in supporting the Federal Government of Somalia regarding the array of programmes and projects across the country. This was largely a result of the embedding of new protocols established during the previous reporting period to manage at increased levels of remote management and with limited monitoring capacity. To counter the limitations and challenges that affect all United Nations organizations involved in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding activities in Somalia, partnerships and collaboration with external partners have deepened.

55. Support and advice provided by the Risk Management Unit, along with the tools developed, such as the Contractor Information Management System and the Capacity Injection Reporting Tool, have played a critical role in facilitating information-sharing and risk-informed decision-making across the United Nations. Regular forum discussions facilitated by the Unit involved increased and broader stakeholder participation. The discussions included risk-related information-sharing on contractors, capacity and risk assessment reports, performance reporting and specific deliberations on such risk-related areas as contract procurement fraud, misappropriation of assets and other fraud schemes, along with audit reports and investigations.

56. Increased information exchange has led to greater availability of risk information and to a corresponding increase in continuous, active engagement between the Risk Management Unit and the United Nations Risk Management, Accountability and Quality Assurance Working Group.

57. During the reporting period, the five-year collaborative risk management strategy implementation plan was operationalized within the United Nations and the NGO community. The operationalization has ensured greater risk management awareness and collaboration, as well as the strengthening of risk management systems across partners.

Impact of paragraphs 22 and 36 of resolution 2551 (2020)

58. In paragraph 22 of resolution 2551 (2020), the Security Council decided that the measures imposed on Member States in paragraph 3 of resolution 1844 (2008) should not apply to the payment of funds, other financial assets or economic resources necessary to ensure the timely delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance in Somalia, by the United Nations, its specialized agencies or programmes, humanitarian organizations having observer status with the General Assembly that provide humanitarian assistance and their implementing partners, including bilaterally or multilaterally funded non-governmental organizations participating in the Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia. While organizations surveyed for the present report did not explicitly comment on the impact of paragraphs 22 and 36 of resolution 2551 (2020) on their ability to implement programmes, the humanitarian exemption has a significant impact on the ability of partners to deliver life-saving aid and protection.

59. Non-renewal of the humanitarian exemption would result in donor reluctance to fund humanitarian operations, as well as increased bureaucratic and administrative operating challenges for humanitarian partners. Even incremental increases in donor risk aversion would have a significant adverse impact on the ability to deliver assistance. In turn, the inability to deliver aid would deprive civilians of the essentials to survive while compounding the risk that the humanitarian situation will deteriorate. The suspension of aid would result in a greater likelihood of additional displacement, including potential refugee flows to neighbouring countries and internal displacement towards urban, government-controlled areas that are already underresourced and have inadequate basic services. Furthermore, if Al-Shabaab were to prevent civilians from leaving areas under its control, their needs would go unmet, and those soliciting aid, such as elders and leaders, might be subjected to human rights abuses or violations of international humanitarian law, such as extrajudicial executions and child recruitment.

60. Importantly, the humanitarian exemption provides the basis for donors, contractors and finance and banking systems to enable the financing of humanitarian assistance in areas in which Al-Shabaab operates. The humanitarian exemption and the establishment of corresponding national implementation measures facilitate the financing of humanitarian programmes in Somalia.

Conclusions

61. Somalia remains at a crossroads. Humanitarian needs have increased at a time of reduced funding and heightened access challenges. The impact of climate change, COVID-19, protracted conflict and a desert locust upsurge, along with a global economic downturn, may contribute to an unravelling of hard-won progress achieved in the past decade, at high human and financial cost.

62. Humanitarian organizations in Somalia continue to strike a balance between their security concerns and ensuring effective and principled delivery of assistance.

Humanitarians will continue to work to sustain and expand access to those in greatest need despite security challenges. However, respect for international humanitarian law is paramount, and parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate the access of those who are in need. In addition to requiring greater access to beneficiaries, humanitarian efforts need flexible and timely funding to effectively assist millions of Somalis and to ensure that the security needs of national and local implementing partners are properly factored into proposals and budgets.

63. As at 31 August 2021, a total of 285 humanitarian partners are operating in Somalia, including 154 national NGOs, 119 international NGOs, 9 United Nations partners and 4 governmental partners. Those agencies are ready to scale up operations, drawing on lessons learned to ensure that response efforts prevent a major humanitarian catastrophe that could jeopardize gains made in recent years. Mechanisms are in place for rapid scale-up and sustained response. They include significant cash programming, expanded partnerships with already vetted local implementing partners and improved engagement with authorities and affected populations.

64. The Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit of FAO projects that, from October to December 2021, food insecurity is expected to further deteriorate among poor rural, urban and displaced populations owing to the impacts of anticipated below-average 2021 *deyr* season (October to December) rainfall, continued insecurity and other food security-related risk factors, including rising food prices and a higher cost of living, declining availability of milk for both consumption and sale and a likely reduction in agricultural employment opportunities during the forthcoming *deyr* season. Nearly 3.5 million people across Somalia are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity, crisis-level outcomes (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3) or worse, through the end of 2021. Humanitarian assistance will continue to be critical for millions of people in Somalia.

65. In a context of already high and increasing needs, non-renewal of the humanitarian exemption would result in disruption, interruption and/or suspension of life-saving humanitarian services throughout Somalia. In the light of the foregoing, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator invites the Security Council to renew the humanitarian exemption provided for in paragraph 22 of its resolution [2551 \(2020\)](#).