

SOMALIA POST REFUGEE RETURN MONITORING SNAPSHOT

MAY 2021

This post return monitoring snapshot presents selected findings of data from interviews with Somali refugee returnees interviewed in Somalia over the past 30 months. This data set is based on interviews with 2,046 returnee households (HH) across different return locations in Somalia. This exercise follows the previous post-return monitoring snapshot issued by UNHCR in August 2020. Since 2018, UNHCR has interviewed spontaneous returnees (6 % of sample/ 116 individuals) in addition to assisted ones to allow comparisons to be made between these two groups regarding the effectiveness of return and reintegration assistance for assisted returnees. Moreover, further analysis regarding documentation, safety and security concerns was introduced (disaggregated by countries of asylum).

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020, followed by restrictions on cross-border movements. As a result, repatriation was temporarily suspended, but resumed with limited capacity from Kenya in December 2020 with fit-for-purpose COVID-19 measures agreed on and put in place by the Federal Government of Somalia in collaboration with WHO. Therefore, the recorded number of repatriations in 2020 is significantly lower than in previous years; the Assisted Voluntary Return (ASR) programme in collaboration with IOM for returnees from Yemen continues to be suspended due to COVID-19 Pandemic related movement restrictions and testing challenges. UNHCR Regional Bureau in collaboration with UNHCR Somalia is closely following up this with IOM and UNHCR Yemen.

Somalia has one of the world's largest forcibly displaced populations with an estimated of 3.9 million displaced Somalis, of whom around 1 million are refugees and the rest are IDPs. Around 660,000 Somali refugees are hosted mostly in Kenya (40%) and Ethiopia (31%). The rest are reported to be in Yemen (23%), followed by Uganda (6%). (Source of data: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=M1jOiZ>)

KEY STATISTICS

INTERVIEW DETAILS

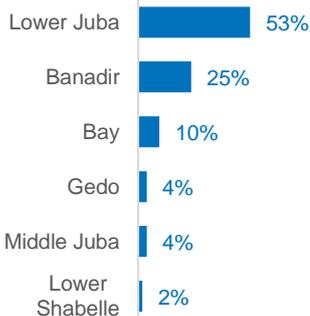


RESPONDENTS' GENDER

63% Female

INTERVIEW TYPE

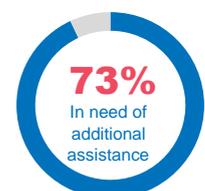
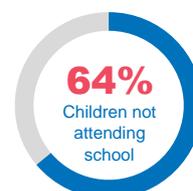
TOP REGIONS



PRM ROUNDS BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

PRM ROUNDS	Djibouti	Ethiopia	Kenya	Libya	Other	Yemen	Total
2018 - Round 1	1	2	758		1	3	765
2019 - Round 2	4		294		1	11	310
2019 - Round 3			198			3	201
2020 - Round 4	5	1	296		9	87	398
2020 - Round 5		47	285	2		38	372
Total	10	50	1,831	2	11	142	2,046

OVERALL FINDINGS (2018-2021)



Contextualizing the findings

- The 372 interviews in the second half of 2020 were carried out by telephone, and occurred after the introduction of COVID-19 related social distancing measures. Telephone numbers were randomly selected among lists of returnee households who have been assisted in return by UNHCR and partners between 2014 and 2020.
- As in previous surveys, the vast majority of the respondents were returnees from Kenya though in 2020 other countries of asylum such as Ethiopia (47), Yemen (38) and Libya (2) have been included for comparison and triangulation purposes to understand better the situation depending on their respective displacement history.
- Overall, approximately 63% of the respondents were female, of whom 58% were reported as heads of household. The total number of individuals in the surveyed households was 11,851 in the period January 2018 to December 2020, representing approximately 13% of all 91,828 returnees who have returned with UNHCR support since 2014.
- COVID-19 related questions were added to allow comparison pre and post pandemic.

RETURN DECISIONS

Overall, **90%** (Fig.1) of the respondents were satisfied with their decision to return, in line with the trend of the previous surveys conducted. The three most frequently cited reasons were: To be reunited with family (53%), Ability to return and live in place of origin (22%), and improved security situation (10%).



Fig. 1: N=2,046

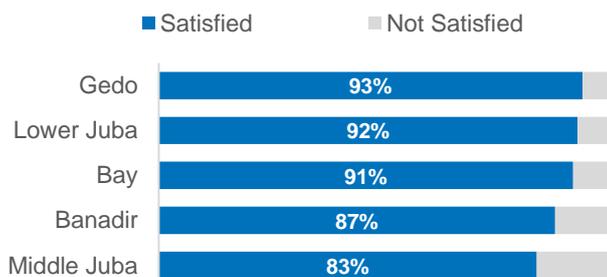
The three most frequently cited reasons for not being satisfied with the decision to return (10%) were: separation from family (38%), limited livelihood opportunities (17%), and lack of assistance and support from authorities (12%).

A total of 46% of the respondents reported that they decided to return due to improved security in place of origin, followed by opportunities for better livelihood (13%), and fear of closure of Dadaab camp in Kenya (9%).

Respondents who had returned to Gedo, Lower Juba, and Bay region indicated that they were satisfied with their decision to return (above 90%). (Fig.2)

Satisfaction level by Region

Fig. 2: N=2,046



Overall, **83%** (Fig.3) of the respondents stated that they intend to remain in their current location permanently which shows a 5% increase from the previous survey conducted in August 2020. The top three reasons given for those who did not intend to stay were to be closer to family (41%), limited livelihood opportunities (16%), and limited access to basic services (12%).



Fig. 3: N=2,046

Most of the respondents who did not intend to stay were considering relocating back to the country of asylum. A total of 9% of returnee households would consider moving to a new country of asylum.

Of the households interviewed since 2018, 19% indicated that they currently reside in an – what is inadequately referred to as – “IDP settlement”. Out of the 81% households who reside in settlements among host communities, 53% of whom are in Lower Juba (53%) followed by Banadir (25%), Bay (9%), and Middle Juba (5%) regions.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Overall, **95%** (Fig.4) of respondents reported that no member of the household had been threatened, intimidated, or experienced violence since returning to Somalia.



Fig. 4: N=2,046

While 87% of respondents informed that they could move freely in their community and surrounding district. Respondents who had returned from Ethiopia (Fig.5) and stated that they cannot move freely (50%), are currently in Bay Region and returned more than four years ago. The most cited reasons were limited access due to gatekeepers (52%) and roadblocks (42%).

¹ See for example, 2010 Durable Solutions Framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

Fig. 8: N=2,046

Freedom of movement by country of asylum

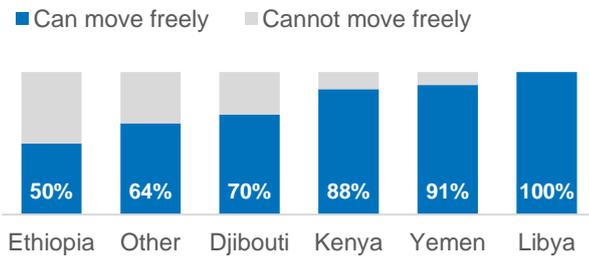


Fig. 5: N=2,046

DISCRIMINATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH HOST COMMUNITIES

When measuring achievement towards durable solutions, discrimination on account of return/displacement status is an important factor for consideration¹.

The vast majority of respondents (92%) (Fig.6) indicated that they had not faced discrimination on the basis of being a returnee and 90% of the respondents report not having been subject to clan/ethnicity-based discrimination.



Fig. 6: N=2,046

88% stated that they had not experienced disputes with other (non-returnee) members of the community, while the remaining 12% reported disputes with other (non-returnees), with the main causes being housing, land or property issues (43%), followed by family disputes (19%). (Fig.7)

Reasons for disputes

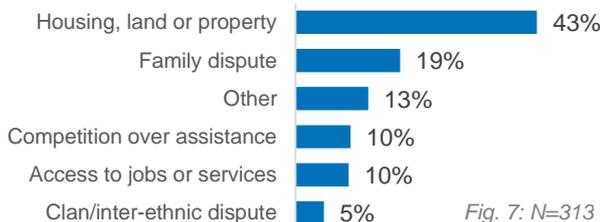


Fig. 7: N=313

SHELTER AND HOUSING LAND AND PROPERTY

Overall, 80% (Fig. 8) of the respondents have not been evicted from their housing, land or property since their return to Somalia. 70% of the respondents do not fear being evicted.



Overall, 83% of the respondents live in housing that they do not own and are living in makeshift with Corrugated Galvanized Iron (CGI) sheeting (38%), Temporary Shelter (28%), and make-shift shelters (Bul) (20%). In addition, 67% of households reported having no proof of occupation of the place they live in. With only verbal agreements with their landlords, returnees are exposed to an increased risk of eviction.

With more than 80% not owning and almost 70% having no documentation, there is a high degree of informal arrangements – including living with relatives, or squatting – potentially leading to protection concerns, including housing insecurity and risk of eviction.

96% of respondents in Banadir region do not own their place of residence (Fig. 9)

Property ownership by region

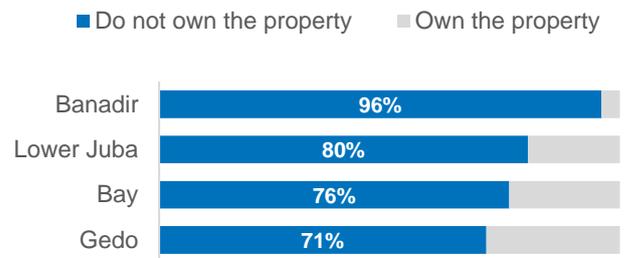


Fig. 9: N=2,046, top 4 regions

EDUCATION

Overall, 64% (Fig.10) of respondents indicated that all of the children in their household do not attend school regularly, though the most recent PRM conducted in December 2020 reported a slight decrease with 50% of children from the respondents falling in the same category. This could be attributed to remote learning arrangement after school closures imposed by COVID-19 restrictions as the findings in the previous report (August 2020) informed almost 80% of the children did not attend school.

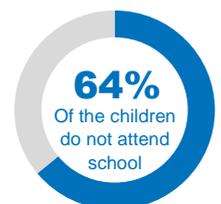


Fig. 10: N=1,280

For further details on how UNHCR, the Ministry of Education and partners are committed to ensuring access to education for returnee children and youth: UNHCR Somalia Multi-Year Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (pp. 14-15) and the UNHCR Somalia Education Strategy entailing a disengagement strategy to ensure sustainability after the UNHCR return-related education grant ends.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND LIVELIHOODS

Overall, **66%** (Fig.11) of returnee households reported that their sources of income are insufficient to meet the needs of the household, which often rely on day labour, business/self-employed, and humanitarian assistance. What prevents returnees from accessing livelihoods seems to be associated with the unavailability of jobs (41%), employment opportunities being too far away (12%), and lack of equipment needed for running a business (12%). 57% of the respondents indicated that remittances or support from other family members were reduced, after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out.



Fig. 11: N=2,046

The effect of COVID-19 related restrictions in 2020 have had a drastic effect on livelihood opportunities for returnees as well as other Displacement Affected Communities in Somalia. Vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by reductions in international remittances and a decline in purchasing power². Income sources among returnee households are typically day labour and small business or self-employment that leave returnee households vulnerable to economic shocks, both local and global.

IDENTIFICATION DOCUMENTS

Overall, **93%** (Fig.12) of households reported that all members do not have government-issued identification documents. However, 82% of those households also reported that lack of IDs has not resulted in any issues since their return.



Fig. 12: N=2,046

Out of the 18% of households who reported challenges due to the lack of documents, 64% indicated trouble accessing services while 25% reported challenges at checkpoints.

Of the 142 respondents (62%) who reported they experienced problems due to lack of identification, 105 are from Kenya, 19 from Ethiopia, 17 from Yemen, and 1 from Libya. (Fig.13)

Problems due to lack of documentation by country of asylum

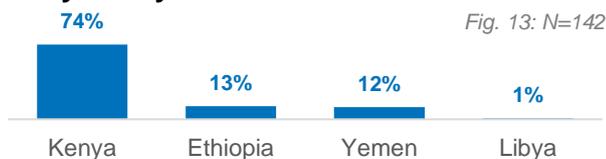


Fig. 13: N=142

Formal identification is a primary means to access rights and, to some extent, services. Furthermore, while legal documentation processes for the planned upcoming federal elections are yet to be finalized, possession of government-issued identification may reduce the risk of disenfranchisement and potential exclusion.

COVID-19

In 2020, UNHCR included questions related to Covid-19 and its impact to refugees returning to Somalia. Findings on the 5th Round of PRM indicated that 73% (Fig. 14) of the returnees need extra assistance since COVID-19 broke out. The three main (Fig. 15) preference for assistance were access to health services (48%), Cash (26%), and access to livelihood (11%). 31% stated that they have received Information on COVID-19 (49%), Cash (28%), and health services (16%) from NGOs/UN (63%), Government (20%), and local communities.

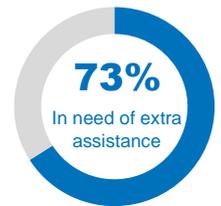


Fig. 14: N=372

Additional assistance for COVID-19

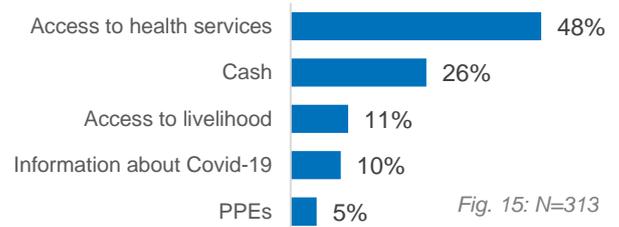


Fig. 15: N=313

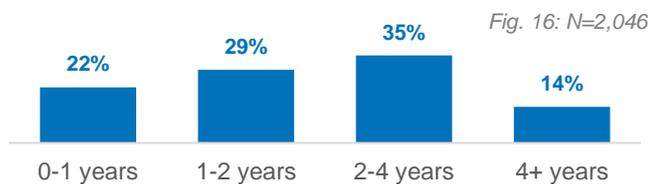
COMPARISON BETWEEN ASSISTED AND UNASSISTED RETURNEES

In 2020, UNHCR included spontaneous returnees in the PRM sample to see if UNHCR's assistance yielded impact when compared to unassisted returnees. Recent PRM findings (data as of December 2020) confirm that those returnees assisted by UNHCR indicated relatively higher satisfaction level than that of unassisted (91% vs. 75%). More than half of unassisted, and 19% of assisted, returnees currently reside in IDP sites. Those assisted also indicated higher intention rate (84% vs 64%) to remain permanently in their current location. Despite both groups indicating the inability to pay for school fees as a reason for children not attending school, more than half of assisted households indicated that their children attend school compared to that of unassisted indicating 23%. Access to markets also has been perceived comparatively more likely by those assisted than that of unassisted (80% vs 36%).

² CALP | Global remittances to suffer a blow from COVID-19 | June 2020; EU REF | How will remittances affect Somali COVID-19 Response | April 2020

METHODOLOGY

Since December 2014, UNHCR has assisted approximately 16,000 households in their voluntary return to Somalia. In the current PRM system, 2,046 household level interviews (13% of the total) have been carried out by telephone and face-to-face from 2018 to date. The households sampled for telephone interviews were randomly selected from the lists of telephone numbers provided to returnee households on arrival with the goal to ensure representation by year of arrival and region of return. Face-to-face interviews were carried out with households within communities containing returnees known to UNHCR and partners and may not be strictly a random sample. A breakdown of the 2020 sample (returnee households surveyed according to return year) is depicted below. (Fig.16) Further details on sampling methodology are available on request.



The findings presented in this snapshot represent a selection of findings of UNHCR's post-return monitoring. More comprehensive data is available and will be used in discussion with partners and stakeholders, and for planning purposes.

Although further exploration and analysis at the field level is needed, the findings suggest that more investment is required in strengthening the service infrastructure in return areas and in developing livelihoods opportunities, access to micro-finance and inclusion of returnees into social safety nets/ social protection mechanisms for returns to be sustainable. Particular emphasis must be placed on

- addressing housing, land and property issues in collaboration with the competent authorities;
- addressing legal documentation to avoid the risk of exclusion to services;
- identifying and addressing the needs of persons with specific vulnerabilities;
- area-based/ whole-of-society and community-based protection approaches;
- transition into longer-term development type of programmes.

Post-return monitoring is an ongoing activity of UNHCR that will continue throughout and be expanded in 2021.

JOINT ANALYSIS

In 2020, UNHCR presented preliminary findings from 2020 to external durable solutions partners as well as discussed findings with UNHCR in Kenya – the results of both discussions have led to further insights into the situation of returnees, as well as recommendations on how to address the identified issues and improvements to the approach. More detailed joint analysis sessions will be conducted as new findings arise, and a methodology has been proposed. A structured joint analysis of data enables:

- a rigorous approach to ensure that each result is given due consideration.
- findings/conclusions may be validated through consensus of actors or partners with different viewpoints (or where consensus not reached, formally documented with rationale);
- external information and expertise can be used to triangulate or shed further light on findings.
- recommendations for joint inter-agency action can be made and agreed.

NEXT STEP FOR 2021

The purpose of post return monitoring is to support key areas within UNHCR's solutions mandate such as to ensure return is informed, voluntary and conducted in a safe and dignified manner, to support the sustainability of returns and reintegration, to feed into continuously adjusted evidence-based programming, to monitor and follow up on protection issues as well as to provide area-based information to prospective Somali refugee returnees in countries of asylum.

Existing needs assessment activities such as the nationwide Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (JMCNA) can also inform facets of post return monitoring and the intention in 2021 is to work with existing partners such as OCHA and REACH to ensure an adequate representation of returnees within the national needs assessment and to further harmonize indicators within the agreed frameworks.

DONORS

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have directly contributed to the UNHCR Somalia operation in 2021



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