

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

September 2006



Political developments

The situation in Somalia saw some progress with dialogue taking place in Khartoum between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). One of the major happenings was the takeover of Kismayo by the UIC on 25 September. An assassination attempt was made in Baidoa against TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed. The attempt on President Abdullahi took place on 18 September outside the Parliament building in Baidoa. The blast by a suicide car bomber left 11 people dead, including the President's brother.

The talks in Khartoum took place between 2 and 4 September. The UIC and TFG agreed to honour an earlier agreement signed in Khartoum on 22 June 2006. The agreement called for reconstitution of the Somali army and police as well as reintegration of the forces of the Islamic Courts, the TFG and other armed militias in the country. They also agreed to maintain peaceful co-existence between Somalia and its neighbours as well as uphold the policy of non-interference in each others affairs. The two sides agreed to meet again in

Khartoum, Sudan for the 3rd phase of the talks on 30 October 2006. The UIC continues to oppose the deployment of foreign peacekeepers which the TFG has always supported. The TFG and UIC still insist that they are committed to dialogue to resolve differences.

On the diplomatic front, the UIC has reportedly initiated contacts with the United States. It was reported that on September 21, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the chair of the UIC's Executive Council, held indirect talks with representatives of the US. On return to Mogadishu, he said the UIC had reached agreement with the US on several unspecified issues.



Students in a classroom tent in Somalia. UNICEF has been providing tents to shelter pupils, a cheaper and innovative alternative to putting up of permanent blocks.
Credit: UNICEF Somalia/July06/CSZ Office.

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Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') President Dahir Rayale Kahin visited Britain, Germany and Ethiopia. In Germany he got investment pledges in the cement and power sectors. A member of the Somaliland cabinet said whereas the self-declared republic looks forward to end of the conflict in Somalia, it was still appealing to the international community to channel aid to Somaliland given the strides it had made in establishing democracy.

Meanwhile, an eight-person Norwegian delegation visited Somaliland. Among the issues the Norwegians discussed was the possibility of support to the education and agriculture sectors.

Special events

During the reporting period, various special days were commemorated. They included the World Literacy Day which was observed on 9 September (it is marked on 8 September which was a religious holiday, hence pushed one day forward), the International Day of Peace on 21 September and the launch of the State of the World Population report in Hargeisa, capital of Somaliland. The report highlighted among other issues the status of migrants and stated that half of the 95 million

migrants in the world are women, children and youth (between 15 and 29 years). The theme for Literacy Day was Literacy – the way out of poverty. The celebrations in Somaliland involved UN agencies, local administration, NGOs, schools, teachers and pupils. Other celebrations took place in Merka and Jowhar Central Somalia.

International Peace Day events took place in collaboration with UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities in Somaliland, Puntland and Central/Southern Somalia. In Baidoa, Central Somalia, the celebrations drew participation of Transitional Federal Government (TFG) officials, youth and women's groups. Activities carried out included sports tournaments, drama performances and a peace rally.

Security developments

An Italian nun was killed in Mogadishu on Sunday, 17 September. The UIC later arrested three men in connection with the killing. Sister Leonella Sgorbati was killed as she left the Austrian-funded SOS Hospital for her home across the street. The assailants also shot her bodyguard who died instantly. The Sister died shortly in surgery from her wounds. Sister Sgorbati was in charge of

UNICEF Operational Areas...

Northwest Zone – Hargeisa Office

Awdal
West Galbeed
Togdheer
Sahil
Sool
Sanaag

Northeast Zone – Bossaso Office

Bari
Nugal
Mudug

Central and Southern Zone – Baidoa, Jowhar and Mogadishu

Galgaduud
Hiran
Middle Shabelle
Lower Shabelle
Benadir
Lower Juba
Middle Juba
Gedo
Bay
Bakool

the school for orphans run by the SOS in the hospital compound.

Five people died and seven were injured on 4 September following exchange of gunfire between TFG police and local militia at Baidoa Airport.

The UIC administration in Jowhar ordered Radio Jowhar to stop broadcasting instrumental and other music deemed morally unacceptable. The station was allowed back on air after accepting to abide by the conditions. Similarly a station run by HornAfrik in Kismayo was closed but later re-opened. It had been accused of airing reports that led to incitement and protests against the UIC.

In Northeast Somalia ('Puntland') authorities started a crackdown on illegal immigrants waiting to go to Yemen and the Gulf states. Hundreds of people die annually, usually when overloaded boats capsize as they try to cross the Gulf of Aden from Bossaso, the commercial capital of Puntland.

Health update...

Polio: Polio immunization was carried out in most parts of Somaliland and Somalia. The exercise, part of a cross-border campaign kicked off in Hargeisa.

It was carried out between 10 and 14 September.

Besides Somalia and Somaliland, the campaign was also carried out in Ethiopia and Kenya. Somalia had been polio free for about three years until it became reinfected in July 2005. The reinfection was suspected to have been imported from Yemen. Immunization against measles was carried out in Burao town. In Puntland, 127,000 children were immunized against polio.

Tetanus: a Maternal neo-natal tetanus immunization campaign was carried out in Puntland. A total of 87,043 women of child bearing age were vaccinated. A similar exercise was carried out in Central/Southern Somalia.

Training: 60 Maternal and Child Health (MCH) staff and six from the local administration in Somaliland were trained in management of health information systems. Another 40 health workers in Somaliland were trained in safe use of injections and waste management. Fifty traditional birth attendants drawn from internally displaced persons' (IDP) camps were trained in basic skills in Somaliland. They were also provided with equipment to help them carry out their work.

Innovations: Three days dubbed Child Health Days marked the launch of a pilot project in Gebilay district of Somaliland through which delivery of maternal and child health interventions was scaled up. Among activities carried out during the Days were vaccination, deworming, immunization, nutrition promotion and distribution of insecticide treated nets (ITNs). Eight mobile clinics carried out the activities through which 1,500 children aged less than five years were immunized.

Nutrition update...

Feeding: Supplementary food and treatment for vitamin deficiency, anaemia and worms was provided to 122 children from Burao and Jamalaye (IDP) camps in Somaliland. About 20,000 students from 15 schools in Hargeisa and Gebiley districts received deworming medication.

Supplies: Nutritional supplements for severely malnourished children were supplied to Hargeisa Hospital.

Training: twenty-nine health staff from the Puntland Ministry of Health were trained in nutrition and management of health

facilities. The trainees were drawn from maternal and child health centres.

Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

Projects: Construction and drilling works continued for water systems in Arabsio, Borama and Berbera in Somaliland; Gargoore, Washington, Dhahar and Goldogob in Puntland and other locations in Central/Southern Somalia.

Sanitation: Construction and rehabilitation of latrine facilities for schools and IDP settlements started in Somaliland. Construction of nine school sanitation projects is going on in Puntland.

Training: 30 teachers from 15 schools in Somaliland were trained in hygiene and sanitation.

Education update...

Capacity-building: Construction of three regional educational resource centres commenced in Borama, Erigavo and Berbera in Somaliland. They will serve primary school teachers and provide a forum for interaction besides enabling teachers to access resources. About 500 teachers are expected to benefit per location.

Training: A two-week non-formal education training of trainers' course was conducted in Garowe. Twenty-two trainees from NGOs who run non-formal education centres participated. Non-formal education (NFE) provides children and youth who missed out on formal schooling with a second chance to learn how to read and write. Some of the graduates later continue to formal learning in primary schools.

A total of 144 head-teachers and 1,260 teachers were trained in various fields in Central/Southern Somalia. Additionally, 155 head-teachers were trained in Merka, Central/Somalia in psychological and social support for pupils.

Construction: Some 25 new school tents were distributed and put up in Somaliland. They will cater for 2,500 additional

learners. Rehabilitation works for various schools took place in Central/Southern Somalia with tents also being put up. UNICEF initiated measures to repair schools and provide tents to ensure learning continued after rains damaged some schools in Central/Southern Somalia.

Youth development update...

Leadership: Youth groups played a key role in organization of International Day of Peace activities in Somaliland. A youth consultative meeting was held in Garowe, Puntland. Twenty-six participants participated in the discussions that centred on youth policy development and action plans.

Rehabilitation of a youth centre in Garowe, Puntland, has started. Four offices and a meeting hall will be rehabilitated. A basketball playground is also being rehabilitated at Biyokulule Primary School. The school predominantly serves children of IDP families.

Youth in Central/Southern Somalia played a key role in mobilizing communities in HIV awareness and hygiene education. Special focus was on IDP families.

Sports: A soccer tournament was organized for eight teams from IDP camps in Bossaso. The aim was to promote social integration of youth in the camps. Sports supplies were distributed to youth groups in Central/Southern Somalia.

Training: UNICEF and KANAVA Youth Centre organized a four day training workshop in child and young people participation in decision-making and development processes. It took place in Merka, Central Somalia. Some 46 youth from Central/Southern Somalia were trained in resource centre/library management.

HIV and AIDS update...

Advocacy: The women-to-women HIV/AIDS awareness raising for prevention and control initiative kicked off in Somaliland. HIV/AIDS awareness programmes were disseminated through print and electronic media in Somaliland. Another workshop was held in Puntland to equip youth with skills for participation in emergency response initiatives. Sixteen youth mentors and leadership trainers participated.

Copies of *Koor* magazine that is produced by youth with UNICEF support were distributed in

Middle and Lower Jubba. The magazine focuses on HIV/AIDS and other issues of relevance to youth.

Counseling/testing: Some facilities in Central/Southern Somalia were unable to carry out testing due to shortage of HIV testing kits. The voluntary counseling and testing centre in Merka was however operational.

Sensitization forums on HIV were held in Hiran, Central Somalia for members of various groups including youth, militia, women, truck drivers and *khat* merchants. *Khat* is an amphetamine leaf akin to the coca leaf of South America.

Child protection update...

Training: thirty people from different locations in Somalia were trained in child protection issues in the context of emergencies. The training took place in Merka, Central Somalia. Another group that included staff of UN agencies also took part in training that focused on monitoring and reporting of child protection violations.

Advocacy: Information materials on child protection issues were distributed to guardians, local authorities and community groups in different locations in

Somalia. Media in different locations also highlighted various issues on child protection. Social mobilization was carried out in IDP camps in Mogadishu and drought affected areas of Central/Southern Somalia. Special focus was given on the need to protect children against violence.

Communication for Development update...

Media competition: Entries for a media competition in Somaliland were reviewed. The competition was open to journalists from print and electronic media. The entries reflected on areas that fall under UNICEF's mandate for the improvement of the lives of children and women.

Media training: A seven-day training course in basic journalism skills, radio and video production and print journalism was organized for 32 members of youth groups in Puntland. The training took place in Bossaso and Garowe. Training was also conducted in radio programme production and broadcast for youth from nine regions in Central/Southern Somalia. The training took place in Mogadishu.

Various programmes produced by youth groups under the Youth

Broadcasting Initiative continued to be screened in various locations in Somalia. Among the subjects covered are youth and issues such as HIV, drugs, sports, education, education, religion and farming.

Convergence of development initiatives: A meeting was held in Bossaso which was attended by 22 people from locations where UNICEF is implementing programmes and projects through the principle of convergence. The convergence principle involves ensuring that various social services such as water, health and education are all part of the package of support from UNICEF to a given community.

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Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.