



# Responding to the Urgent Humanitarian Needs in the Horn of Africa

HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT IN THE MARGINS OF THE 77<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



## Concept note

Last updated: 13 September

**Governments of Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom and the State of Qatar, in cooperation with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, are convening a hybrid High-Level side event on the margins of the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled “Responding to the Urgent Humanitarian Needs in the Horn of Africa.”**

The Horn of Africa is one of the world’s most vulnerable regions. Communities in parts of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are facing the threat of starvation following four consecutive failed rainy seasons, a climatic event not seen in at least 40 years. The situation has recently reached a tipping point. The lives of hundreds of thousands of people are at immediate risk, according to the [latest food security and nutrition analysis](#). Famine is unfolding in two areas in the Bay region in South-Central Somalia and will likely last until March 2023 if humanitarian aid is not significantly and immediately scaled up. The current extreme, widespread, and persistent multi-season drought is unprecedented. Early forecasts indicate that the October-December 2022 rainy season is also likely to fail. The livelihoods of millions of people who farm and herd in the Horn, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, have already been disrupted. The region is already on edge.

As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate due to the worsening drought, key indicators of displacement, food insecurity, malnutrition and diseases are on a negative trend. Across the Horn of Africa, at least 36.1 million people have now been affected by the drought which began in October 2020. At least 20.5 million people are already waking each day to high levels of acute food insecurity and rising malnutrition across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, and this figure could increase to between 23 and 26 million by February 2023. Food prices are spiking in many drought-affected areas due to a combination of macro-economic challenges, below-average harvests, and rising food,

### Date and venue

**Wednesday, 21 September 2022, 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. New York time (EDT)**

Hybrid event (*United Nations Headquarters*)

### Contacts

For inquiries or administrative matters kindly contact the focal points:

- **Mr. Tommaso Giarrizzo**  
[Permanent Mission of Italy]  
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- **Mr. Karim Saba [UNOCHA]**  
[Saba@un.org](mailto:Saba@un.org)

### Registration

Kindly limit the response to one registration per delegation.

To register, please go to:

<http://ocha.link/UNGA77HoA>

### Interventions from the floor

Interventions from the floor will all take place virtually. Connection details are to follow with registered participants.

### Livestream

The event will be live broadcast on UN WebTV at:

<https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1m/k1mlkndame>

fuel and fertiliser prices on international markets, including as a result of the war in Ukraine. Over 8.9 million livestock—which pastoralist families rely upon for sustenance and livelihoods—have died across the region. Women and children, especially girls, are always hit hardest by a food crisis. Many are at an increased risk of abuse and gender-based violence, including child marriage. Families are taking desperate measures to survive, with more than 1.6 million people leaving their homes in search of food, pasture, water and alternative livelihoods, increasing the risk of inter-communal conflict and heightening pressure on already limited basic services.

In addition to climate-driven emergencies, ongoing armed conflict, terrorism, inter-communal violence and disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, continued to be the key drivers of humanitarian needs in the region, displacing people by the thousands. Newly internally displaced persons (IDPs) seek refuge in overcrowded and sub-standard displacement sites or set up temporary make-shift shelters exposed to protection and health risks. Most are taking refuge amongst the host community, who are most often vulnerable. Meanwhile, in some parts of the region, IDPs return to their respective areas of origin to restart their destroyed livelihoods. However, the returns are happening in a context where basic services are still not restored, and the means to resume livelihoods are not yet in place, exposing returnees to further risks and challenges.

The high humanitarian needs in the region are likely to continue well into 2023 as a result of expanding drought and ongoing violence. Given the protracted nature of conflicts and the recurrent character of natural hazards, all stakeholders—humanitarian, recovery, and development—should be aligned behind resilience-building efforts. The situation requires urgent lifesaving intervention to address immediate humanitarian needs and mitigate the risk of further deterioration in the crises affecting the region; to further enhance the resilience of the population, adapt existing mechanisms and address the root causes of crises and promote investment in climate adaptation and mitigation.

## Objectives of the Event

1. **Raise awareness of the worsening humanitarian situation** in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Kenya.
2. **Advocate for urgent action by the international community** to prevent an imminent famine; protect and reach the most vulnerable; treat women and children for malnutrition; help families with food assistance; provide life-saving water, sanitation and hygiene services; provide access to vital healthcare; and meet other essential needs.
3. **Call on donors and partners to urgently make additional contributions** of emergency funding to address the growing needs and ensure funds are distributed in a balanced way across sectors.
4. **Promote respect for international humanitarian law, and advocate for the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel.** Demonstrate the international community's unwavering commitment to full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and the requirement that assistance is delivered strictly in line with humanitarian principles.

## Programme

<b>9:30 EDT</b>	<b>Event Begins</b> moderated by: Mr. David Miliband, International Rescue Committee President and CEO
<b>9:30 EDT</b>	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Nations Secretary-General (pre-recorded message)</li> <li>• H.E. Ms. Samantha Power, Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development.</li> <li>• H.E. Ms. Marina Sereni, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy.</li> <li>• Rt. Hon. Vicky Ford, Minister of State for Development of United Kingdom.</li> <li>• H.E. Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Regional Affairs, State of Qatar.</li> <li>• Mr. Martin Griffiths, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.</li> </ul>
<b>10:05 EDT</b>	<b>Interventions from the governments of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Mr. Abdirahman Abdishakur, Special Presidential Envoy for Drought Response for the Federal Republic of Somalia</li> <li>• Senior Representative of the Government of Kenya</li> <li>• Senior Representative of the Government of Ethiopia</li> </ul>

- 10:20 EDT**      **Panel discussion: “On the Verge of Famine”**
- H.E. Amb Minata Samaté Cessouma, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission
  - Mr. Francesco Rocca, President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
  - Ms. Gabriela Bucher, Executive Director of Oxfam International
  - Mr. Arif Husain, Chief Economist of the World Food Programme (WFP)
- 10:45 EDT**      **Interventions from the floor**
- Given the limited time available and to allow as many interventions as possible, interventions should be no longer than two (2) minutes. As the meeting needs to end on time, the organisers reserve the right to limit the number of interventions and to ensure a balanced composition of the speakers' list.*
- 11:25 EDT**      **Closing Remarks**
- Mr. Martin Griffiths, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator
- 11:30 EDT**      **Event Ends**

## Participation

Please confirm attendance by close of business (EDT) on Monday, 19 September, using the following link for registration: <http://ocha.link/UNGA77HoA>.

*Invitations will be sent to all UN Member States and partners. Member States are invited to participate at the **Ministerial Level**. Other partners are expected to participate at the principal level. The event will be live streamed to a global audience.*