



**American
Red Cross**

Horn of Africa: Drought

July 29, 2011



A dangerous drought beginning three years ago has reached a crisis point in the Horn of Africa. To date, 2011 is the driest year ever recorded in the eastern Horn of Africa, exacerbating the already difficult conditions. The intensity of this year's drought has led to a humanitarian crisis affecting more than 11.5 million people in Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia. Crop failure, scarce water, low food supplies and livestock deaths are rampant and more than 750,000 people have been displaced as they migrate in search of assistance.

The American Red Cross has been active in the region for years, helping combat the chronic effects of drought. In the wake of the worsening conditions, we have made an initial commitment of \$1 million to support the global Red Cross and Red Crescent network response. Partner national societies in each affected country are engaging in efforts to bring food, water and medical assistance to those in greatest need. The American Red Cross continues to monitor the situation to see how we can provide support most efficiently for these efforts.

CURRENT SITUATION

- More than 750,000 people have been displaced by the drought to date and new refugees are fleeing from Somalia – the country most severely affected – into Kenya and Ethiopia.
- As water sources continue to dry up, the risk and instance of water-borne diseases increases as families are forced to consume untreated water directly from streams and rivers.
- Land used by farmers for grazing livestock has dried up causing livestock deaths and the forced migration of many people seeking assistance.
- Malnutrition is growing as crops are destroyed and people arrive in camps with no money to purchase food now in high demand.
- Political insecurity and the rising cost of fuel have made it increasingly difficult to deliver aid to Somalia.

RED CROSS RESPONSE

The American Red Cross has made an initial commitment of \$1 million to support the global Red Cross and Red Crescent network response activities. "The need is dire at best as families grapple with the lack of food, water and health services, and the American Red Cross is eager to support our local partners that are tackling malnutrition, providing water and medical care, stabilizing livelihoods, and mitigating other consequences of this complex crisis," said Apu Patel, regional director for Africa with the American Red Cross.

In Somalia, the American Red Cross is helping support the work of the Somali Red



Kabei Eruan and Ikale Akinu collapsed, causing their friends to fear they had died. Luckily they were able to receive urgent help from a Kenyan Red Cross doctor who luckily was on the spot. The doctor gave both an injection of Dextroval and saline, as well as clean water to drink. "I've never seen anything like this – the situation for these people is getting worse day by day," says Abdul Hakim Otula, from the Kenyan Red Cross disaster unit.

Jakob Dall / Danish Red Cross

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Crescent and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC is experienced in providing humanitarian assistance in areas of conflict or where human rights are threatened, striving to ensure aid reaches those in need despite potential challenges. Together, these groups are expanding existing outpatient therapeutic feeding centers in southern Somalia. They are launching an additional feeding program for malnourished children and vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women. Targeted food distributions will augment this work and through both these programs, staff and volunteers hope to reach 27,000 families.

In addition, Red Cross and Red Crescent teams are



Jakob Dall - Danish Red Cross

Suldana Mohamed has six children and finds it harder and harder to provide them with water and food. Three of the children are not yet in school, where they would receive one meal a day. More children are starting to drop out of school even though that is where they are fed, because they no longer have the strength.

distributing seeds, farming tools, irrigation pumps and fishing equipment to help restore livelihoods.

In Kenya and Ethiopia, the American Red Cross is supporting the Kenyan Red Cross and the Ethiopian Red Cross in its plans to assist those affected through school feeding programs, well rehabilitation, water trucking and food distribution.

Looking Ahead

With conditions unlikely to improve until early 2012, the needs will be great as humanitarian aid organizations work steadily to reach those in desperate need. The American Red Cross will continue to monitor the situation and provide additional assistance as necessary.

Life in the Desert

Muhammad Emil is 80 years old and has lived his entire life in Barmil, Kenya. One of the city's most respected pastors, he has accomplished great success in his lifetime. At one point he had 500 goats, 100 camels and 80 cows – today he has 14 goats, 20 camels and no cows. Little by little this livestock, crops and beautiful community have been consumed by drought.



“Some years ago I had a large piece of land on the outskirts of town where I grew corn and beans, but now the earth is barren and no longer can grow. It has not rained for four years and the trees have completely disappeared.” says Emil.

Today he joins a long line of his countrymen waiting patiently for water from a Red Cross water truck.

THE SUPPORT OF DONORS

At this time, the American Red Cross can accept donations designated to the Horn of Africa Drought, however we encourage donors to consider a gift to support American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Donors can help people affected by disasters like floods, fires, tornadoes and hurricanes, as well as countless crises at home and around the world, by making a donation to support American Red Cross Disaster Relief. Gifts enable the Red Cross to prepare for and provide shelter, food, emotional support and other assistance in response to disasters. Donations can be sent to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013, made by phone at 1-800-REDCROSS or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish) or online via a secure connection at redcross.org.

To learn more about the work of the American Red Cross in the U.S. and around the world, please visit redcross.org.