

Final wake-up call to prevent famine in Somalia



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BY [ISLAMIC RELIEF](#)

The new food security analysis from Somalia must be the final wake up call to the international community to act now and stop Somalia falling into famine. Hundreds of thousands of lives are at risk unless more aid urgently reaches people on the ground, Islamic Relief is warning.

With the analysis showing that people are already starving and that famine is likely to be just weeks away in some parts of the country, waiting until a formal famine declaration would be a shameful delay. More than 260,000 people died in the 2011 famine in the region, and about half of them had already died by the time the crisis was officially declared a famine.

Four consecutive failed rainy seasons – the region’s worst drought in 40 years – has wiped out crops and cattle and forced more than 1 million Somalis from their homes in a desperate search for food and water. 66% of those fleeing are children. Yet the international response has been, and still is, far too slow. The next rainy season is also predicted to be poor.

“There is a clear choice – act now to get more aid on the ground and save lives, or many people will die. Today’s stark figures must galvanise donors into action. Without an urgent scale up of aid, hundreds of thousands of lives are at risk.

“The world must not wait for famine to be declared, we must do everything we can to prevent it. Aid workers and families in Somalia already know that people are starving, with children and the elderly facing particularly acute pain and suffering. In just one camp in Baidoa people say that more than 300 children have died in the last three months. Islamic Relief aid workers have met families walking for days in scorching heat to reach the camps in the hope of receiving life-saving aid – yet when they arrive there is simply not

enough food to go round and diseases are rife. Children and elderly people have died from hunger and thirst on the journey, while women and girls are at risk of attack while walking miles alone.

“Right now we are seeing unprecedented climate-related disasters all over the world. From the worst floods in living memory in Pakistan to the worst drought in decades in Somalia, it is often the people who contribute least to climate change who suffer the gravest consequences. We need real global commitment to tackle the climate crisis and we need it urgently.”

In Somalia, local, national and international humanitarian organisations can and are reaching communities most in need and evidence clearly shows that when livelihoods and livestock are protected people are much less likely to fall into famine’s deadly shadow.

Islamic Relief is on the ground in Somalia – and in other drought-affected parts of the Horn of Africa – and is providing lifesaving food, water, cash and healthcare. So far Islamic Relief has helped more than 167,000 people in the region but is struggling to raise enough funds to scale up the response further as the crisis has received little attention.

Islamic Relief is calling for an immediate increase in humanitarian aid to save lives now. The international community must also support communities to cope with the long-term consequences of the drought on people’s livelihoods and way of life and strengthen communities’ resilience in the face of climate change.

For any questions or to request to interview one of our spokespeople, please contact: · Jonaid Jilani: 07872 403534;

Islamic Relief is a faith-inspired, development and humanitarian agency working to transform and save the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in over 40 countries. Islamic Relief assists people according to need and does not discriminate in any way.

Set up in Birmingham in 1984 by a group of volunteers, we

have assisted over 117 million people all over the world. We're saving lives and empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty in over 40 countries – from Bangladesh to Bosnia, Pakistan to Palestine, Kenya to Kosovo. Islamic Relief is on the ground in some of the world's most dangerous and difficult places – including Syria and Yemen – strengthening the most marginalised communities to withstand conflict and natural disasters and to build a brighter future. We also support vulnerable people in the UK in partnership with local charities and organisations.

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