

DRC assessment shows the rapid deterioration of the protection environment for pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya

The compounded effects of the most severe and prolonged drought on record, skyrocketing food and fuel prices, desert locust infestations and Covid-19 have pushed agro-pastoralist communities past the breaking point.

Overview

While drought is not new to the region, the scale and duration of the current episode is unprecedented, and the situation is deteriorating rapidly in Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL). With the fifth consecutive rainy season (September-December) predicted to fail, needs will continue to quickly escalate.



Dead animals as a result of the ongoing drought in Dadaab

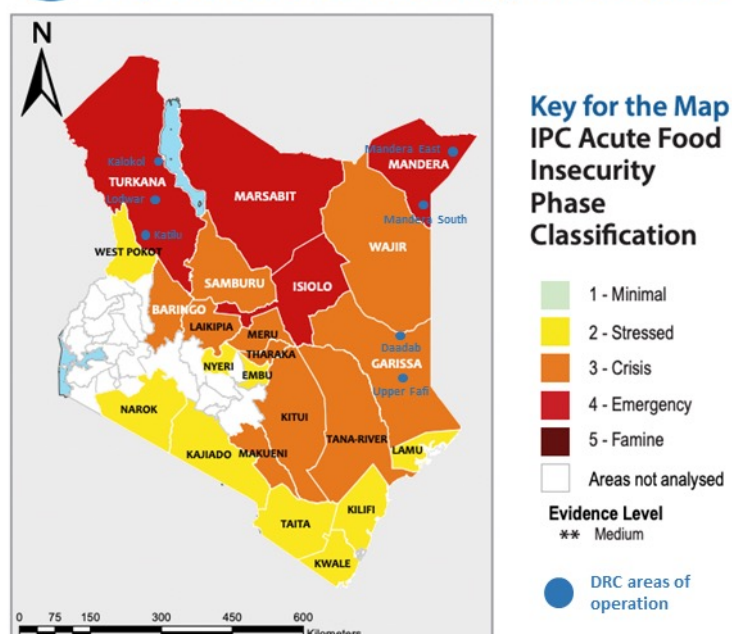
2,100,000 people currently face critical food insecurity across northern pastoral Kenya, including over 1,100,000 in Emergency (IPC4) and some potentially at risk of famine (IPC 5). Malnutrition rates are rising quickly, including an estimated 652,960 children aged 6-59 months and 96,480 pregnant and lactating women require treatment of acute malnutrition (IPC data) leading to dreadful, long-term consequences on their development.

The loss of pasture and water points for livestock have led to the death of over 1,500,000 million cattle in the ASAL. In September alone, over 17,000 livestock died in Mandera county, including cattle, camel, sheep and goats. Increasing deaths of camels and shoats indicate the increasing severity of the drought, as they are the most resilient and are often the last to die.

Livestock are a significant livelihood and nutrition asset for the predominantly pastoralist communities, and critically, fresh milk is a key source of nutrition for children under five.

In order to fully understand the extent of the crisis, DRC conducted a rapid needs assessment in Turkana, Garissa, and Mandera counties, including 258 individual interviews between 12-18 September 2022. Sixty-seven percent of those interviewed were female, and 40% of the entire sample were female-headed households (FHH). Fourteen percent were under the age of 25, and twelve percent were over sixty years of age. DRC also interviewed milk producers and vendors across 12 locations in the 3 counties to understand the barriers to milk production and the milk market – as well as where inputs could help stabilise this value chain.

Projected Acute Food Insecurity: Oct - Dec 2022

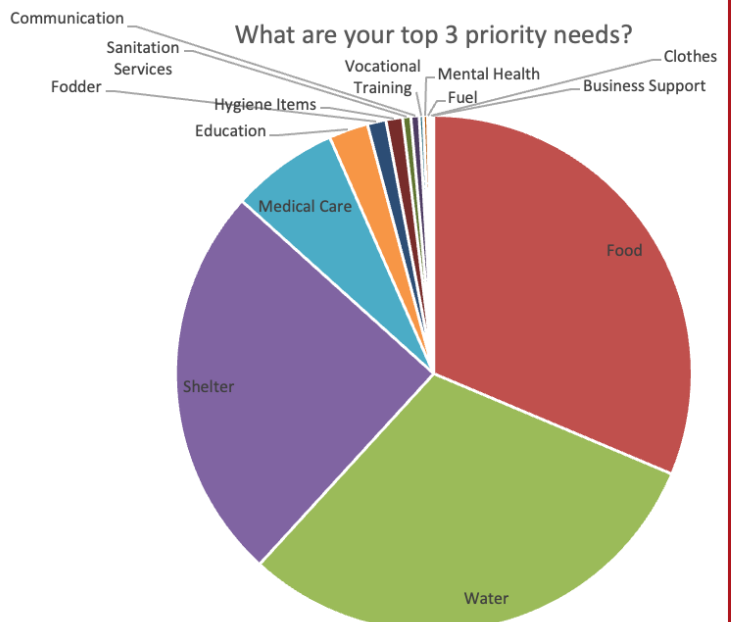


Key Findings

- **94 percent of respondents reported that they would not be able to meet basic needs in the coming month.** This included all demographics and locations.
- **43 percent** reported that one or more **children** in their household was suffering from **acute malnutrition**, based on self-assessment. More than one child in these households was generally reported to be malnourished. **95% of those households who self-reported malnutrition were in Mandera**, however, self-reported malnutrition was present in all of the demographics that DRC spoke with.
- **Food, water and shelter** were consistently cited as priority, with all other needs ranking considerably lower for both men and women.
- **18 percent reported** that there were **separated or unaccompanied children** in the community. It is unknown if this has increased as a result of the drought, however given the increasing displacement and limited community resources, the vulnerability of unaccompanied/separated children are growing.
- **32 percent reported** that a household member **did not have civil documents, including identification or birth certificate and those who lack documentation have increasing vulnerability as a result of the secondary impact of the drought – as they report being unable to access assistance. 26% of those without documentation said this prevented them from accessing NGO assistance, and 84% said that it prevented them from accessing education.**
- **Increased levels of gender-based violence and general insecurity and 82 percent of women stated that they feel unsafe in their communities.** They cited behavior change linked to the drought, including having to travel further for water (with 71% of women surveyed responsible for water collection in their

household), and increased violence in their communities. Men (11% felt unsafe) were primarily concerned with threats of violence, conflict, arrest/detention and robberies – whereas women were concerned about gender-based violence. **85 percent of women said that it was not safe to fetch drinking water** due to risks of violence, particularly gender-based violence.

- The majority of respondents reported that their **household did not have enough water to meet basic needs.** 88% reported that they did not have enough water for drinking in the last 30 days, 87% reported not enough water for cooking, 15% not enough for livestock, and 35% not enough for hygiene. The main sources of water were unprotected wells and surface water. 35% reported that the water was not safe to drink. Common strategies for making water safe were boiling and decantation and using local medicine/herbs.



Protection

The acute food insecurity and destruction of livelihoods have led to a range of negative coping strategies being deployed, including displacement **early marriage of girls, survival sex removal of children from school, and engagement in or illegal activities and increased protection risks, in particular gender-based violence.**

- **85 percent of women said that it was not safe to fetch drinking water** due to risks of violence, particularly gender-based violence. 63 percent collected water on foot and 32 percent by donkey cart.
- 57 percent of respondents reported that they were aware of **female genital mutilations (FGM)** in their community, and **31 percent reported that they were aware of rates increasing in the last 6 months.**
- **Survival sex** was reported by KIIs in Turkana and Mandera. This has not been seen in previous protection monitoring by DRC and other actors – and is quite rare in Somali communities. It can have lasting impacts due to the cultural stigma associated with it – leading to further marginalisation of those who engage in it.
- **31 percent of boys and 41 percent of girls in interviewed households were not attending school, including 13% of respondents who said they had recently removed their children from school to work.** Children removed from school are more likely to be at risk of child marriage and lose access to a stable nutrition source through school meals.
- **32 percent** reported that a household member **did not have civil documents**, including identification document or a birth certificate. Children were significantly more likely to not have civil documents. Cost was the greatest barrier reported to obtaining documents (70 percent), followed by home births (11 percent), access difficulties (6 percent) and illiteracy (4 percent). **Lack of documentation was a barrier to accessing a range of services and rights**, including education, land, governmental and NGO assistance and healthcare. While documentation issues are not new, **those who lack documentation have increasing vulnerability as a result of the secondary impact of the drought – as they are often unable to access assistance.**
- **Elderly people, Female Headed Households (FHH), unaccompanied children and pregnant/lactating women, and persons with chronic illness** are the most vulnerable in the community.

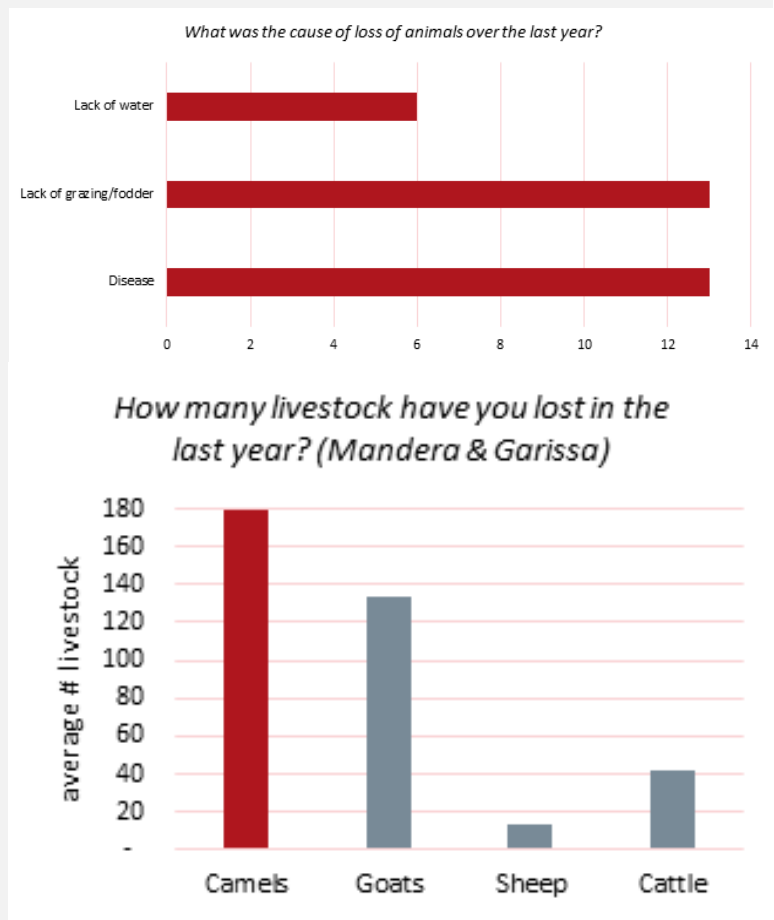


Displacement

Key Informants also reported significant displacement trends. In Kalokol (Turkana), KIIs reported that between 4,800 and 5,000 had displaced within Turkana, and between 3,900 and 5,000 had displaced into the sub-district. Cross-border movements from Somalia, Ethiopia and Uganda were reported by KIIs in Mandera, Garissa and Turkana. UNHCR estimates over 11,000 people have arrived in Garissa County from Somalia due to the drought. Further quantitative data on internal and cross-border displacement is not currently available, and further monitoring of population movements is recommended.

Food Security and Decent Livelihoods

- Findings from both the Rapid Needs Assessment and Dairy Value Chain assessment suggest that pastoralists have lost around **half of their flocks due to the drought**. This is in line with government assessments, including recent indications by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) at the county-level that the number of livestock deaths is likely to triple by the end of the year due to the incredibly weakened state of existing stocks. **Lack of grazing and fodder is a leading cause of livestock death and weakness.**
- Remaining flocks are in a **poor condition and not producing milk** - **68 percent** of respondents reported that their flocks were “**undernourished, unable to produce milk** without access to grazing/fodder”. This is the primary cause of the significant supply chain breaks causing shortages of milk on local markets in drought affected areas. **Almost half of interviewed vendors are not currently selling or buying milk**, due to either the lack of production, or due to the high cost (which means only larger, more centralized traders can buy it) – a figure that reached **88 percent in Turkana**. According to FEWSNET, **Milk consumption is 50-90 percent below the three-year average across pastoral areas.**
- The assessment is in line with data from County Governments and other organizations demonstrating the significant impact on livestock populations. The ASAL region is primarily home to **pastoralists** – whose **main source of income and nutrition is livestock**. These deaths **decimate their livelihoods** – and the **loss of access to milk and meat is leading to malnutrition, particularly amongst children under 5.**
- The average reported household monthly income was KES 3,671 – indicating that the **average household has almost 10x their average monthly income in debt**. As pastoralists, they depend on their livestock for food and income – although many have now turned to daily labor for income. Most have borrowed income from their family (47%) or community (51%) – with communities coming together to support the most vulnerable. However, given the increasingly limited resources of pastoralist communities – this is an extremely limited coping mechanism that cannot continue.



Response Considerations

- Limited Funding and Response Activities:** Only 1 percent of respondents (2 individuals) reported that they had received government support in the last 30 days. 11 percent reported receiving cash assistance from NGOs in the last 6 months. This is in line with DRC’s feedback from communities through DRC’s community feedback mechanism, the majority of whom are receiving no support through the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP), and with even those who are registered not receiving any assistance since June 2022.
- No coordination/missing information on assistance activities:** Respondents did not have consistent information on HSNP registration and distribution within their areas of responsibility. For example, in Mandera East, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Sub-County Representative stated that 2,000 were registered and 1,800 had received assistance, whilst the HSNP Project Manager stated that 151,606 were registered and 22,231 had received transfers in the last 6 months.

Recommendations

To donor communities

- The Kenya drought response is significantly underfunded and only 61 percent of the drought appeal has been funded to date, and the lack of direct funding to NGOs has contributed to a limited humanitarian response in hard-to-reach and marginalised communities where needs are highest. Funding allocations so far have focused primarily on continuing funding to refugees – rather than a prioritized, integrated and targeted approach to needs.
- The protection component of the Kenya drought appeal is only 13 percent funded. However, protection services in drought affected communities are an absolutely essential component of the response and not a luxury. They are often a matter of life and death for women and children.
- Funding allocations and targeting decisions by donors and UN Agencies should be made in close consultation with I/NGOs to ensure adequate focus across all sectors and areas.
- Donors should advocate for improved coordination and information sharing at all levels of the response. Without inclusive prioritisation of needs, funding is not reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized. Lack of coordination and information sharing is leading to a muddled picture of the extent of needs and an inability to highlight the dire situation in some areas.

To local authorities

- Clear information sharing and tracking mechanisms must be put in place between departments, inclusive of humanitarian actors.
- Communication campaigns should be organised to ensure that all people in need have access to the necessary information and services.

To humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors

- Interventions should consider significant linguistic and clan differences in drought-impacted areas – and ensure that conflict sensitivity is a key part of project design to ensure the most marginalized are

reached.

- Age, Gender and Diversity mainstreaming should be an integral part of the response, in particular ensuring access to assistance and protection for UAMs, elderly, female headed households, persons with disabilities, persons with chronic illnesses, and persons living in remote areas with little access to markets.
- Protection interventions should be prioritized for the response and the following programming is recommended:
 - Integrated economic recovery and protection programmes to address negative coping mechanisms and protection risks including GBV, early marriage and survival sex.
 - GBV prevention and child protection.
 - Child protection should include support for UAMs including family tracing and prevention activities for children and youth.
 - Legal aid
 - Support to obtain civil documentation.
 - Awareness raising for parents on child labour risk of GBV (early marriage, FGM, survival sex).
 - Protection monitoring, with a focus on protection risks including security, incidents, GBV, child protection and population movements/displacement patterns.
 - Individual protection assistance and CVA for protection outcomes for persons with specific protection needs.
- Market interventions may be required to facilitate access – including support for transportation to marketplaces and for vendors to maintain stocks, and to address the safety, discrimination and social restrictions impacting access. Given the high number of respondents who cited barriers to market access, an understanding of these barriers – and who is impacted by them – is an essential part of any cash-based programming.

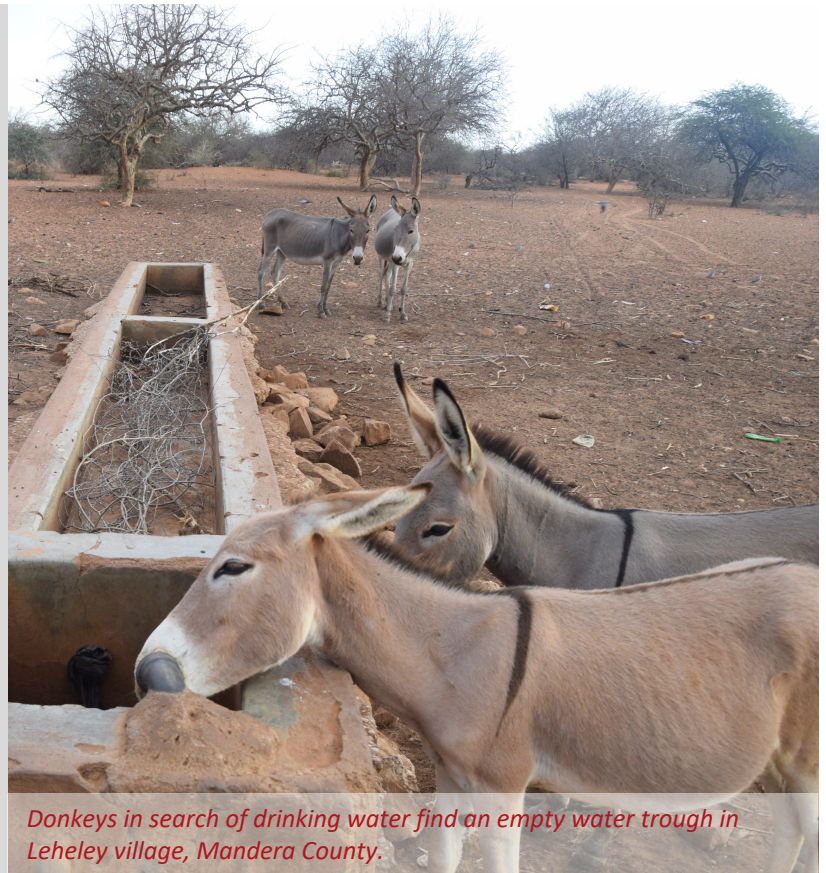
Recommendations

- Beneficiaries receiving MPCA (particularly women) would benefit from financial literacy training re: MPESA, also on debt management and repayment.
- Provision of (cash for) fodder to livestock owners would support the provision of supply to the local market in the medium term. (Cash for) asset replacement would allow livestock owners to restock their herds. Improving access to water will also improve animal condition and milk production. However - these interventions will have a delayed impact - the MPCA transfer value should be increased in the interim to cover the (higher) cost of powdered milk.
- Safe access to water: Safe, accessible water points, are essential to reduce the risks associated with water collection (including the worry cited by many that children would fall in open wells and drown). Cash for water treatment and storage would also reduce risks.
- Cash for Work (CfW) to construct latrines in locations where residents live in temporary shelters and/or hosting drought displaced HHs will reduce the risk of disease outbreak.

DRC Response

DRC has been operational in Kenya since 2005 and is present in Mandera, Garissa (Dadaab & Garissa), Turkana (Kakuma, Kalobeyei & Lodwar) and Nairobi. DRC is a leading protection actor, supporting community-based mechanisms for prevention and response of general protection, gender-based violence and child protection risks across all areas of intervention.

DRC is supporting highly vulnerable households in the ASAL with Multi-Purpose Cash Transfers, prioritising remote and insecure locations which other actors are not able to reach. DRC is additionally rehabilitating strategic boreholes in livestock concentrated areas, as well as supporting livestock vaccination and treatment, to protect pastoralists' livelihoods and improve access to fresh milk during the emergency phase. With additional funding, DRC can scale up to deliver a comprehensive, multi-sector response package in the most drought-affected communities in the region.



Donkeys in search of drinking water find an empty water trough in Leheley village, Mandera County.

For more information, contact:

Simon Nzioka, Country Director, DRC Kenya, Simon.Nzioka@drc.ngo

Brenna Carmody, Head of Programmes, DRC Kenya, Brenna.Carmody@drc.ngo