



## **Families Face Heightened Risk after Evictions and Destruction of IDP Settlements in Mogadishu, Somalia**

**Mogadishu, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

The Somalia NGO Consortium strongly condemns the recent forced evictions and large-scale destruction of settlements for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) that took place on December 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 2017. Over 21 IDP settlements, housing over 5807 households, in Km13 on the outskirts of Mogadishu were destroyed.

Aid organizations and witnesses reportedly observed armed forces arriving early Friday morning with bulldozers and large vehicles, demolishing shelters, schools and other humanitarian assets intended for those recovering from drought and conflict related emergencies. The evictions were done with no prior consultations, and numerous requests by the community for time to collect their belongings and to safely vacate were not granted. Families were not provided with adequate notification and compensation; though viable relocation or local integration options are required by International Law. Under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (Article 11, and general comment 7) evictions require substantive justification, due process and consultations with communities on alternative accommodations prior to evictions taking place.

The destruction has left thousands of already vulnerable populations and their families homeless, without access to health, water, food and community infrastructures such as latrines and schools. The destruction included schools, learning centers and materials—leaving children not only homeless but also with no hope to access any form of education. These communities, who are displaced as a result of drought, are now faced with further vulnerabilities and risks including disease outbreak, exploitation and abuse.

According to OCHA reports, there are at least: 21 internally displaced settlements, 4 emergency schools, 1 Gender based Violence Center, 1 feeding center, 3 community centers, 353 small scale businesses mainly operated by IDP women, 170 emergency latrines, 26 water points, 9 Quranic schools and many critical humanitarian assets that have been destroyed at the hand of unconfirmed government security authorities. These attacks represent potential Human Rights violations, not to mention disregard for domestic laws and policies regarding lawful evictions and the protection of Housing and Property rights.

These forced evictions are also likely to violate the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, also known as 'The Kampala Convention', which was signed by Somalia in 2009 and clearly commits States to 'refrain from, prohibit and prevent arbitrary displacement of populations', as well as 'Respect and ensure respect and protection of the human rights of internally displaced persons, including humane treatment, non-discrimination, equality and equal protection of law'.

The Somalia NGO Consortium is calling upon the government to respond to the ongoing situation, investigate the alleged wrongdoing and wrongdoers, protect the communities impacted and work with landowners and other actors to develop a plan that will promote lawful evictions and protect housing, land and property rights of IDPs. We call on all actors to support the IDPs to relocate voluntarily - with dignity - to places where they feel safe and secure and in a more humane manner. The Somalia NGO Consortium also urges all humanitarian actors to alleviate the suffering of the displaced communities through a multisector

and interagency response. This should be done in a concerted and collective approach inclusive of immediate relief efforts, durable solutions and resilience interventions.

The ongoing drought and conflicts in Somalia continue to displace people. In 2017 alone, over one million people were displaced, living in IDP settlements across the country. As the drought is not over yet, we are likely to see more people moving to IDP settlements in search of life saving humanitarian support. Working closely with the government, our priority should be to ensure that they get the support they need to rebuild their lives and be protected from secondary displacements, including forced evictions. In addition to this, we need to address the underlying factors such as urbanization and limited access to land that have further exacerbated forced evictions in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia.

**ENDS**

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The Somalia NGO Consortium is a network of Local and International NGOs working in Somalia.