

## 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*

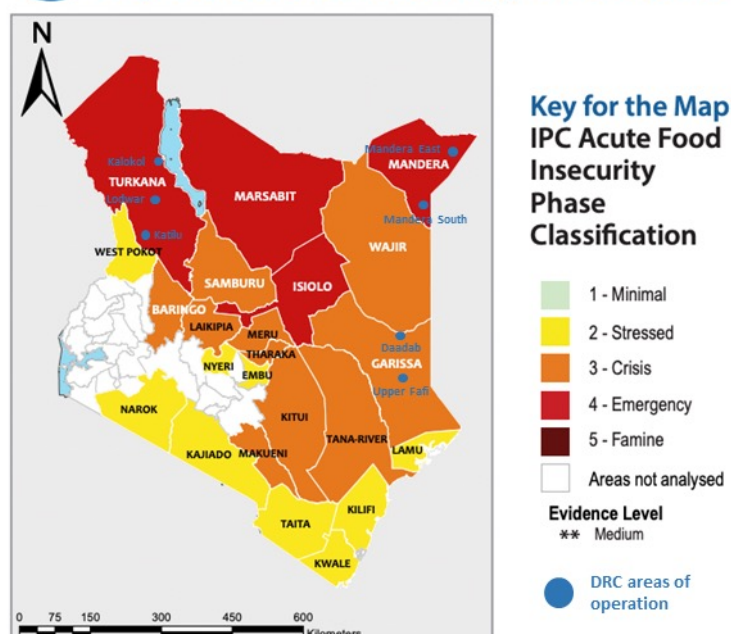
2,100,000 people currently face critical food insecurity across northern pastoral Kenya, including over 1,100,000 in Emergency (IPC4) and some potentially at risk of famine (IPC 5). Malnutrition rates are rising quickly, including an estimated 652,960 children aged 6-59 months and 96,480 pregnant and 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. 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.

## 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.

## Recommendations

### 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.
- 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.

- 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.

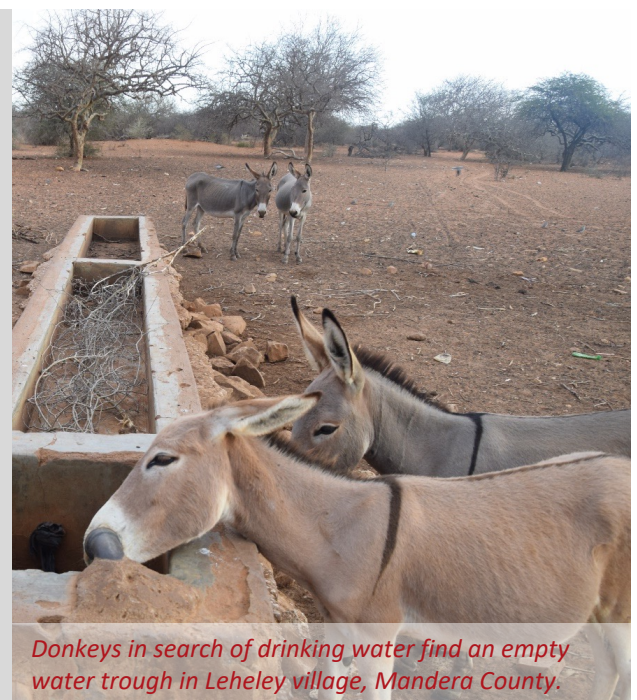
### DRC Response

*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 also providing ongoing WASH, basic needs (MPCA), and early recovery support focused on livestock.*

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