Addressing forced evictions as a key obstacle to achieving durable solutions in Somalia

There are over 2.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia1, the majority of which have settled in IDP sites in urban and peri-urban areas across the country. IDPs are particularly vulnerable and often unable to access and assert their basic rights, due to insecure land tenure arrangements in settlements. Evictions therefore represent a constant risk to these already vulnerable people. Specifically, forced evictions remain a primary cause and a multiplier of the displacement crises affecting Somalia. This is exacerbated by challenges of land and lease documentation, and inequalities in housing standards as compared to host communities, with IDPs primarily residing in precarious makeshift shelters.

Recognizing that obtaining land tenure security is an important step on the path to integration, the Danwadaag Durable Solutions Consortium works at different levels to address these issues. The consortium works with local and federal government authorities to ensure policies are put in place that increase access to land for IDPs, to allocate public land where the most vulnerable can be resettled, to facilitate eviction prevention initiatives, and to address the immediate needs of those who were evicted. The activities include advocating for adequate notice periods, securing occupancy extension, facilitating access to alternative dwelling arrangements, averting imminent eviction threats, and advocating for more inclusive housing, land and property related policies. Danwadaag also works with displacement affected communities to improve their knowledge about their rights and provides legal counselling for housing, land and property-related matters. Finally, private landowners and community leaders are engaged to solve conflicts over land and offered dispute resolution trainings.

Key Impact in Baidoa and Kismayo

In Baidoa, the District Administration issued an Eviction Moratorium, suspending evictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, which was put in place in April 2020, leading to zero evictions recorded since July. The Mayor of Baidoa further issued a warning of legal action for landowners who disobeyed this directive. That these directives were issued, was in large part due to persistent advocacy and engagement by the HLP sub-cluster, Somalia Protection Cluster and Danwadaag.

In Kismayo, Danwadaag also successfully renegotiated for longer-term tenure security arrangements for displacement-affected communities in Hashi and Manamofi camps, providing more than 1,000 individuals with four- and five-year tenure security documentation.

The support of local eviction taskforces in Baidoa and Kismayo has led to increased government engagement in eviction prevention initiatives, establishing the capacity to coordinate eviction prevention effectively.

Caption: IDPs in Barwaqo, © IOM.

Moving forward: bringing displacement and urban agendas together

Moving forward, not only to prevent evictions, it will be essential to ensure synergies between urban and displacement agendas in Somalia, to bring together humanitarian, development and peace building actors to support locally led processes, and linking durable solutions programming to district and municipal development plans. Danwadaag has been supporting a multi stakeholder process to develop a collective roadmap towards a common agenda on urbanization, land and displacement in Somalia and will continue to do so, while working with the federal government to operationalize the National Durable Solutions Strategy to set collective targets and track progress, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals to leave no one behind.
**Case study 1: Eviction Moratorium leading to downward trend of forced evictions in Baidoa, Somalia**

**Downward trends in forced evictions in Baidoa**

Evictions represent a particularly high risk for IDPs living in densely populated areas. The need to address housing, land and property issues, is therefore a critical step towards finding a long-term solution to displacement in Somalia. In this context, Danwadaag has adopted an integrated, inclusive approach towards Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) blending evictions prevention programming and traditional legal aid services to provide comprehensive support. In 2018, Baidoa reported to have prevented 78,000 evictions and an additional 39% decrease in 2019. This was as a result of the increased prevention efforts and the growing involvement of local authorities.

**Moratorium issued to suspend evictions in Baidoa during the Coronavirus pandemic**

The rapid spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) exponentially increased the threat of evictions in Somalia. In response, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), together with the Somalia Protection Cluster; the Baidoa Evictions Task Force, Baidoa Municipality and the South West Commission of Refugees and IDPs (SWCRI), local authorities, and other stakeholders, placed concerted efforts towards preventing forced evictions with the introduction of an eviction moratorium. Incredibly, this was achieved in April 2020 when the Baidoa District Administration issued the official directive to suspend evictions in Baidoa. Linked to this, the Mayor of Baidoa further issued a warning of legal action against landowners disobeying this directive, as a direct consequence from persistent advocacy and engagement of the HLP Working Group and the Somalia Protection Cluster. The moratorium has now been extended until the end of March 2021.

**Value for Money (VfM) analysis – eviction prevention activities in Baidoa**

Local authorities in Baidoa issued a statement letting IDPs residing in eight settlements close to the airport know they would be evicted in a month’s time in March 2020. IDPs from some of the settlements had already relocated before the moratorium came into effect, but more than 640 households from five of these settlements were able to remain after the moratorium came into effect. For 19 other IDP settlements in the vicinity of the airport, hosting approximately 1,400 households, lease agreements were extended in a preventative effort, and for a further 1,150 evictions were prevented. Based on extrapolation of historic data it is likely that the extreme vulnerable among eviction victims, (approximately 37% or 2,550 households), would have needed post-eviction cash assistance (USD 164,854), emergency shelter kits (USD 136,593) and emergency latrines (USD 141,303) as well as tenure security support (USD 11,304). As demonstrated, Danwadaag saved approximately USD 454,054, while the work to safeguard the investments made cannot be underestimated.
Building momentum towards addressing displacement issues in Somalia

Danwadaag’s engagement on the evictions’ moratorium has highlighted that it is essential to address land tenure to resolve displacement in Somalia and prioritise it on the government’s agenda. Regardless, working with the government towards eviction moratoria or better regulations to foster access to land for the most vulnerable, is not enough to reduce displacement-related needs. In recognition of this, Danwadaag takes an integrated HLP approach that includes working with the government to find longer term solutions, such as the Barwaqo relocation site in Baidoa, where 1,000 households were resettled in 2019, and a further 1,009 households will be resettled in February 2021. On a smaller scale, Danwadaag has facilitated the provision of more than 870 land titles for IDP households in different settlements in Baidoa since January 2020, with IDPs purchasing land, and NRC supporting through public notaries and costs for title deeds. Additionally, the programme has achieved impact with medium-term solutions, for example with extension lease agreements for 19 IDP sites, such as in camps Hashi and Manamofi in Kismayo, Jubaland State, where Danwadaag managed to leverage investments in infrastructure on a private land into negotiations over a longer lease period to host IDP families settled there.

Case study 2: Re-negotiating for longer-term tenure security arrangements leveraging infrastructure investments in Hashi and Manamofi Camps, Kismayo

The lack of tenure security has the potential to hinder the impact of long-term humanitarian and development investments in Somalia. With few people having registered ownership or documented land tenure, humanitarian actors may be reluctant to invest in infrastructure such as shelter, schools, hospitals, boreholes, latrines, and markets aimed at supporting displacement affected communities for fear that beneficiaries might be evicted, and investments cannot be safeguarded.

Leveraging investments in infrastructure to negotiate for longer rent-free leases for IDPs

Besides Danwadaag investing in long-term solutions such as the Barwaqo relocation site in South West State, Danwadaag invests in medium-term solutions to address the issue of evictions in Kismayo by negotiating for longer term rent-free leases for IDPs. This is demonstrated by partner NRC’s work in Hashi and Manamofi Camps where investments in infrastructure were leveraged to negotiate for extended tenure security arrangements. Through Danwadaag, investment in Hashi and Manamofi contributes
to increasing the value of the land by providing physical infrastructure inputs and upgrades to the IDP sites, which in return is tied to land tenure. The physical infrastructure negotiated includes the upgrade and rehabilitation of housing and site planning for all 173 households involved, construction of 150 latrines and two shallow wells for domestic use. A bakery in Camp Manamofi is also planned from a different funding stream. With such investments, landowners are more inclined to provide unutilised land for IDPs at no cost. The expansion and the demand for urban businesses and residential construction sites further increases the value of the IDP leasehold land. Lease agreement spanning four and five years were subsequently achieved for Hashi and Manamofi Camps, respectively.

Camp Hashi, home to 78 households, was situated on a government-owned land, while Manamofi is on a private property, home to 95 households. Both informal settlements host a total of 1,038 individuals who lived in the area for over 20 years before being evicted recently. The impact of the incident on the victim families ranged from limited physical security, disruption to established life routines, and breakdown in local networks and social protection mechanisms. Most of the occupants were initially displaced from Gosha, Lower Juba, following the 2016/17 devastating drought that led to widespread insecurity and loss of livelihoods. Irrespective of the substantial humanitarian investments made in the two camps by international aid agencies, the inhabitants were eventually evicted from the only place they had known as home for more than two decades.

Camp Manamofi had a one-year formal written agreement with the landowner, ending in September 2020, and the landowner formally notified the residents of his intention to develop the land. After extended negotiations with the camp leaders, the landlord eventually agreed to extend the lease agreement by ten days, concurrently constituting the notice period. With forced eviction seeming imminent, the Jubaland Evictions Taskforce, chaired by the Jubaland Refugees and IDP Agency (JRIA) and co-chaired by NRC, together with camp elders initiated contact with many landowners within the area in an effort to identify an alternative location for the households to settle. However, securing tenure for IDPs on both government and private owned land proved to be challenging. On government owned land, IDPs can be evicted at any time when the government secures funding to support its own rehabilitation projects. Also, it is often difficult to hold those responsible for violating the evictions guidelines accountable. For private land, it is challenging to verify the ownership of the land, with a high risk of engaging conmen and facing frauds. The majority of private landowners also only agree to short term leases, making it difficult for humanitarian organizations to invest. Through Danwadaag’s active outreach, two landowners were identified who understood the impending risks of evictions IDPs were facing, and they agreed for the households to relocate to their property. For IDPs settling there, an initial three-year occupancy right was agreed, documented through a communal agreement signed by both landlords in the presence of local municipality, and facilitated by NRC. To achieve a longer-term solution for these IDPs, the Evictions Taskforce, co-
chaired by Danwadaag partner NRC, and camp leaders further renegotiated for a five-year tenure agreement with a possibility of extension, leveraging the promise of infrastructure investments in the camps.

**Value for Money (VfM) analysis for interventions in Hashi and Manamofi**

Again, a simple calculation demonstrates the VfM of the interventions leading to this extended land tenure security. Had the households of Hashi and Manamofi sites been evicted, and no alternative land found, they would have been eligible for post-eviction assistance, emergency shelter kits (ESK) and emergency latrine facilities. For the post-eviction assistance, households are usually supported with a minimum package between 150 to 450 USD, depending on the severity of the vulnerability, and funding available. This is used as a relocation package, rent payment, subsistence support, and income source. Additionally, each household would have been paid 150 USD for transportation (from their places of eviction, to their destination), adding up to 25,950 USD. Other complementary interventions to augment evicted households’ immediate needs, such as ESKs and communal latrines, would have cost an estimated 43,330 USD. Combined, these additional cash requirements would have resulted in an overall total cost of 95,230 USD that would have been spent if these households were evicted.

Through these initiatives, Danwadaag avoided disruption to beneficiaries’ ongoing recovery initiatives, making it more meaningful than any post-eviction assistance package, which would have required the families to start from scratch and lose their critical assets in the process. The intervention allowed beneficiaries to dismantle their dwelling structures conveniently, relocate with the materials and use them to erect dwelling structures in the new location.

The Danwadaag Consortium is led by IOM, with partners NRC, Concern Worldwide, and ReDSS. It aims to enhance progress towards durable solutions and (re)integration for targeted displacement affected communities (DAC). The programme uses an adaptive contextualised approach to ensure the specific needs and priorities of DACs underpin programme design, implementation and learning. Danwadaag focuses on long-term solutions to displacement and connects them to urban development processes ensuring sustainability and impact. Danwadaag is area-based, government-led and community driven. Danwadaag is funded by UK Aid.

---

Photo caption: A young child watches a football match next to an IDP camp in Mogadishu, 2013, © Tobin Jones/UN.
DANWADAAG
Towards Durable Solutions to Displacement