



Office of the President

REF: RSL/OP/GA/222/7-853/042022

Date: 06/04/2022

Re: An international appeal for the WAAHEEN Market Fire Disaster Affected populations

The Waaheen market has been rated as one of the most economically vibrant trading centers in Somaliland and has been the seat of all financial exchange transactions in the region. It serves the entire country of Somaliland and most of the neighboring countries.

On 1st April, 2022, an immense fire engulfed the entire market and rendered it into the oblivion. Fortunately, the human casualties consisted 27 burned individuals and no deaths reported. This unprecedented fire disaster affected every family in Hargeisa, directly or indirectly, and thus the **economic and psychological impacts** of the affected populations is undoubtedly enormous. In this regard, we are launching for a **combined US\$2 billion** to urgently deliver humanitarian and livelihood support to an estimated 5,000 small, medium, and large family businesses. Furthermore, it is important to underline that the disaster has triggered an immediate and steep rise of commodity prices and has worsened the already prevailing globally triggered inflation. We need to ramp up our response now to mitigate and protect the lives of the most vulnerable populations; mostly of women and children. We must respond with compassion and solidarity collectively, including a) the donors, b) the private sector c) the Government of Somaliland, d) the Somaliland diaspora and e) the international community.

The envisaged programme includes multipurpose cash assistance for **the most vulnerable group** of the affected population, food assistance, and shelter assistance to rehabilitate damaged buildings. The plan aims to deliver support to the municipal authorities to maintain and establish **six (6) temporary locations** for the affected population to carry on their businesses while the main market (Waaheen) is being re-built and re-introduced.



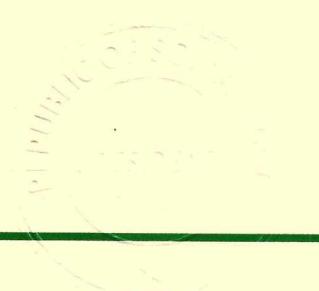
While we have seen tremendous solidarity from neighboring countries and beyond, and the local population, much more support will be needed to assist and prevent any humanitarian disaster. Together and united, we could redress alleviating the suffering of this population. In order to effectively coordinate all inputs (national and international), and to ensure a high level of accountability and transparency, I have designated a high level national committee at the ministerial level augmented by the mayor of Hargeisa, the Governor of the Maroodi-jeeh region assisted by highly qualified emergency experts.

This is an emergency of a high-level magnitude and **time is of essence**. We are appealing for all the international communities and friends of Somaliland to effect an immediate resource mobilization supplemented by technical expertise as deemed essential. In close coordination with all the public institutions, the private sector and the Somaliland diaspora, and the international community we are committed not to leave any stone unturned. An integrated plan for the envisaged humanitarian, rehabilitation and livelihood interventions will be molded comprehensively and it will be carried out in phases and based on a vulnerability criteria.

Yours Sincerely,



**Muse Bihi Abdi;
President;
Republic of Somaliland**



Annex 1: Preliminary Report on the fire devastated Waaheen Market in Hargeysa
National Relief and Support Committee to the Victims of Waaheen Market
Progress report as of 6 April 2022

Overview:

Waaheen, Somaliland's largest business market, one of the largest in the Horn of Africa, and the booming commercial hub of Hargeysa City, is now destroyed after a major fire broke out at 8:10pm Friday night, April 1st, 2022, and raged through Saturday morning until the fire was contained and extinguished. Waaheen market served the entire region of Horn as a distribution centre and business facilitator. A preliminary estimation of fire losses is calculated to be between 1.5 billion- \$2 billion. The effects of this fire amplified by the fact that Waaheen market was the economic centre of the city with over five thousand family businesses, stores, shops, and stalls, all serving as a lifeline for tens and thousands of Somaliland residents as well as communities beyond the territories including the Eastern regions of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the devastating destruction of Waaheen is a major loss as the market was a significant source of revenue for the Municipality of Hargeysa and the Somaliland government. Somaliland's Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture estimate that the market accounted for 40% to 50% of the city's economy. Unfortunately, this catastrophic fire, the first of its kind in Somaliland, for which its exact cause is still under investigation, destroyed billions of dollars' worth of businesses and injured 27 people (18 men; 9 women).

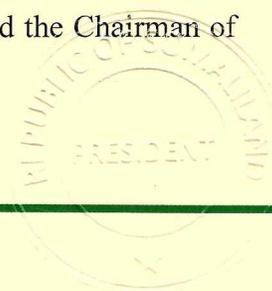
The president of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi, on visiting the fire swept Waaheen Market praised Somaliland's Fire Brigade, Hargeysa residents, Municipal Council, Water Truckers, and the Troops who took part in the efforts to douse the flames that tore through the market Friday night. The President also thanked the heads of state and governments, and international community leaders, who had expressed their sympathy with the people of Somaliland during this most difficult time.

Response from International Community:

The devastating fire that destroyed Waaheen Market has caught the attention of the international community around the world. The people of Somaliland have received heartfelt sympathies and support from communities across the globe. The International Community is working with Somaliland government in mobilising resources for both short and medium-term support and already have met the National Response Committee. It is expected to have further bilateral discussion on how to utilize these resources in the coming two days.

Relief Efforts so far delivered:

On April 2, 2022, H.E. President Muse Behi Abdi, established a high-level National Relief and Support committee to the Victims of Waaheen Market to lead the fire relief efforts, operations to rebuild the market to support quick economic recovery. The Ministerial-Level Committee is augmented by the Mayor of Hargeysa, the Marodijeh's Regional Governor and the Chairman of



the Chamber of Commerce and is assisted by highly qualified emergency experts. The main aim of the committee is to utilize effective response mechanisms to the emergency and support the country in the recovery process. The committee is endowed with the responsibility of rebuilding physically the market and restarting the economy of the country via direct livelihood support to the victims of the fire.

This preliminary assessment on Waaheen Market by the Committee has found that:

1. The outraging fire that broke out at 8:10pm, on the Friday, April 1st is now entirely put out; an investigation team led by the national security offices is immediately put in place and, the team is investigating and analysing the cause of the fire. The investigation report is expected to be submitted to the media in the next few days.
2. According to initial estimates, the disastrous Waaheen Market fire has resulted in the loss of an estimated **\$2 billion** worth of assets and property, which makes almost 60% of the country's GDP;
3. There is a need to immediately build six temporary sites strategically located in the city to restart informal and micro-business activities for vulnerable groups.
4. There is a need to support with financial injection and recompensing for all affected businesses, but there is an urgent need to start with the very low-income business owners in the informal business which are mainly led by women who support their family through these trades.
5. There is budget-support need for the municipality of Hargeysa, as it has lost 40% of daily income (tax and licences) and 20% for the national revenue, as the disaster has interrupted the tax collection.
6. Many people had strong emotional and physical reaction following the disaster. The level of traumatic effect of the event needs psycho-social support for the people affected, therefore a hybrid system of traditional and medical counselling is required.
7. Handling the burned hazardous materials (e.g. plastics, chemicals or fuel) within the market needs quick cleaning and special attention should be paid to the environmental impact. The expected raining days may create further problems. Therefore, the need for structural reassessment and site clearance, with special attention on environmental impact should be given priority.

To immediately support those effected by the fire, the Committee has so far:

1. Appointed a subcommittee, comprised of members of the business and religious community, to assist the National Response Committee in the relief operations and fundraising from the community.
2. Opened official bank accounts specified by donation type. Accordingly, any donations coming from the people of Somaliland and individual support from friends of Somaliland, both at home and abroad will be sent to the bank accounts managed by the above-mentioned subcommittee. While, all donations coming from states, Islamic organizations, UN, EU and INGOs will be sent to the bank account (Account No. 1830 US Dollar Account) managed by the National Relief and Support to the Victims of Waaheen Market.

3. Designated the Hargeysa Local Government to open access to Waaheen Market and manage all cleaning efforts. Two major accesses have been opened and cleared. Waaheen Market business owners are advised to take any remains of their property in two days.
4. With the Municipality of Hargeysa, the committee identified six temporary sites strategically located in the city to restart informal and micro-business activities for vulnerable groups.
5. With the Municipality of Hargeysa, listed all the impacted traders and further identified those highly impacted by the accident and disrupted to them a daily income. The committee also put in consideration the indirect impact on the families affected by the fire.

Moving Forward: Action and Response Plan:

The National Support Committee for the Victims of Waaheen Market plans to immediately implement the urgent needs as listed in the next paragraph, and now is conducting a more thorough assessment of which the results will be drafted within the next ten days. The assessment will include the comprehensive analysis of the loss and present the consequences of the Waaheen Market fire in mid and short term. The final report will discuss, among the others, the:

- Magnitude of the damage in natural numbers, i.e., number of deaths and injuries, destroyed buildings, vehicles, businesses, money in cash, material, equipment, and tools.
- Full registration and details of each business impacted, and the people involved, including the staff of the business to have an estimation of the indirect impact of the fire.
- Accurate damage in monetary value estimated through standard method, instead of guess-based estimation. The first estimation is about \$2 Billion.
- Economic impact of the disaster, which is the estimated to-be a loss of profit, income, jobs during the years to come.
- Environmental impact assessment and its consequences in the long term on health.
- Re-planning and reconstruction of infrastructure of the market by rebuilding a state-of-the art secure market in the city while revising the security of all existing other markets in the country.

From that assessment, the Committee will develop a strategic master plan based on the findings reflecting the reality on the ground to proceed from the calamitous ramifications of the Waaheen Market fire.

Immediately intervention and time plan:

The following immediate needs are to be met, and cost-evaluated:

No.	Item	Starting date	End date	Estimated costs
1	Need for technical support in all phases of the recovery plan, including data collection for evaluation of the damage, multifaceted effects of the accident, value/cost estimation of the loss, redesign and rebuild of infrastructure, setting a security structure for existing markets, and building marketplaces, etc.	08/4/2022	-	-

2	Converting (building, alterations, rehabilitating, or restructuring) six premises as per alternative temporary market sites, including shelter, and basic services. The six sites are strategically located in the city to restart informal and micro-business activities for vulnerable groups.	08/4/2022	20/4/2022	\$ 1,262,000 (paid by the Somaliland Government)
3	Demolition and site clearance of fire damaged property including the immediate removal of burned hazardous material.	10/4/2022	25/4/2022	\$ 450,000(paid by the Somaliland Government)
4	Direct support immediately in the form of finance injection to small business for vulnerable people. This is only for immediate restart for low-income businesses. The full assessment will include the re-compensating plan of all impacted businesses.	10/4/2022	25/4/2022	\$ 15,000,000
5	Institutional budget support to the municipality because of disrupted daily tax-collection.	immediately	for the first six months	\$ 6,000,000
6	A detailed proper assessment based on registration of all impacted people and their loss, of the overall impact to determine the exact of the loses. From this a masterplan of intervention will be produced.	03/4/2022	15/4/2022	\$145,000