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AFRICA/SOMALIA - A quarter of the Somali population is displaced according to a report of Caritas Somalia

ìMogadishu (Fides Service) - "In south-central Somalia the primary need is the immediate access to food. People affected by drought are in urgent need of drinking water, sanitation, health care, protection, shelter and livelihood", said the first Situation report sent to Fides by Caritas Somalia. "The World Food Programme (WFP) and a number of humanitarian agencies were expelled from most of central and southern Somalia in the past two years. This has left a huge emptiness in terms of food provision ", recalls Caritas Somalia.
According to the Catholic organization "the Shabab are allowing various NGOs to provide humanitarian assistance in some of the areas under its control in south-central Somalia. Three of these organizations include ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), Kuwait Direct Aid and Muslim Aid".
The report describes a very dramatic humanitarian situation: "The search for food and service has resulted in a massive displacement of population, with the migration of farmers and poor peasants, both in south-central Somalia and in Kenya and Ethiopia. A quarter of the population in Somalia is displaced, travelling great distances on foot, by mule or by using their last savings to get a ride on overcrowded trucks. Families fleeing the drought-affected areas are forced to abandon the elderly, the sick, the weakest children and pregnant women. They often have to leave behind the bodies of their loved ones down the road. Those who fail to reach their destination, arrive in appalling conditions: exhausted, malnourished, and stricken with diseases such as malaria and measles. Many of them have been attacked by armed bandits, subjected to all forms of violence and robbed of their meager possessions".
"Given the sensitivities and risks associated with the provision of humanitarian assistance in Somalia" - says the statement-the communications concerning the program interventions should be kept to a minimum". "Caritas Somalia is currently supporting local partners to assist displaced families in major cities, by sending food, medicine, tents and therapeutic food".
Caritas Somalia is coordinating the aid coming from all Caritas' in the world, and from other organizations to help the populations in Somalia and the displaced Somalis in Kenya and Ethiopia. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 08/01/2011)

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