



AFRICA/SOMALIA - Alarm on behalf of Caritas Somalia: a new wave of drought in the Horn of Africa and a large influx of displaced persons from Afgoye Corridor are feared

Mogadishu (Agenzia Fides) - According to climate scientists, there is a high probability of drought returning to the Horn of Africa. This is what the eighth Situational Report of Caritas Somalia says, sent to Fides. The Countries that could be affected are Somalia, Djibouti, northern Kenya and southern/eastern and north eastern Ethiopia. Climatologists from IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) warned NGOs and governments to begin preparing now for a possible new crisis. However, other officials maintain that it is too early to know the conditions of the Gu rains, which fall from April to June, and that are most significant rains to ensure a good harvest.

"At the moment - said the report - all areas of Somalia are no longer in a situation of famine, thanks to the improved 'Deyr crops' (the rains that fall from October to November). There are still emergency areas such as river areas of Juba and Middle Shabelle". However, the situation remains precarious and any changes in the levels of humanitarian assistance, increased droughts or military activities can suddenly increase the number of displaced persons. According to Caritas, in February alone 62,000 Somalis were forced to flee, two thirds of which were due to insecurity.

They is fear of a possible large IDP influx from Afgoye corridor due to increased insecurity. Al Shabaab and AMISOM/TFG troops could possibly fight in the corridor which is home to the largest IDP settlement in Somalia. If conflict occurs, more than 270,000 internally displaced people could flee from Afgoye corridor towards the capital.

Caritas network continues to operate both in Somalia and neighboring countries by providing assistance to populations, displaced persons and refugees. His Exc. Mgr. Giorgio Bertin, Bishop of Djibouti and Apostolic Administrator of Mogadishu and President of Caritas Somalia, visited the United States where he met a high-level delegation of the Congress and United Nations representatives. He called for greater political and diplomatic efforts to recreate a State in Somalia in order to achieve lasting peace. Mgr. Bertin then took part in the meeting in Rome on the emergency of Caritas International in the Horn of Africa and Nairobi for a meeting of coordination between the Caritas active in the area. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 09/03/2012)