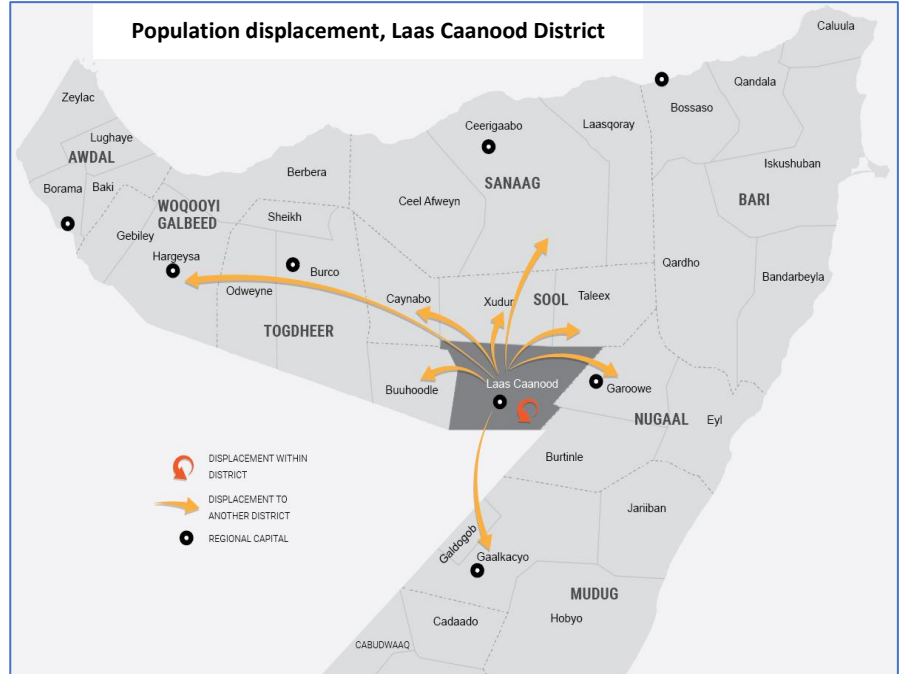


## Key Highlights

- Heavy fighting continued to be reported in Laas Caanood in the disputed Sool Region.
- More than 185,000 people have been displaced from Laas Caanood, according to an inter-agency assessment mission.
- The assessment team identified major gaps in all sectors.
- Authorities in Puntland and Somaliland have called for assistance to be provided to the people affected.
- An inter-cluster response plan for Laas Caanood is being finalized. Partners have reported insufficient resources to respond to the new displacement.



## Situation Overview

An interagency assessment mission conducted by humanitarian partners in Puntland visited villages that are hosting internally displaced people (IDPs) in Boocame, Taleex, Buuhoodle and Xudun Districts in Sool Region from 11 to 13 February. The assessment team reported that more than 185,000 people have been displaced by the fighting in Laas Caanood; an estimated 89 per cent of the IDPs in the assessed areas are women and children.

Many of the IDPs are reportedly sleeping under trees while some are living in schools and other public buildings. At least 33 primary schools and seven secondary schools have been closed, affecting about 11,690 primary and 3,560 primary secondary school students and 700 teachers, according to district authorities.

Officials at the Laas Caanood General Hospital have reported that as of 11 February, 57 deaths and 401 people injured had been recorded at the General Hospital and the three private hospitals treating the injured in Laas Caanood town. On 11 February, a volunteer with the Somali Red Crescent Society was killed in Laas Caanood after he was reportedly hit by a stray bullet.

Government authorities, community/traditional leaders, and the international community have called for a de-escalation of the fighting. On 12 February, Somaliland authorities reiterated their continued commitment to the unconditional, unilateral ceasefire they declared on 10 February.

Authorities in Puntland and Somaliland have called for assistance to be provided to those affected. Humanitarian actors are working closely with government officials to assist displaced people.

Access to Laas Caanood is limited as fighting continues. Authorities and partners in Puntland report that areas that are receiving IDPs, including Taleex, Boocame, Xudun, Kalabeyr, Widhwidh and Buuhoodle, can be accessed from Puntland.

On 12 February, authorities in Somaliland indicated that due to the evolving security situation, humanitarian organizations will be required to inform the National Disaster Response Authorities (NDRA) of the type of assistance they intend to provide, and the areas targeted. The NDRA will then issue a letter to facilitate their programmes in targeted areas.

The current fighting that began on 6 February was reportedly triggered after Dhulbahante clan elders issued a declaration stating that they are no longer part of Somaliland and that Sool, Sanaag and Cayn regions are now governed by the Federal

Government of Somalia. Both Somaliland and Puntland claim Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn (Buuhoodle). Fighting in Laas Caanood in January reportedly resulted in the displacement of about 31,000 people and the death of at least 20 people.

## Humanitarian Needs

The joint inter-agency assessment mission identified major gaps in all sectors, including food, emergency shelter, and non-food items (NFIs), health, nutrition, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

**Food Assistance:** The fighting has disrupted the availability of basic goods and services and access to markets. The IDPs have resorted to one meal a day or borrowing. The assessment team recommended emergency general food distribution, immediate provision of in-kind assistance, and cash in areas where markets are functional such as in Taleex and Xudun.

**Water** scarcity has been reported in all affected areas resulting in excess demand and pressure on available water sources. Approximately 80 per cent of the displaced are reportedly using open defecation and lack water storage facilities. The team recommended urgent water trucking and rehabilitation of boreholes and shallow wells in locations assessed with high potential such as Boocame, Taleex, Widh Widh, Kalabayr and Buuhoodle Districts.

**Shelter and NFIs:** The assessment team recommended the provision of emergency shelter and NFIs to IDPs in public buildings and those staying with host communities. It also recommended multi-purpose cash to cater for rent and NFIs, including portable household solar lamps in the villages with no electricity.

**Health and Nutrition:** The majority of locations assessed reportedly have a health facility but lack medical supplies or services from mobile health teams. Transportation of health and nutrition supplies from Laas Caanood Town remains a challenge due to insecurity. According to the assessment mission, at least 90 per cent of the displaced children under one year old have not received routine immunizations. The team recommended a detailed health and nutrition technical assessment, especially in areas where household interviews showed a prevalence of acute malnutrition in children and the elderly.

**Protection:** Partners reported a high number of people presenting with trauma due to the impact of the fighting and displacement. They noted the high risk of sexual and gender-based violence and recommended psychosocial counseling as well as provision of dignity kits and clothes to women and girls.

**Education:** All education institutions in Laas Caanood are closed. Many schools in other areas of Sool are closed due to the influx of IDPs, with IDPs living in some school buildings. The assessment team recommended the construction of temporary learning centers and distribution of teaching and learning materials.

## Humanitarian Response

Humanitarian partners who were present in Laas Caanood town before the fighting began have continued to provide assistance amid ongoing fighting and insecurity. Partners have reported challenges with accessing stocks located in the affected areas in Laas Caanood.

The inter-cluster coordination group is finalizing a response plan for Laas Caanood in collaboration with partners in Puntland and Somaliland. There are insufficient resources to respond to the needs of the new IDPs.

Since early February, food security partners have provided a one-month emergency food distribution to 33,990 IDPs in 44 settlements in Laas Caanood, Taleex, Xudun and Buhoodle Districts of Sool and Togdheer Regions. Partners report that about 118,000 people are still in need of food and 130,000 people require cash/voucher assistance in these areas.

Protection partners are registering IDPs in Kalabeydh Village in Laas Caanood for first-line emergency protection response through cash assistance to people affected by conflict and survivors of torture.

Since January, health partners have provided emergency medical supplies for an estimated 2,000 people in Sool Region for a period of three months through the Ministry of Health Development. Partners have deployed 20 community-based surveillance teams to support case detection, testing, case management and referral of severe cases to the health facilities in Hudun and Buhoodle Districts, intended to support about 30,000 people for a period of two months.

***The next Flash Update will be issued when more information is available.***

***For more information, please contact:***

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