

# Horn of Africa Flooding and Associated Health Risks

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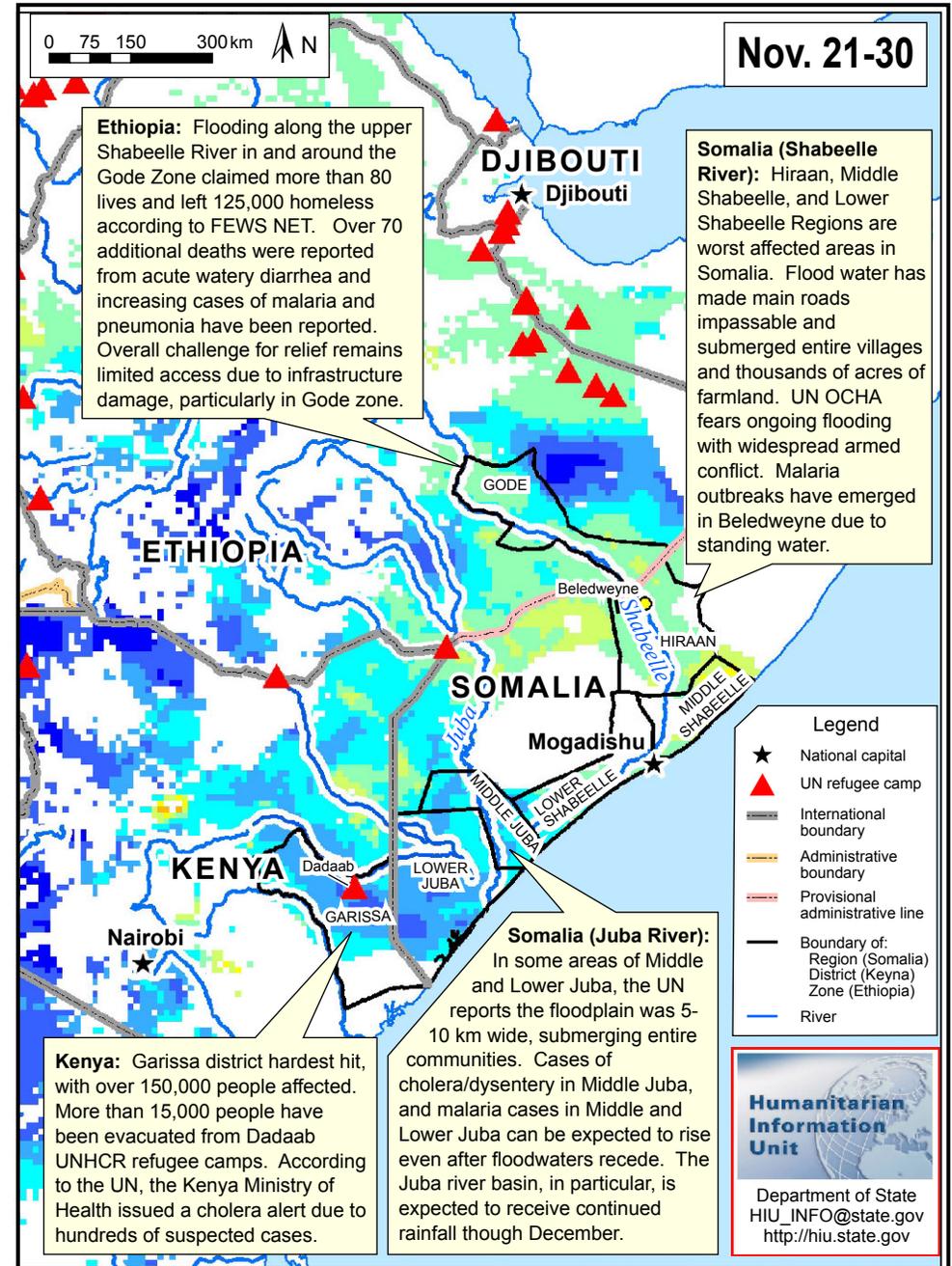
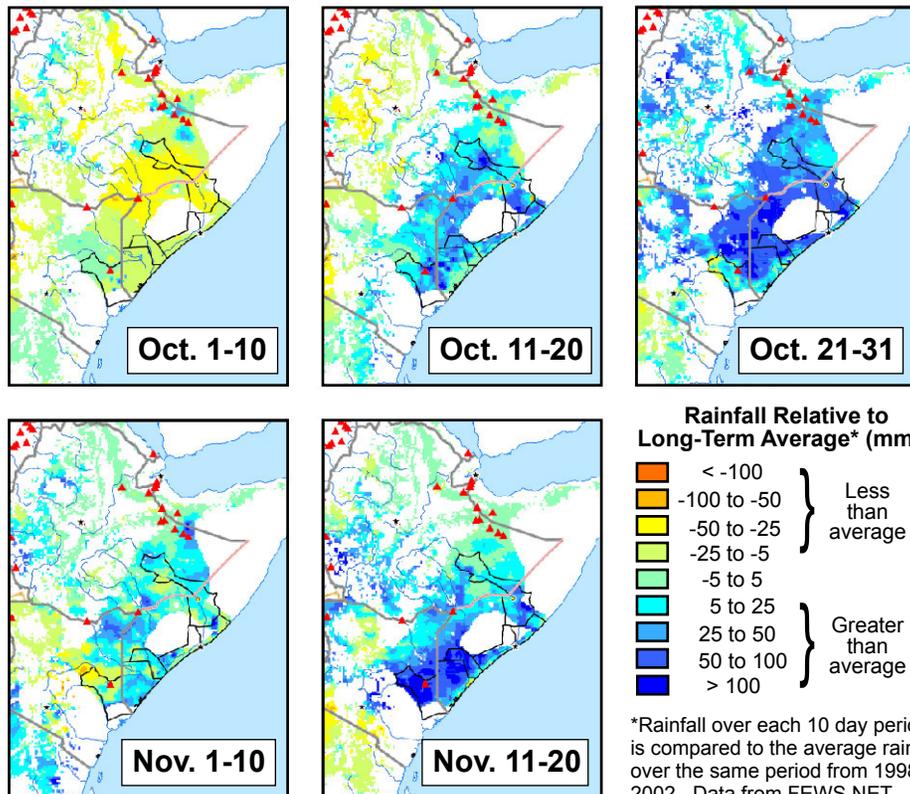
Date: December 8, 2006

**Disaster Summary:** "Deyr" season rains (typically Oct-Dec) began two weeks early, pounding the Horn of Africa (HOA) region, inundating parts of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. Up to 1.8 million people have been affected. The UN estimates the floods could be the worst in 50 years. The greatest obstacle to relief efforts is lack of access to affected populations, due to submerged and damaged roads and damaged bridges.

**Health Concerns:** The risk of cholera is immediate as floods destroy latrines, spread contaminated water, and infect wells. As of November 28, the WHO reports 40,341 cases of acute watery diarrhea in Ethiopia, including 435 deaths. Flooding can saturate typically arid soil, enlarging mosquito breeding grounds, which commonly leads to a spike in malaria infection several weeks later. Outbreaks of livestock disease, as occurred during the floods of 1997/1998, could lead to a ban on cattle export and future economic hardship.

## Rainfall Anomalies in Zones with Malaria Epidemic Potential October 1 - November 30, 2006

Some areas of the HOA, particularly the Shabeelle and Juba river watersheds, received up to six times the long-term average rainfall since late September. These colored maps show rainfall amounts relative to the long-term average. Regions shown in white are areas considered to have no historical malaria threat. Increased rainfall in malaria-prone regions should be a proxy for future malaria outbreaks as standing water forms mosquito breeding grounds.



**Sources:** UNHCR=UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, UN OCHA = United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, FEWS NET=Famine Early Warning Systems Network, WHO=World Health Organization

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Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative