

### Timeline: Crisis in Somalia

- **Feb. 29, 2008:** [Al-Shabaab is designated](#) by the U.S. government as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and a Specially Designated Foreign Terrorist (SDGT). The group establishes itself as the *de facto* government in much of central and southern Somalia.
- **July 2009:** A [diplomatic cable](#) from the U.S. embassy in Nairobi links delays at Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) with the worsening crisis. The cable said, in part, "The continued delay of humanitarian assistance funds is likely to have a devastating and long-lasting impact on humanitarian operations in Somalia..."
- **2009-2011:** U.S. [aid to Somalia drops](#) 88 percent, from \$237 million to \$20 million in the wake of the designation of al-Shabaab. Many U.S. counterterrorism officials feared that aid would leak to the terrorist organization.
- **Jan. 19, 2010:** UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) calls the drought and potential famine in Somalia the "worst humanitarian disaster in the world."
- **April 12, 2010:** [Executive Order 13536](#) declared a national security emergency with respect to Somalia, ordering economic sanctions against al-Shabaab and 11 individuals.
- **August-November 2010:** USAID's Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSnet) [published multiple warnings](#) that rain shortfalls caused by [La Nina](#) could have a negative impact on food security throughout the region of East Africa.
- **July 7, 2011:** In a [joint Congressional hearing](#), U.S. laws cited as a barrier to delivery of humanitarian assistance. A *Huffington Post* [blog by MercyCorps' Jeremy Konyndyk](#) explained how the Treasury and State Depts. showed little interest in pursuing a humanitarian exemption (license) for aid to Somalis.
- **July 20, 2011:** The UN [declared several areas](#) of Somalia to be under a famine. An estimated 2.8 million of those affected lived in the south, much of which was controlled by al-Shabaab.
- **August. 2, 2011:** The U.S. State Dept. [held a briefing](#) to announce that U.S. aid groups will not be prosecuted for delivering humanitarian assistance to areas controlled by al-Shabaab so long as they act in "good faith." Two days later, Treasury Dept. officials [clarified](#) that the exemption applied *only* to aid groups receiving money from USAID.
- **August 3, 2011:** After a [hearing](#), Sen. Leahy (D-VT) [sent a letter](#) to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Attorney General Eric Holder expressing "deep concern that the current interpretation of the law governing material support for terrorism is prohibiting organizations from delivering essential humanitarian relief in the Horn of Africa."

- **November 10, 2011:** Treasury Department's OFAC formally [denies an August 2011 request](#) made by InterAction, an association of over 200 aid and development NGOs, for a "General License" for aid groups to provide assistance to civilians in al-Shabaab controlled areas.
- **February 2012:** The UN [declared the famine over](#), but warned that humanitarian action is needed to forestall further food crisis.
- **June 2012:** The International Rescue Committee (IRC) [estimated](#) that "one child dies every six minutes" in Somalia.
- **July 2012:** [Executive Order 13620](#) adds several criteria for designation, including misappropriation of public assets, acts of violence against Somali civilians, recruiting or using child soldiers or importing or exporting charcoal after Feb. 22, 2012.
- **February 2013:** The [UNHCR reported](#) that one million Somalis remain food insecure, with another 1.7 million in danger of falling back into crisis.
- **April 4, 2013:** President Obama [renews Executive Order](#) declaring a State of Emergency in Somalia with no change in restrictions on humanitarian assistance.
- **April 25, 2013:** The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and The Humanitarian Forum met in Somalia to discuss the humanitarian situation. [Recommendations](#) from the meeting include making humanitarian principles and imperative the basis for aid delivery.
- **May 2, 2013:** [A study released](#) by the UN and USAID found that 258,000 Somalis died as a result of the famine from 2010 to 2012. A majority of the deaths (52 percent) were among children under age five.

For more information about the impact of U.S. on disaster relief or about the work of the Charity & Security Network, contact us at:

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The **Charity & Security Network** was launched in November 2008 by charities, grantmakers and advocacy groups to eliminate barriers counterterrorism measures create for legitimate charitable, development, human rights and conflict resolution work.