

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**2/2/2017**

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## **Severe drought in Kenya and Somalia**

**Minneapolis, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017** – The drought that has been developing in regions of Somalia and Kenya over the last year has reached a stage of extreme concern. The second rainy season, which typically lasts from October to December, began late and ended early in 2016, leaving total rainfall amounts far below average.

“This is a new wave of severe drought. The reports we are getting from our field offices are devastating,” said Mohamed Idris, ARAHA’s Executive Director. In eastern Somalia, the ongoing drought has left families in dire need of water, food, livestock support, and shelter. Half of the local public schools have closed, market sales have fallen, and livestock herds and crops are disease-ridden or failing. Many families have been reduced to eating just one meal a day. More than a thousand families from the *Sool* and *Sanaag* areas have migrated to the west of Somaliland all the way to the *Gabiley* region.

Isiolo County, Kenya, faces a similar situation. Rivers and other surface water sources have dried up. Consequently, water access had decreased—pastoralists in the region are an average distance of 3-6 miles from the nearest water source—and water prices have more than tripled. The drought has caused individual water usage in Isiolo County to fall to 1.8-2.6 gallons per day, far below the recommended daily minimum of 3.9 gallons. (For reference, the average American uses 100 gallons of water per day.)

ARAHA has launched a campaign to support families that are suffering due to this drought. Teams at our Somalia and Kenya field offices are assisting families by providing water, food, and shelter materials. According to our Program Director, “We are able to distribute food baskets and non-food items for hundreds of drought-affected families in Somalia and Kenya. However, the needs are currently far beyond the resources we have.”

We still need donations in order to continue providing immediate relief and aid to victims of this disaster. The Executive Director of ARAHA urged donors to think about these families and support ARAHA’s lifesaving work: “It’s a matter of life and death for these families.”

If you would like more information about ARAHA's current efforts in Somalia and Kenya, please contact Mohamad Sheik-Omer, Program Director (Mohamad@araha.org), or Jen Fannoun, Executive Assistant, (Jen@araha.org). To learn more about our relief campaign, please visit [www.ARAHA.org](http://www.ARAHA.org).

**About ARAHA:**

For over a decade, ARAHA has been delivering the essentials necessary to provide relief to those suffering from drought, disease, hunger, and illiteracy in the Horn of Africa region. ARAHA also helps families break the cycle of poverty by developing opportunities for them to generate an income and educate their children. The American Relief Agency for the Horn of Africa is a registered non-profit 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible. For more information, please visit our website at [www.araha.org](http://www.araha.org).