

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: [Forced Displacement and Food Crises in Central and East Africa](#), HC 873

Tuesday 25 April 2017

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 25 April 2017.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Fiona Bruce; Dr Lisa Cameron; Pauline Latham; Jeremy Lefroy; Mr Ivan Lewis; Paul Scully.

Questions 1-62

Witnesses

[I](#): Moulid Hujale, Humanitarian Journalist.

[II](#): Lucy Hovil, Senior Researcher, International Refugee Rights Initiative (IRRI), and Sanjayan Srikanthan, Vice President, Europe, Deputy Executive Director, International Rescue Committee (IRC).

[III](#): Juliet Parker, Director of Operations, Action Against Hunger UK, and Sarah Pickwick, Senior Conflict Adviser, World Vision.



Examination of witness

Witness: Moulid Hujale.

- Q1 **Chair:** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the final meeting of the International Development Committee of this Parliament. I shall say briefly in the public session what I have just said in the private session: I thank all my Committee colleagues and the Committee staff, but also the many organisations and individuals whose evidence to us enables the Committee to operate effectively, particularly those who have submitted evidence for our work over the past two years.

We were keen as a Committee still to have today's session, because the set of issues that arises from both the food crisis and some of the broader issues in relation to displacement, refugees and IDPs in Africa is so crucial that we did not want them to have to wait until a new Committee is formed after the general election.

We have three panels of witnesses giving evidence between now and 11.30, and I am delighted now to welcome our first witness, Moulid. We have four questions that we want to put to you over the next 25 to 30 minutes. I will also give you a chance, when I have asked the first question, to introduce yourself. Can you describe to us your personal experiences of life in the Dadaab camp?

Moulid Hujale: Thank you very much for inviting me to this important meeting. I am very glad to be part of this inquiry.

To start with, I had very mixed feelings about leaving the Dadaab refugee camp, because when we fled Somalia following the civil war, our family wanted to get to the nearest safe haven, but we thought we would be there temporarily and go back when the war ended, and we ended up staying there forever. Because I was trapped there, I was very disappointed, but then when I looked back at the conflict, the stories and the people still undergoing threats and displacement, I thought, "I would rather stay here." I had those mixed feelings. Growing up there was very difficult, because there was no way out and I had no access to employment and no freedom of movement. There was education and some sense of security, but nothing beyond that. Life is about more than safety; life is about dignity and freedom of movement, and I could not go out—there was no way. All I knew about was the international organisations like the UNHCR and other people; that was my world. I cannot describe the whole experience in just a few words, but that was what life was about in Dadaab.

- Q2 **Chair:** In terms of now and Dadaab today, what would you say about Somali refugees who are still living there? What are the big concerns for them at the moment?

Moulid Hujale: The situation has become very, very bad because of the political situation, because of Kenya's demand to close the camp. It has

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gone from bad to worse because people have no option now—they cannot go back to Somalia, and Kenya does not want them—and the international humanitarian response in terms of the food distribution has been scaled down. So they are in a situation where sometimes some of them are forced to sign up to the repatriation programme to go back, even though they do not want to. In early 2016, I met a woman who was forced to return, and when she went back to Somalia, her home was occupied by other people who were powerful in terms of their tribal affiliation and she could not get back. Her husband tried to demand that and was killed because of that. She was raped and had to come back. When she came back, Kenya said the people who went through the resettlement programme would not be registered, because, “You’re gone now”. So, UNHCR was stuck there. As much as they wanted to register, the Kenyan Government said they had to undergo a fresh refugee status determination. This woman was disappointed and displaced again, a second time.

That is the situation at the moment. The food distribution has gone down by up to 50% in the last couple of years. The security is also not good. When they go back, because of the conditions, they cannot live in Somalia. Again, they end up coming back to the camps. They are in limbo because they are not there legally. That is the kind of situation people are finding themselves in now.

Chair: We will explore that a bit more now.

- Q3 **Pauline Latham:** Thank you very much for coming. What has been the reaction of the refugees in the camp to the proposed closure and what do you think the risk and challenges are? I know you have touched on some of what has happened, but what do you think the risks and challenges are for those people wanting or having to return to Somalia?

Moulid Hujale: The risk is that they end up in IDP camps in Somalia. When they go back, they are promised reintegration, which is the big thing, in the repatriation programme. Repatriation is one thing, but reintegration is a whole process: after almost a quarter of a century, going back to a new place where you have no livelihood, nothing. Because they cannot find the lives they are looking forward to, the risk is that they end up in an IDP camp. The situation in IDP camps is very bad, even much worse than in Dadaab because there are some health facilities in Dadaab. That is one of the risks.

The other risk is that they decide again to come back to Dadaab. They have to walk sometimes, and some of them, when they come again, do not find the support they need. They are also stopped at the border. Because of the famine and the drought, it is going from bad to bad, because the situation in Somalia is not better.

- Q4 **Pauline Latham:** What you are saying is that there is not really a realistic opportunity to go back?

Moulid Hujale: It is not really realistic. When you talk to the people, they tell you, “Of course we want to go back to our country”, because they

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don't want to live in the camp all the time, for all their lives. But it is not the right time. They want to go when the situation is right and when they know they can.

A few of them have connections and their houses and livelihoods are still intact, and they have some support from the diaspora and family and relatives. When they go back, they start re-establishing their lives through their own connections, not through the reintegration support they are promised, because that is never enough and it is not realistic. Those people can re-establish their lives, but the majority cannot.

Q5 **Pauline Latham:** So just a few can survive when they get back? The people in the IDP camps are in a much worse situation than those in Dadaab?

Moulid Hujale: Yes, much, much worse.

Q6 **Pauline Latham:** Is there any education there?

Moulid Hujale: There is no education. They live in tents. They are overcrowded. The health and sanitation are very poor. Again, the security situation is very bad, because they are exposed to rape and exploitation. There is not enough food. They are separated from the main cities.

Q7 **Pauline Latham:** Do they get any aid from other countries like Great Britain, or anywhere else, into the IDP camps?

Moulid Hujale: There are international and local organisations supported by donors like Britain and DFID. They support them, but the support they give is not enough. It is not enough and because these people came from camps, they did not want to go to camps. So these organisations feel like they are supporting, but they do not see that these people are not getting what they want. You cannot just say, "I am supporting you"; this is not what you are looking forward to. Now you are in your home country, you do not want to live in the same situation, where you are in a camp. Yes, there are people supporting them, but it is not enough and it is not what they want.

Q8 **Paul Scully:** It is fantastic that you are here. Thank you very much. Are refugees returning to Somalia voluntarily, or are they being coerced, do you believe?

Moulid Hujale: This is the complexity of part of it. It is called "voluntary", so yes, they are doing so on their own, but the situation and the conditions in Dadaab force them to return: because the Kenyan Government is really pushing them to sign up to the repatriation programme and because, over all of Dadaab, humanitarian support operations are reduced and scaled down.

I remember when I was in Dadaab, we used to go to the camp to get food distribution every two weeks. We used to get wheat flour, oil and a lot of things. But then, over time, the quantity was reduced and also the number of times people go. Now they go only once a month and everything is almost 50% reduced. So because they do not have that and there is this

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campaign of the Somali Government, meeting politicians in Kenya and UNHCR and soliciting funding—they come to the camps and they talk of paradise in Somalia. They talk of programmes put in place. People don't have much information and because of the campaign from the Kenyan Government, Somali politicians who are under the protection of African Union forces and who live better lives come and tell them, "We have this for you." So people, because they do not have enough in Dadaab and Kenya is pushing them—

Also, in terms of security, it is not better. When anything happens, the Kenyan security forces come to the camps and beat people up. Refugees feel, "We don't have any food, we don't have security", and our politicians are telling us there is something in place for them, so they end up "voluntarily"—in that sense—going, because that is the better option for them.

Q9 **Paul Scully:** You do not feel that they are sufficiently informed, is that what you would say? They are not sufficiently informed about the conditions, they are not getting the information.

Moulid Hujale: Yes, the information. The situation in Somalia is very fragile and it changes all the time. What happens is that when, for example, al-Shabaab is pushed out of a town and the Government come in, the information people receive in that town is that it is now under Government control. People feel, "I don't have any good life here so I'd better go back to my town" and they sign up. So in just a few days, al-Shabaab takes over that place and everything is dismantled. The information is not updated, it is not sufficient. People get that, they end up going to that area and they find themselves in a totally different situation.

Q10 **Paul Scully:** What options do you think are available to the inhabitants of Dadaab? Are any of them turning to traffickers to go elsewhere?

Moulid Hujale: Yes, they are. I know a friend—we lived together in the same camp—who is now stuck in Mexico.

Q11 **Paul Scully:** Where?

Moulid Hujale: In Mexico. He allowed himself to be smuggled because he could not go back to Somalia; there is no education and no employment. He went all the way through Brazil and he is now in—I found him on Facebook and his story is also covered in the Canadian broadcast media. He is just one example; there are many others. He came out and spoke about his predicament and his plight, but many of them didn't talk about that because they are still being smuggled.

Q12 **Paul Scully:** Do you get a sense of where they are going, the people who are being trafficked? Is there a particular country?

Moulid Hujale: Many of them come through the Mediterranean sea.

Q13 **Paul Scully:** To Europe?

Moulid Hujale: To Europe, yes. They are among the people who die in the sea.

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No one knows about them because they don't want talk about it, because their families are still in the camp and they don't want to say anything about that until they get to a safe haven. So that's the challenge people are facing.

The other main issue of the whole repatriation programme—the tripartite agreement signed by Kenya, UNHCR and Somalia—is that the refugees are not part of that. They are never given the opportunity to have a say. They have a strong leadership structure within the camp, elected by the refugees. They work voluntarily; they have meetings with the organisations—with UNHCR and with Kenya—but when it comes to signing this agreement that is affecting their lives, they are not part of it.

So what happens? These politicians meet in Nairobi; they sign this agreement and they come back to Dadaab. That is how it is implemented. They say, "Your country is now getting better—just go back." The refugees in Dadaab have different priorities, different needs. There are some who are there for protection—they cannot go back: their houses have been occupied; they are from minority clans and, because of that, even if Somalia is safe, for them, it is not safe.

There are those who are on the resettlement programme and have been going through this resettlement process for 10 years, so they don't want to go back. There are those who have their children in school because there are no functioning schools in Somalia. These different categories and needs are not looked into. This document is signed, and it is being enforced.

Q14 **Fiona Bruce:** Good morning and thank you for coming. You are describing very movingly the challenges of living in Dadaab, the camp. In the past you have described it as the "third largest city in Kenya", where people have, according to what you are saying today, real difficulty living with dignity. Can you give us any other examples of how difficult it is for people to develop businesses, to live dignified lives—the kind of obstacles people face in the camp?

Moulid Hujale: Yes. People are not allowed to move out of the camp and the food they are getting is not enough, so they have started their own businesses within the camp. They get some support from the families who are settled. With that little income, they establish their own businesses. Those businesses flourished. The Government of Kenya benefits from that: they take millions of Kenyan shillings in tax from the people every year. That money never comes back to them in terms of infrastructure. It is not something that is set in a policy where people know how much they have to pay. They just come and take whatever amount they feel like.

These people cannot go to Nairobi or outside the camp to buy something. What they do is send the money through mobile money transfer to Nairobi, and, through agents, they receive this. It much more expensive. If the Kenyan Government—because they are taking the taxes from them—facilitate a safe way for them to go Nairobi where they can get—a few of them got these documents, but now, because of the security

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situation, everything has changed. When they said that the camp was closing, the whole business collapsed because people had no certainty. It is just like Brexit: when Brexit happened, there was no certainty. In the camp, when the Government said, "We are closing", all the businesses they had—even the people in Nairobi with whom they have built relationships, who were sending them goods, said, "You guys are going, so you will go without money". So they ended up having nothing to go. So they have their own businesses, but they are doing it in a very difficult situation.

Q15 **Fiona Bruce:** Right. It is not dignified.

Moulid Hujale: It is not dignified at all.

Q16 **Fiona Bruce:** Thank you. What do you think would be the best alternative to the camp-based solution of helping large groups of displaced people? What suggestions do you have to best help people rebuild and continue their lives?

Moulid Hujale: The people in Dadaab themselves have demonstrated the best way they can be supported. They said, "We want to live in dignity; we want to contribute to society; we are paying taxes." They have their own businesses.

They just want to be given freedom of movement and employment, like the Ugandan policy, for example, where they are given rights to work, so they will never be a burden to Kenya. They are not even a burden at the moment. Kenya says these people are a burden but they still get money from them. Donors support Kenya to help these people.

The best way is to give them employment rights. Last year, I met Abdi Fatah, one of the young business people. He was born there and is now 25. He has his own business and has connections in Nairobi. He even has connections with businesses as far away as Dubai. He brings the stuff there and people use it: furniture for weddings. People come to his business for their weddings and he is making a lot of money and pays tax to the Government.

He told me he has been going to Kenya's Department of Refugee Affairs for months and months to get a document for him to be able to travel to Nairobi and Dubai to purchase his businesses. He said, "I don't even want food. I have my own food. I can give you money but please facilitate for me the way I can do business." People like him, if he is given the freedom of movement and employment, he can help himself and also go back to his country when it is right for him.

The best way is to sit down with people and to categorise them according to their needs. There are people who cannot even work because they are very vulnerable. Some of them have protection. These people can be given resettlement, while those who want to work can be given a work permit.

There are many, many youths—hundreds, thousands of them, I know—who have gone through the Kenyan education system. Some of them have

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qualifications as far as degrees and college but they do not have employment rights. They are just sitting there. There are some, like my friend who is stuck in Mexico: he has got an education but he was never given any rights and he cannot go back to Somalia. That is the challenge.

When I finished high school in one of the camps in Dadaab, I thought I could now work, pay and help my family but, when I went to seek employment rights, I was told, "This education is a privilege that you have got. Don't talk about anything else." I was disappointed. Why was I wasting my time, going through all those years, working hard to ensure that I got an education? It was sad and I ended up working just voluntarily with organisations. I worked all day and was given less than £100—let me say, £50—a month and I worked throughout the month. That is the kind of situation people are still facing.

Q17 **Fiona Bruce:** And your situation was typical of the young people?

Moulid Hujale: Yes, still young people are finding that.

Q18 **Fiona Bruce:** Opportunities are very difficult and limited.

Moulid Hujale: Yes, very limited.

Q19 **Fiona Bruce:** Would you consider that Somali refugees have a voice in deciding their future?

Moulid Hujale: Not really. Is that Somali refugees in Kenya?

Fiona Bruce: Yes.

Moulid Hujale: They don't have one. If they had a voice or if their voice was listened to, they would not find themselves in that situation.

Q20 **Fiona Bruce:** You have no means of expressing your views.

Moulid Hujale: Yes. Meetings are held in Nairobi and people cannot even go out there.

Q21 **Chair:** The Committee recently visited East Africa: Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. I think we would all very much concur with what you have said about Uganda's enlightened approach to refugee issues. Is there one thing you could say that the UK Government could do to make this situation better?

Moulid Hujale: Yes. The UK Government have leverage to talk to Kenya and the UN in Kenya. I would say, let the UK Government advocate for these people and ask the Kenyan Government to live up to its promises of safeguarding these refugees and give them rights. I would say that if the Kenyan Government adopted the Ugandan policy, that would make much difference in terms of security and the development and dignity of these people and getting a durable solution for them. The best thing to do is to adopt the Ugandan refugee policy.

Q22 **Chair:** Before we move on to the second panel, is there anything else that you would like to add?

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Moulid Hujale: I want to take this opportunity to thank the UK Government for helping refugees worldwide, particularly Somalian refugees. I want to thank you on behalf of those refugees for putting all this energy into helping to find a solution for the displaced people. Thank you.

Chair: May I, on behalf of us all, say a big thank you to you for joining us today, for your powerful evidence to us and also for your wider work? On a personal level, I wish you the best of luck for your own future. We are going to move on to the second panel, but please feel free to stay in the public gallery to listen to that evidence. Thank you.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Lucy Hovil and Sanjayan Srikanthan.

Chair: Thank you for joining us. We will go straight into the questions. When you first answer a question, please introduce yourself and your organisation.

Q23 **Mr Lewis:** Thank you for attending the Committee this morning. It is estimated that there are about 63 million currently displaced people in the world, twice as many as in 2007. How do you see displacement in Africa fitting within the bigger global context?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: I am Sanj Srikanthan, deputy executive director of the International Rescue Committee here in the UK. I would like to begin by thanking the Prime Minister for her announcement last week to commit to 0.7% of gross national income to aid at this critical time. It is welcome, and I say—on behalf of the rest of the humanitarian community—that it is essential that DFID continues to play the leading role that it has done.

With respect to your question regarding how the total number of displaced persons relates to conditions specifically in East Africa: we are continuing to see protracted displacement in terms of the Somali refugee population that now numbers some 885,000 in the region. However, we are also—much more quickly—seeing South Sudanese numbers that are almost the same: about 872,000, in the region. Why is this happening? It is a combination of factors. In South Sudan, for example, there have been no failed rains. These sorts of numbers are entirely conflict driven. In Somalia, we are seeing a far more complex situation of continuing impunity of operations for terror groups that are causing instability; lack of foreign troops and declining numbers there, and of course failed rains too. If you combine that with the fact that stable countries like Kenya are likely to see the long rain fail this summer and already have over 3 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, that number could go up to 4 million. We are seeing displaced people and refugees moving to countries or moving internally in places where conditions are already severe, and

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food insecurity is on the rise. It is the worst concentration, and one of the worst examples of the displacement crisis around the world.

Lucy Hovil: I am Lucy Hovil from International Refugee Rights Initiative. Thank you for inviting me. I would like to concur with what has just been said. We have a bit of a perfect storm of new emergencies overlapping with these protracted crises that have never been resolved. The displacement numbers are an indicator of that lack of resolution. Of the three official durable solutions, repatriation is the only one that has been pursued with any seriousness. It has left millions of people in protracted exile for decades. When you add these new emergencies on top of that, you have an incredibly deep crisis that has been allowed to evolve.

Q24 **Mr Lewis:** In terms of conditions facing refugees in Africa: how does that compare with conditions facing refugees in, for example, Europe and the Middle East? How could those conditions be improved, in your view?

Lucy Hovil: I don't like making comparisons—it is hard, and I don't know enough about the Middle East to say—but East Africa probably has some of the poorest refugees and internally displaced persons. They are people who are very invisible; they are not very much on the global public radar. I think there is a real danger that, because the numbers are so high and people are having to move to places with very poor access, the profile of the crisis is poor. Yes, I would say these are the poorest of the poor at the moment.

Sanjayan Srikanthan: I would just say that conditions vary hugely. Uganda, which as we have heard is one of the most progressive countries, has taken 885,000 South Sudanese, 489,000 of them in 2016 alone. For comparison, Europe, which has 16% of the world's GDP, took in 369,000 refugees in total across the continent. Uganda, a much smaller economy, has taken far more as a single country. Only 5.4% of the appeal for its response has been funded, but it is still providing refugees with free healthcare, education, the right to work and a plot of land if they want to farm it, while also supporting its own population in the midst of that. Meanwhile, as we have seen, Kenya has hardened its position in terms of strongly encouraging returns, and we heard from the previous speaker about the impact of that. In doing so, Kenya has cited, for example, the EU-Turkey deal as a precedent for sending refugees back to Somalia.

The huge variation in conditions is a challenge that we need to address. The last time I was in South Sudan, during the previous famine, people in some of the most remote areas—in Ganyiel, for example—were eating water lilies because food was not reaching them. That was partly because the appeal was unfunded, but partly because conflict and insecurity meant that humanitarians were simply not given access. That is our fear now, particularly in southern Somalia as well.

Q25 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Perhaps we could also consider the case of Burundi and Tanzania. When we were in Tanzania last month, we were told that 1,000 refugees a day were coming in from Burundi, and that already there were 250,000 refugees, up from fewer than 100,000 a year ago. Can you

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update us on that situation, if you are aware of it?

Lucy Hovil: Yes. The situation is very severe. We did some research recently to understand the sheer scale and speed of that displacement crisis. The level of violence within Burundi was serious, but it seemed disproportionate to the speed at which displacement took place in many respects. What we found is that a lot of those who are currently displaced and are being displaced had previously been living in Tanzania and had tried to repatriate to Burundi, but that process had fundamentally failed. The situation with Burundi points to many lessons that could be learned about failures around repatriation and, more importantly, reintegration. The way in which these processes tend to operate is very much that people are pushed over a border and maybe given two to three months of rations, and that is it. That was completely inadequate in this context.

This all contributed to the situation that then led to the displacement, or re-displacement, of over 300,000 Burundian refugees. For decades—certainly in the '70s—Tanzania had a very progressive approach to refugee protection under Nyerere. It had a pan-Africanist approach that was very welcoming. People who fled in the '70s were given large plots of land. By the '90s, that hospitality had been seriously degraded, and people were given much smaller amounts of land. It is important to watch what is going on there.

I will say about the Burundi situation that the flipside is a success story. In 2008, the Government of Tanzania offered naturalisation to over 200,000 refugees, all of whom had fled in 1972, not in the '90s. Of those, 162,000 accepted the offer. Although the process got snarled up in realpolitik for a while, it has been a success, because those 162,000 people have not been re-displaced. A durable solution has been found for them. That option around local integration needs to be seriously considered in other situations as well.

Q26 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Do you have up-to-date figures on Burundi? Is it still 1,000 a day, or has the flow slowed considerably?

Lucy Hovil: I am not exactly sure, but I know that, yes, people are still fleeing but people are also returning at the same time. People are making very complex decisions, because the situation in Burundi is very hard to read. It is not a conflict but a political crisis and it is a really complex process for people to understand the level of danger. A lot of the difficulty we found relates to the fact that people moved pre-emptively, particularly those who were caught up in either the 1972 or the 1990s violence. Yes, the numbers are still high and yes, Tanzania has talked about closing its borders. I think the will of the Tanzanian Government has to be supported, without a doubt, because they have shown themselves willing to take in refugees. I think that these camps that have been closed down relatively recently, and that are now being reopened, do not have anything like what is needed to house the people that have come.

Q27 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Nevertheless, I think the fact that Tanzania has been so willing to accommodate such a very large inflow over the past few weeks

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and months is something that we should highlight.

Lucy Hovil: It is, and I think the other thing is to make sure that the promises that were made in 2008 that surrounded that deal, if you like, on naturalisation really come to fruition. The worst thing that can happen is that the international community does not come through on those promises, because that sets a very bad precedent. We said, "You offer citizenship to this group and we will help you with their local integration", but if that does not actually happen in practice, then other states are not going to do it.

Q28 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Is there a food issue there, or is this purely a political crisis?

Lucy Hovil: In Burundi?

Jeremy Lefroy: In Burundi.

Lucy Hovil: There is a terrible food crisis as well. People are starving in Burundi right now and there are very few international actors on the ground.

Q29 **Jeremy Lefroy:** We understood that the UK, the US and possibly one or two others, are the only supporters in that situation, because it is largely under the radar.

Lucy Hovil: It is completely under the radar. I travelled all over the south of the country and did not see one NGO vehicle: there was just no presence of the international community. It is very serious and very forgotten.

Q30 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Thanks for highlighting that. We shall move on to the Somali refugee situation. Do you think enough is being done, either of you, by the Kenyan and Somali Governments, the UNHCR and donors, to mitigate the risk of return?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: When we think about returns, we need to think about four factors. The first is, is it safe to do so? Secondly, and important to highlight, is it dignified? In other words, are they going somewhere where they can have a livelihood and a future and are they properly informed when are they are doing so? We heard from the previous speaker about the challenge of information. First, it is not up to date: despite the best efforts of some of my colleagues at Norwegian Refugee Council and Danish Refugee Council to provide that, the situation is highly fluid and we heard the tragic story of the woman and her husband who returned.

Secondly, the safety aspect is of real concern to us, because the vast majority will be returning to southern Somalia where there is a reduced number of foreign troops and therefore insecurity is on the increase, with terror groups operating. This is combined, of course, with the increasing famine situation in Somalia. If we look at the flipside, and whether we are mitigating these risk factors, at the moment we are strongly encouraging people in Kenya to go to Somalia, which is a double-edged sword. It is

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convenient, politically, to do so, but we need to ask ourselves, morally, if that is the right thing to do, and pragmatically, if it is just going to make the problem more complex.

We have a situation where people go to Somalia, realise there is no sustainable future, there are no livelihoods and no dignity there at all, and then return. Unfortunately, returning refugees no longer have prima facie refugee status if they are Somali in Kenya. That means they need to begin again the process of seeking asylum, which means they do not have access to food distributions and services that they had when they were previously in Kenya. As a result, we are seeing a 40% uptake in healthcare services. We provide 50% of the health services in Dadaab camp and the service demand has increased by 40%; we think largely because of unofficial returns, but also because people are stockpiling. It is completely understandable, if they are sent to Somalia, where there is no healthcare service in many parts of the country, to have basic medicines—paracetamol and things like that—to return with.

My absolute fear is a repetition of the scenes I saw in 2011, with people, women and children, walking down the dusty road—mothers having buried their children en route—returning this summer from Somalia, having been returned, whether voluntary or otherwise, to a situation where they have less access to services than they did in 2011, because they do not have refugee status. One child I saw in 2011 in Dadaab was a toddler who was crying because he was so weak he could not stand and didn't understand why his legs weren't working any more. That scene is in danger of repeating itself if we do not take seriously what returns mean in the midst of a food security crisis, as well as the insecurity in Somalia.

Q31 Jeremy Lefroy: Do you think that UNHCR's involvement in the return programme is consistent with its mandate to provide international protection and seek permanent solutions for refugees?

Lucy Hovil: I would say, not really—but I think the problem is that UNHCR is operating in limited political space. It is a political, not humanitarian, decision, to sign that tripartite agreement. This is not unique; it has happened all over the continent. It has happened with the Rwandan refugees in Uganda and with the Burundian refugees in Tanzania. The problem is that political pressure pushes for what is called voluntary repatriation, but is very rarely purely voluntary on the part of most people. It pushes for this sort of premature process to take place and it is politically expedient, because there is an election coming up in Kenya. UNHCR is obviously somewhat caught, but I think it needs to do all it can to stand up to the Kenyan Government to make sure that it does live up to its mandate. It is very clear in the '51 convention that it has to be voluntary. Without the capacity to provide the support on the other side of the border, it is irresponsible; but, even more to the point, in the medium to long-term it is going to lead to much, much more money that is going to be needed to work with people. Re-displacement is incredibly inefficient for people's coping mechanisms. If things were bad being displaced once, if you are then displaced a second time, each time you are displaced your capacity to cope goes down considerably.

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Q32 **Jeremy Lefroy:** What about donors—are they doing enough to ensure that the returns are **voluntary**?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: First, I think DFID has been singular in its contribution, particularly in Somalia, to the response there. £110 million dispersed is 30% of the total appeal and the total appeal is funded to 46%, so it is a singular contribution. There are donors like DFID who are making really large contributions, but we need to encourage others to step up. I think that's important that DFID, with the Somali conference coming up and the South Sudanese conference in May, does so. In terms of ensuring that returns are voluntary, this is a partnership between donors, NGOs and the UN agencies like UNHCR. UNHCR is responsible for ensuring that returns are voluntary, safe, dignified and so on; but, equally, NGOs have a responsibility to provide the basic humanitarian services and dignity that people deserve, regardless of their status or whether they are asylum seekers or refugees. We need to ensure that we can continue to speak out, both in Kenya and Somalia, regarding the returns process. We have seen just over 20,000 volunteer to return and another 22,000 or so in the system. There are 308,000 Somalis in total in Kenya. What we are concerned about is their future, as well as for those going. We do not want to see a process of coercion, but certainly a process of strong encouragement, which leaves them with little other option—particularly when we see the situation in Somalia this summer evolving for the **worse**.

Q33 **Dr Cameron:** At the World Humanitarian Summit, the UK committed to the "centrality of protection", where protecting civilians from harm is a core objective of humanitarian action. Do you believe that the UK Government are delivering on that commitment in the case of **Somalian refugees in Kenya**?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: It is a very good question, because if we look at the refugee population it is not untypical. The vast majority are women and children. They have more specific needs. They are generally more vulnerable and they are in danger of being forgotten in the wider humanitarian response. Beyond the pure protection needs of safety in camp settings, access to other services, whether food distributions or health care, also increases their vulnerability. Regardless of gender or age, those returning after they have left Kenya will not have refugee status. That might be an easier situation for adult men, but for women and children, to be lumped in that same group reduces their access to all services. There is therefore a risk of that leading to the negative coping mechanisms that we have seen in other crises, such as the breakdown of the family unit, where women and children are not admitted even to camp settings, but live in informal settlements where they are more likely to be exposed to **abuse**.

Furthermore, if they do return to Somalia, as we have heard from the previous speaker, the danger is that they will not be able to return to the homes that they fled all those years ago, because they have been occupied and they do not have the means to reclaim them. We need to

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ensure, therefore, that when we think about livelihood solutions, when we think about cash solutions—such as the hunger safety net programme funded by DFID, which is coming up to its last year and which we hope will be renewed—they focus on women and children.

The way we target them has to be deliberate and ensure that they are included, because they will not be the first to approach an NGO. They often will not be seen unless you choose to see them. This is where we need to ensure, in partnership with DFID, that there is a strong protection focus. I commend the work of the Protracted Crises Hub at DFID, which has been focusing on this in some detail.

Q34 **Dr Cameron:** Should the UK Government be supporting the return programme? What might the most suitable alternatives be, besides repatriation?

Lucy Hovil: I think it comes back to the fact that Dadaab should not exist. The danger is that we are in a situation where we are firefighting. That is understandable and people's lives need to be saved and we have an emergency. But at the same time, we need to understand that decisions that are being made right now have a real impact on the long term.

It comes back to the fact that repatriation is the only one of the three durable solutions that has really been viable. Resettlement numbers are low; they became even lower with President Trump's executive order. Local integration is very unpopular.

I return to my point that I think we need to be far more creative in pushing Governments to look at local integration. In effect, if you have had a Somali population living within your borders for well over a decade, how inefficient to have them living in a camp, where security concerns grow up, and where there are all the different factors that the previous panel spoke to. With all those factors they are incredibly inefficient, not least because they are not rights-respecting of individual refugees. We need to be thinking much more creatively and we need to find ways. This is where the UK Government have a role to play. This needs to be a very political conversation around what it means to host large numbers of refugees and whether there are ways that local integration can operate.

There is a real danger that we focus very much on Dadaab or on the camps, but off the radar, hundreds of thousands of refugees are finding their own durable solutions. They are doing this despite the policy context, not with it. We should realign our thinking from the grassroots up, find out what refugees and host communities want, where they are looking for solutions and how they are managing to survive.

We have heard a lot about Uganda as a success story. I would sound a real word of caution about that. There are factors about what is going on in Uganda that are also concerning. I believe that only about 0.1% of people in the largest camp, Bidi Bidi, have access to land. What they call settlements are still isolated areas of land; they are still de facto camps.

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We have to be very, very careful how we talk about these things. The point is that what we need to do is to build in these longer-term responses. Let us not assume that Somalis will be able to go back to Somalia in the next year, or maybe in the next five years, or maybe in the next 10 years. We do not know that right now. But to keep it open as what has basically been a permanent emergency is only going to be inefficient for everyone in the short and long term.

I return to the point that if we can figure out the coping mechanisms that refugees and host communities already have and are putting into practice on a day to day basis, we will probably find that a lot of the answers are there already.

Q35 **Dr Cameron:** May I quickly go back to your point about very vulnerable people—children, women and possibly disabled refugees? Do you feel that there should be some special provision to ensure their security, given what you said earlier?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: In all crises, there needs to be special provision for women and children in particular. As an agency that focuses particularly on gender-specific issues, that is something that we call for. First, in every humanitarian response, GBV programming is typically underfunded, often because unearmarked funding from donors goes elsewhere. We also need to think about longer-term funding for protection—not for one year, but multi-year—because there is then some predictability for them. There need to be safe spaces for women and we need to think about psycho-social needs for children when we think about education in these situations. In terms of healthcare, we already do a great deal—for example, our field hospital in Hagadera has a special unit to treat malnutrition in children. We already recognise some of these needs, but this needs to be by everyone across all services.

On your previous point, I would also say that, yes, local integration is essential and we need to encourage the Kenyan Government, with support from the UK, to think about a comprehensive refugee response plan that is multi-year in focus and multi-year-funded. Yes, you can say that there is no ideal model—think of the Jordan compact and what is being done there, or Uganda—but we are moving towards a recognition globally that local integration with access to services for refugees is really the durable solution that we all know but have yet to really capitalise on or recognise the benefits of, both for host communities and for refugees.

The second is what the UK can personally do. I really look to the Home Office to think about the numbers we are resettling in the UK. Of course we are not going to solve this crisis through resettlement, but morally we should do more than we are already doing. We resettled just over 5,000 last year, but only 121 were Somalis and 39 were South Sudanese, so the numbers are very small in relation to the crisis. IRC is certainly calling for a proportion, based on GDP and population, of around 15,000 to be resettled a year. That would be a great signal and also a moral argument to use when Kenya cites things like the EU-Turkey deal as a good reason

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why it should not take Somali refugees and in fact should return them. So it is really a multifaceted solution.

The last is probably the hardest. Conflict is driving displacement—it is not just a famine. As we have said, South Sudan does not have a failed rain yet—it is driven by conflict—and yet in the space of a few years the numbers displaced have equalled what Somalia has seen over the last 20 years. We need to see solutions from the international community and the UN Security Council to solve conflict in East Africa, not just in Syria, which of course is equally tragic.

Lucy Hovil: On the issue of vulnerable groups, I think that there is a real danger that a particular group is overlooked: young men. There is a real danger of having a population of young men who are very vulnerable, both to being recruited—whether by al-Shabaab or by other groups—and to smugglers. It is really important that we keep them on our radar.

Q36 **Pauline Latham:** May I ask you, Lucy, to expand slightly on what you were saying about Uganda? When we were there, we were told what a wonderful solution it was—every refugee had a piece of land and they were free to integrate and get on with their lives—but you seemed to say that that was not exactly the case.

Lucy Hovil: I have been working with Sudanese refugees in Uganda since 2000 and I have seen an enormous change. There has been progress, without a doubt, and I do not want to belittle the extraordinary hospitality of the Ugandan Government right now; the speed of displacement and the willingness to accept people has been extraordinary. I do not want to undermine that, but at the same time there is a lot of rhetoric and we need to be very cautious, for two reasons.

First, Uganda is on a positive trajectory with its refugee policy. This is something that civil society has been pushing for years, and there is a very strong empirical basis on which it has happened. The new Alternatives to Camps policy that came out of UNHCR in 2014 related partly to research done in Uganda. So that is all very positive, including the willingness to bring refugees.

The Ugandan Government have certainly caught the vision of aligning services for host and refugee communities, but in practice there is still a bit of a problem. They talk about local integration in the settlement structure, but settlements still remain fundamentally isolated pieces of land that were empty for a very good reason before refugees were put there to live. They still have relatively closed economies. They technically have freedom of movement, but there are prohibitive factors: maybe they cannot afford to get to market, and technically, they are still supposed to get permission from the camp commandant. There are still de facto restrictions on movement.

So it is heading in the right direction, but there is a danger of Uganda suddenly becoming a perfect model, as though you become a supermodel because you are slightly less ugly than everyone else. There is a danger

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that that will have two negative impacts. One is that we will not continue to hold the Government of Uganda accountable for human rights abuses. This is a Government that closed down its university for two months at the end of last year; we must not forget the incredibly tight restrictions on civil society in the country. Secondly, there is a danger that it will lead to the argument, "Everything's okay in Uganda, so it doesn't need that much support." Actually, the situation in West Nile right now is chronic.

To add to that, the area where most of the refugees are coming over the border is itself recovering from conflict. A number of rebel groups were operating there; it is very close to where the Lord's Resistance Army operated, and there were other rebel groups in that region. They are still reintegrating ex-combatants, and are still relatively marginalised and neglected. Within the Ugandan national context, this is a very neglected area. With Uganda, what is absolutely crucial is engaging civil society and local government much more and bringing together the humanitarian and development actors to make sure that this new emergency does not become a festering emergency like the previous Sudan crisis, because of course a lot of those who have just come over the border were living in Uganda for decades before.

Yes, it needs to be nuanced. The problem is that although some robust research has been done in Uganda, it was done in a different camp environment, not up in West Nile, and it was done with UNHCR and the Government, not independently per se. There is a danger of accepting it as gospel when there is much more to the case than that.

Q37 **Pauline Latham:** That is very helpful. Given the impending election, we should not lose sight of it after the election, whoever is on this Committee. Thank you.

My question is about the World Humanitarian Summit, where donors made commitments to support durable solutions for the displaced. Do you think there is evidence that donors are delivering on these commitments for displaced persons in East Africa? What more do you think is needed? Do you feel that the multi-year financing that we have agreed is actually reaching down to the ground?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: I would begin by saying the commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit were the right ones, in terms of multi-year funding. The reality in East Africa today is that it is very much not universally applied on the ground. For example, UNHCR funding for non-governmental organisations responding there to the huge numbers of South Sudanese and others is roughly three months long and must then be renewed. Far from being multi-year, it is barely multi-month, so this is something that needs to be looked at. In places like Dadaab, our funding is also one-year rather than multi-year.

This is a problem because it is hard to plan long-term for durable solutions when you only have single-year funding. Equally, we recognise that, coming out of the World Humanitarian Summit, we have a duty as NGOs implementing to be more transparent and up-front about what we want to

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do. We need to spell out to donors a multi-year vision, which we are keen to do, as well as building adaptability into our programming. For example, in Somalia, we might start out in January saying we are going to do one thing, but we would like to build in the flexibility to move geographically or change sectors depending on need. That sort of partnership is what was hoped for out of the World Humanitarian Summit, and we still would like to see it.

The other side of this is also partnership between Governments and donors by Governments in the region developing comprehensive refugee frameworks, which is what came out of the two meetings in New York last year, all building towards a global compact for refugees, which we are expecting to see now in 2018. DFID has a real opportunity to take leadership in that role. There is an uncertainty around the future of the Solutions Alliance. In that space, DFID, considering its funding commitments and also its investment in resources, the Protracted Crisis Hub, can really help these countries think about multi-year planning for refugee response. That, also, from the policy side needs to be part of the solution. On the funding side, we really need to see that multi-year commitment translate on the ground. Incidentally, in Syria we are already seeing that multi-year commitment, so it is possible, we just need to see it more in East Africa.

Q38 **Pauline Latham:** Do you want to add to that?

Lucy Hovil: No.

Q39 **Pauline Latham:** Do you think there is an over-reliance on repatriation, even when it is not really safe and secure to do so?

Lucy Hovil: Without a doubt. I think this is so much the problem. You would never put refugees into a camp in the first place if you thought they might stay. The entire policy approach to refugees is predicated on repatriation from the day they go into exile. This means that a series of decisions are taken along the way that all point to that end point. However, given the level of crises within the region and these conflicts that seem to either get temporarily resolved or just continue to fester, it is unrealistic. We need to have a massive paradigm shift in our thinking. Yes, we need to do everything we can to bring stability to the region and that should be a top priority, but at the same time, we should not make refugee protection contingent on that happening anytime soon. If we stop thinking in that way, it will make a very big difference to the responses. It will be things such as longer-term funding, it will be bringing those development actors in right from the beginning. It will be all these different aspects and it will be working much more closely with the host communities. This is ultimately how you capitalise on situations where there are low economic resources but high social capital. At the moment, a lot of decisions are being taken that undermine that social capital and exacerbate the low economic situation, rather than the other way around.

Q40 **Pauline Latham:** We touched on the EU-Turkey deal. Would either of you like to expand on that? Do you think there is insufficient support from the

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whole international community to find a long-term sustainable solution for Somalian refugees, who contribute to Kenya's decision to close Dadaab? Do you think the EU-Turkey deal has been helpful or not?

Lucy Hovil: The problem is that refugee protection is basically predicated on burden sharing. The problem is that with the so-called migration crisis in Europe, it slightly blew apart the remnants of the myth of burden sharing. As a result, yes, a lot of money has been given, but at the end of the day, in terms of actually sharing that burden—as was said earlier, in terms of resettlement numbers or other aspects—it really hasn't stood up to scrutiny and I do think that was part of the equation.

The Kenyan Government felt they had the moral high ground in many respects and I do not think the timing of the announcement to close Dadaab was a coincidence. So it is a very complex—again, political—engagement that is going on. I think the numbers in Europe are so small compared with what is going on on the ground, the difference in GDP is so enormous, that it does feel very unfair. Until there is a bit of realignment, that is going to be the case. It has definitely lowered the legitimacy and the negotiating power of a lot of Western Governments.

Sanjayan Srikanthan: It is exactly that. The numbers do not stack up. Europe is hosting 8% of the world's refugees, less developed countries are hosting 84% of the world's refugees by having the misfortune of often neighbouring countries with displaced people. But that is not their problem, they would say. Not when they are seeing things such as the EU-Turkey deal, which is lessening the burden—if you want to call it that—on Europe and sending people back. Their question then is, "Since we are already doing many times more than countries in Europe, why not send refugees back?" That leads to broad changes in the definition of what is a safe country to allow repatriation. That is being done at a unilateral level; whether it is European countries declaring Afghanistan safe or Kenya declaring Somalia safe, it is not the reality on the ground. That is our fear and our problem. I think it is also a cry for help. Let's not view it simply as a morally blackmailing argument from Kenya. It is also about "Why can't we have durable solutions too? What's happening in Jordan and why can't we have the same? What funding and what models can you offer us to create a sustainable solution to help both Kenyans, 3 million of whom now need humanitarian assistance, and refugees?" If we, as a Government and as a country, see it as an opportunity to provide some moral leadership and a voice on this, I think we would be in a strong position to articulate what a modern refugee plan looks like at a country level.

Q41 **Paul Scully:** How much progress, if any, has UNHCR made on alternative solutions, other than those we have talked about in its alternatives to camps? You mentioned it earlier; have you any further thoughts?

Lucy Hovil: At a Geneva level, there is enormous will and desire to implement this and to bring about change. The problem is that it continually gets snarled up in national politics. Obviously, it has to be implemented within a national policy framework and that is where it often falls apart. The problem is that all over the world—this is not unique to

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East Africa—the political space for foreigners to be within a country is contracting daily. This is a very serious problem that stands against the direction of travel, if you like, that has been so beautifully put in some of the international declarations and documents. Again, we need to have a very political discussion about opening up that political space and seeing the advantages of having people from outside in your country in the longer term. That is **crucial**.

Q42 **Paul Scully:** You talked about Uganda at length, which was very useful. What about Kalobeyei camp in Kenya? Do you have any thoughts about that?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: How we organise camps is one thing, alongside the urban problem and the fact that the majority of refugees around the world are in urban settings. Kalobeyei camp is fine in principle, the issue is around funding. Locating all non-Somalis in one place, when the funding for non-Somali refugees, such as the South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan, is critically underfunded, at less than 10%, is an issue, because you have an underfunded camp in an underfunded response and you are concentrating the problem there. Also, it is still part of the same problem: where is the durability of that solution? As I said, South Sudan is driven by political conflict and the crisis and displacement we are seeing, where 10% of the population, nearly a million people, has now fled the country. The nature of political crises, as we knew in the early days of Somalia, is that they are quite open-ended; in many ways more so than famine and drought. Therefore, we need to think about durable solutions in places such as Kalobeyei camp. It is really an opportunity to redo Dadaab in a more effective way: maybe a camp is not the best solution.

Q43 **Chair:** We are about to run out of time but I have a final question for Sanj. You mentioned resettlement in the UK context. Can you say a bit about what the situation now is in the US, with President Trump's approach to these **issues**?

Sanjayan Srikanthan: As you know, Chair, we contribute to a total resettlement of around 85,000 a year—we resettle around 11,000. That number has been halved or more now and we are seeing the residue of last year's commitment now finishing up. There are real concerns about next year, 2018, and what that means. The United States has actually been the leader on resettlement and has operated a process for vetting resettled refugees that is more thorough than any other check done to get any other visa to enter most countries. It has ensured that United States citizens and refugees can live and coexist safely. It has a progressive policy, to which we contribute, to employ refugees within the first 90 days and in 85% of cases, it does. It contributes to the airfare that brought them to the United States and willingly does so to give back to the country that resettled them. It is one of the most successful examples of large-scale resettlement. In fact, I have spoken to local councils and others here in the UK about what we can learn there. We now work in partnership with the German Government to bring some of the lessons from the US context there.

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President Trump's announcement to cut numbers so dramatically is really a blow for that 21.3 million **refugee** population, only a fraction of whom qualify for resettlement, and an even smaller fraction get to go, and that fraction has now got even smaller.

I would say that, when you set that against the contributions of other countries, it is time for Europe to step up, particularly the United Kingdom as a global humanitarian leader, but also as a global leader in resettlement. It is an opportunity waiting for UK leadership, so we hope they will take up the commitment to our target of 15,608 refugees per year.

Chair: Thank you both for your evidence today. We are now moving on to the third panel but feel free to stay. Our third and final panel will focus more on the impact of the food crisis.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Juliet Parker and Sarah Pickwick.

Chair: Welcome, both of you. As per the previous two panels, we will go straight to the questioning, but please introduce yourself when you first answer a question.

Q44 **Fiona Bruce:** Good morning, Ms Parker and Ms Pickwick, and thank you for coming today. To what extent is the current food crisis likely to drive—or is already driving—a new wave of **displacement**?

Sarah Pickwick: Thank you very much for having us. I am Sarah Pickwick, senior conflict adviser at World Vision, UK. I want to congratulate the Committee on having an inquiry on this topic, for the visibility and awareness it gives. Thank you for **that**.

I will start with Somalia. Somalia's existing case load of 1.1 million internally displaced people is obviously well known. We are seeing, yes, that this crisis is driving a new wave of displacement. The number is actually quite staggering because it is more than half a million since November.

We are very much seeing people moving from rural areas into urban settings, mainly because they have maybe lost their livestock and crops and they are going to areas where they can seek aid and assistance. Some will join existing settlements; others have started up new areas on the periphery of towns.

One key thing we are concerned about is that a lot of these people are now sleeping out in the open. They don't have tents and some are under trees. The rainy season will very shortly be upon us and there is the need for shelter and for these people to be given food and different items, because they left their areas with nothing, due to restrictions in transportation.

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The number being as fluid as it is, that was the UN figure that came out on 13 April, I think. I spoke with my Somalia team yesterday who said that that figure of 535,000 on 12 April is now 599,000. The numbers are increasing every day, particularly in Mogadishu and Baidoa in Somalia, where there are very large numbers coming in on a daily basis because of the crisis.

South Sudan is slightly different. Previous speakers alluded to the conflict being the main source of a lot of the issues there. The displacement there is often due to that rather than the food situation but we are seeing people, when asked about why they are leaving, saying that food is also a reason but it might not be the primary reason. It is a factor, but maybe not as prominent as in Somalia. Juliet might like to talk about Nigeria.

Juliet Parker: Talking to our missions in Nigeria and South Sudan, they are not really using the language of a new wave of displacement, but more a recognition that displacement is a factor of an ongoing crisis, both of newly displaced but also re-displacements.

That sits with our analysis that the vast majority of displacements are primarily caused by the conflict, with the food crisis as secondary. We also recognise that it will continue to be unpredictable, so the preparedness for new displacements, in whatever form, is a critical part of managing this crisis.

Q45 **Fiona Bruce:** We heard in the previous evidence session that authorities are struggling with past waves of refugees from civil wars in Central and East Africa. What planning has there been for what you might call a new wave or a continuing wave of further refugees resulting from the current food crisis?

Juliet Parker: On the whole, in South Sudan in particular, there is a lack of capacity of the local authorities to prepare and manage the multiple displacements that are happening. But actually we are finding similar patterns in northern Nigeria as well, where the authorities are just overwhelmed and unable to cope. While they have some capacity in the urban centres, we can't access the rural environment where a lot of this displacement is also happening. So there is a concern about lack of capacity to co-ordinate, lack of capacity of the local authorities to plan, and lack of capacity and resources for them to do it.

Q46 **Fiona Bruce:** What you are saying, Miss Pickwick, is that people are just simply fending for themselves, on the streets?

Sarah Pickwick: Yes, the level of vulnerability is very high. World Vision is a child-focused agency—we are seeing the impact in high levels of malnutrition, particularly for children under five, and that having a really detrimental impact, not just on their status at the moment, but on their lives going forward. That is one of the key aspects we are particularly trying to address.

Q47 **Jeremy Lefroy:** A famine has been declared in Unity state in South Sudan. Could either of you give us an update on that?

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Sarah Pickwick: The famine was a localised declaration in two particular counties in former Unity state. Since then, there has been a massive scale-up of response; the scale-up has also happened in other countries, in Somalia as well. When it comes to South Sudan, our concerns are that often there are many other areas that might not have been declared "in famine", but are on the edge of that and very vulnerable, and that sometimes there are analysis blind spots where we can't get the data and we don't know what is going on. Those are the areas that really need a lot of attention in terms of getting the food supplies in as quickly as we can to try to save as many lives as possible. It is trying to get that balance, but also acknowledging that food insecurity is also creeping into some of the urban areas.

We were particularly worried, when we recently did a study in Juba, to learn that a high proportion of the population—nearly 70% or 80%—were reporting food shortages and insecurities. We were also worried about the particular frustrations we found with youth, who were finding a lack of employment, and men, who were frustrated by their inability to provide for their families. Those growing tensions coming as a result of that lack of food are something we are also concerned about.

- Q48 **Jeremy Lefroy:** We have heard a figure from the DEC on the East Africa appeal that there are about 16 million people on the brink of starvation. The OCHA analysis says that 22.9 million currently face crisis levels of food insecurity. That is quite a substantial difference. Do we have up-to-date data, because data are obviously incredibly important when it comes to finding solutions?

Sarah Pickwick: The figures are changing all the time, and different agencies will use different methodologies to calculate their figures. As far as I understand, at the time of the declaration for the DEC appeal, they used the data that were available for the areas and went with that particular figure. It might not necessarily be the same methodology as OCHA which, by the sound of it, looked at a broader range of vulnerabilities. The key thing is that it shows the vast scale of the numbers now, and also how the situation is getting worse over time. The needs are very much outpacing our ability to respond in a lot of these contexts.

- Q49 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Where are the food supplies coming from that are meeting these needs?

Sarah Pickwick: The food supplies would be coming from a number of sources. For example, World Vision partners with the World Food Programme, so a lot of this would be sub-partners of UN agencies that would be getting money from the international community, or from our own appeals to our supporters in terms of private funding. So there is range of sources. I don't know if it is different for you?

Juliet Parker: No, the same.

- Q50 **Jeremy Lefroy:** In the past, we have heard that the World Food Programme has been doing much more to source food regionally where it is possible, where there is surplus. Are there any surpluses around at the

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moment that they can source within the region, or is it all coming from outside the region?

Juliet Parker: I am afraid that I would not have that information, but I would certainly be able to find it out.

Sarah Pickwick: Yes, we could find that out.

Jeremy Lefroy: It would be very interesting to know, because this has obviously been an extremely important method that they have used to ensure that local food markets are not distorted by large-scale imports.

Q51 **Chair:** In your assessment, where else is it likely that famine might be declared?

Juliet Parker: The next meetings of the IPC workshops for South Sudan and Somalia are at the beginning of May. That is the initial IPC forum, where they will be looking at the assessments and analysis that have come in. It is difficult to speculate before the actual data come in and are looked at, but our expectation is that if there is another area that has fallen into famine, Somalia is potentially the one we would be looking at.

Q52 **Chair:** What is the impact of declaring that something is a famine versus not declaring that something that is clearly a crisis is a famine? What is the difference in terms of the international community's level of response in those two scenarios?

Juliet Parker: The IPC defines a famine on three key indicators. One is food insecurity, one is prevalence of malnutrition and one is mortality rates. There is a categorisation from 1 to 5, with a 4 and a "4!" for being at risk of famine, which is where Somalia is at the moment. There are all sorts of challenges in collecting that data, which of course we recognise—there is lack of access to data, particularly around the mortality indicator. That is the one that is debated a lot by the IPC at the moment, particularly because by the point at which you get mortality data that meets that indicator, you are already in the midst of a famine, so you are already late. By the time a famine is called, we recognise that we are already late, and that is a shame; it is a missed opportunity. Regardless, one of the things we are extremely keen on within Action Against Hunger is that that declaration of famine should be retained by the IPC. It should be evidence-based; it should be based on technical indicators because it is not a term that should be used too freely. It needs to be specifically tied to a set of circumstances. But the reality is that when it does get called, while we recognise that it is too late, it does push it up the public agenda and raises public levels of awareness. We have things like the DEC appeal and changes in donor funding patterns. There is a whole set of different discussions that we can have once that declaration has been made, which unfortunately it can be quite difficult to have beforehand.

Q53 **Chair:** Do you think the system moves too slowly to declare a famine, where there is one?

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Juliet Parker: I think **that** famine is such a loaded word that of course it comes with additional action once you get there. In reality, all of us should be moving more quickly when there is a risk of famine—particularly around El Niño climate patterns, when we know there is a level of predictability and a level of warning that comes with it, and even more so for the La Niña that follows afterwards.

Q54 **Paul Scully:** Action Against **Hunger** refers to the situation in South Sudan as “a preventable hunger catastrophe”. Is that the same in all areas facing the food crisis?

Juliet Parker: Much like my colleague from IRC, our analysis is that these crises are primarily driven by conflict. They are then compounded by drought and poverty, but the key driver is conflict. That means that they are man-made and therefore preventable. Particularly with the issue about early warning and early action, we know that a lot of the analysis after the 2011 drought said that if we want to prevent this happening again we need sustained investment over a period of time—and yet the response plans were underfunded between 2011 and 2016. Part of the reason for the crisis now is that we did not have as much early action as we could have **done**.

Q55 **Mr Lewis:** Do you think that better measures could have been put in place to mitigate the effects of the **drought**?

Sarah Pickwick: I think when it comes to mitigation, it is always a very hard thing to measure. When we look back, we as agents always feel that we could have done more. A lot of us have been working in the area of resilience and trying to build back people’s ability to cope with different shocks and stresses, whether that is to do with climate change or conflict. We’ve been there, but when you are not in an emergency setting then those types of funding and those types of premiums are incredibly hard to gain the resources for. The Department for International Development has been leading the charge on resilience, and has been a donor that has really grappled with this concept and supported it both in South Sudan and in Somalia. But often not a lot of other donors have followed suit, or the programmes have been quite small. When you get these shocks that come to communities, then that will erode some of their coping mechanisms. Our work that we do in resilience involves us knowing that we cannot ultimately get rid of that particular shock. That is not within our power. What we can do is to try and build up communities’ abilities to cope with it better the next time that it comes around. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for the programmes that we have got off the ground, there has indeed been an increase in communities’ ability to cope. The key thing, obviously, is to keep that long-term focus and carry on doing those programmes into the coming year as well as trying to work on the ground and save as many lives as possible.

Q56 **Mr Lewis:** **Do** you think that the lessons of the 2011 drought were learned, and if so what lessons have been applied in the way that this drought has been dealt with?

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Sarah Pickwick: Certainly, there has been a lot of analysing and going through 2011 to see what went well and what we could have done better. One of the interesting things to come out from 2011 was the need to respond earlier. People have said that we have responded earlier. It might still not be early enough, because in 2011 it was in May that the response really started to gain momentum. This response started in February, so that has been better. There has been more analysis of the situation and trying to gain more expertise, particularly in livelihoods. That has improved since then. There has also been a focus on cash programming. That was one big recommendation that came out from 2011: agencies needing to look at that, and not to see that that is a panacea for all the problems. It needs to be balanced with other interventions alongside it, but that is something that a lot of agencies now look at. We have tried to look at cash for work, cash transfers, vouchers: enabling local economies to remain stimulated and for people to have a bit more control over different decisions. We would urge that it is too early to do a "compare and contrast" of the situation between now and back in 2011. The two situations are very different, with different factors at play. One is not so much a blueprint that we can look at to see what has now happened, but the key thing would be for us to continue to learn the lessons as this response gains momentum. There are also lessons that we know we have not learned, where we need to get better.

Q57 **Pauline Latham:** Can you tell us what your assessment is of the Department for International Development's and the UK Government's response to the food crisis? Is there enough money coming forward from the UK and other donors?

Juliet Parker: No, because the humanitarian response plans are so woefully underfunded. We know that there is not sufficient money. Everything that we have heard through from our missions on the capacity of the local Governments and on their co-ordination suggests that there are significant gaps in food assistance. All the basics are still issues. So there is definitely insufficient funding, but we have had some very positive examples of actions from the DFID that have been well-recognised by us within our agency. One is the IPC fund: this is a critical part of early warning for famine. They have just done their mid-term review which they seemed happy with, which is a good thing. Funding research on nutrition early warning is also a positive action by DFID, and we have also had some good examples of action against hunger both in northern Nigeria and in Somalia related to them enabling us to re-programme existing grants in response to the new crisis. That has been a very positive increase, by quick decision making, in the funds available to specific programmes and re-purposing those programmes to more directly address the effects of the crisis.

All those things have been very positive. Sarah also mentioned DFID as a champion of the resilience approach, which we absolutely believe is the way to make the biggest difference in these crises—they are a long time coming and take a long time to recover from, and resilience is a critical part of that. Championing cash has also been very positive.

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Overall, there has been an insufficient response by the whole international community, but with some very positive examples from our experiences of working with DFID.

Q58 **Pauline Latham:** Is there any one thing—or two or three things—that you think we could do better and that would make more of a difference?

Juliet Parker: Yes. Our analysis is that conflict is the biggest driver. Actually solving the conflict—increasing efforts to secure and continue peace processes—is absolutely critical for us.

The second thing is access. Our effectiveness and our ability to support those who need assistance are really hindered by lack of access to the populations that need our assistance. That is common across all three of the contexts that we are talking about. Bureaucratic impediments, whether on purpose or not, are a significant reality; they drain our resources and prevent us from getting to the people who need our help. Another problem is lack of respect for international humanitarian law by all actors involved, which is absolutely critical to us.

Yet another thing is prioritising protection, as the previous panel commented. The protection needs are massive, and the lasting impacts of lack of protection for generations to come are significant.

Sarah Pickwick: I would reiterate that the UK came out very quickly, in terms of leading the charge to get an international response. That is another thing that we have all appreciated, but one of the key things that we therefore ask of the UK and the whole international community is transparency of funding and disbursement of funds to implementers on the ground as quickly as possible, so that we can scale up. We have been able to scale up massively as a result of all the funding we have, but there is still a gap, as Juliet was saying. I speak as a non-DFID partner and I know that ACF is a DFID partner, so we are looking at it from two different angles, but the transparency issues are about whether the money is new money, whether it is being programmed from somewhere else, where it is coming from if so, who it is going to—new partners or existing partners—and for what topics. The more all donors can give that transparency, the more it will enable better planning to see where the gaps are per sector and generally enable us to have better co-ordination in terms of information. At the moment, so many figures are flying around that it is often very hard for us to know exactly what there is and therefore to say what more we need, because we are not sure how much more is coming. That is quite key.

Protection has already been mentioned, but I particularly stress child protection. It was mentioned that it is not just about having stand-alone child protection programmes, but about mainstreaming and integrating child protection into all interventions, particularly given children's vulnerability to the effects of displacement, food insecurity and conflict. The fact that those effects last right through into adulthood means that that area is often woefully underfunded and needs particular attention.

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Juliet Parker: May I add one more thing? This was also commented on by the previous panel, but I think it is absolutely critical: the issue of multi-year flexible funding. The reality is that we know that in most of these crises we will need to be doing ongoing development resilience programming with humanitarian crisis response programming on top. We will need to be running both at any one time, and our ability to plan, build partnerships and negotiate access are all much better if we can do that over a multi-year period. Like the example of the three-month projects, these projects are a significant drain on our management resources, so if we are spending our whole time securing and reporting on short-term grants it means that we are not doing other things. We have some really good examples, and DFID certainly has some, but we need more of those examples because we know that the crisis is going to be ongoing beyond six, 12 or 24 months, and therefore we might as well be realistic in setting up robust structures, relationships and programmes that can help us deal with that.

Q59 **Jeremy Lefroy:** OCHA has said that so many people died in Somalia in 2011 because of a slow response by the international community. How do you rate the response now compared with 2011, and what has changed? If it is better, what has been the reason for the change?

Sarah Pickwick: I remember sitting in a presentation looking at the lessons learned from 2011. They were talking about how, in order to build up the maximum response to the need when the need was at its highest—usually around May in Somalia, maybe around July in South Sudan—you needed therefore in working backwards to have at least a two-to-four-month window. In the case of Somalia this time round, it does seem that we are now within that window and able to scale up. But the key thing that we are finding is that the needs continue to outpace us in terms of our ability to respond.

It is particularly a problem this time around because the rainy season which we have been waiting for is obviously now too late to impact the people in their current situation, but if it comes now and it comes in a very heavy quantity, you have a real risk of an outbreak of diseases, particularly diarrhoea and cholera, because you have a lot of dead animals lying around and there is a risk they will be drawn into the watercourses. With people moving into confined areas, particularly with the displacement, there is a very strong risk of an outbreak of disease. But equally, if the rains don't come, there is also a problem for the crops in six to nine months' time.

Those are some of the crucial things we are looking at in terms of how the response deals with that. Timing-wise, the response has gone in earlier, but the need now is to sustain that momentum and to not let up and to be able to get in now and save as many lives as possible, while maintaining the longer-term focus, if we can, and making sure that we do not have a pendulum swing just to that, but we try and keep a broader perspective with multi-year funding as well.

Q60 **Jeremy Lefroy:** What effect has the crisis had on schooling and

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education?

Sarah Pickwick: It has had a massive impact on children's schooling. In South Sudan, I think over 1 million children have lost access to education and there are similar figures in Somalia. I am sure you are very aware of the safe environment that school can provide, not only in being able to get children on feeding programmes and help them with nutrition status, but also in providing a protective learning environment. When that is disrupted by their being put on the move, it obviously brings a lot of different challenges.

Other people have mentioned the negative coping mechanisms that we worry families will start to adopt once they are on the move; and once children's lives are disrupted and they are not in school, those could include recruitment into armed groups, child labour, and early child marriage. These are all things that we worry will increase as children are brought out of school.

Q61 **Jeremy Lefroy:** So do you think there is a strong lesson to be learned from the approach towards the importance of education in the Syrian refugee crisis, where we have seen a lot of effort put into that, and the approach to the East and Central African refugee crisis, where it seems that education is given a very low priority by comparison?

Sarah Pickwick: Absolutely. We have always been quite strong in pushing for the fact that education should be considered in emergency responses because of the disruption for children when an emergency happens. Yes, we absolutely do draw on lessons learned from other responses and try to make sure that education is funded, because education and child protection are often the two sectors that very much drop off the radar and have a very low amount coming in.

Q62 **Chair:** May I thank you both for your evidence today and, in summary, thank the previous two panels? As Parliament is dissolved next week, our hope is that we will write prior to the dissolution of Parliament, based very much on the evidence that we have had today, setting out the major concerns, both about the food crisis and the broader displacement situation for people in Africa. If we can agree a letter over the next few days, we will publish that before the dissolution of Parliament. Thank you for your evidence and thanks to colleagues for being here today.

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