

SAA CID



Displaced by the fighting

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Maryan and her children subsist on the very margins of existence after being displaced by recent fighting

As clashes intensified in the north of the capital, Mogadishu, a new ubiquitous stream of civilians flowed to safer areas of the city – or left the city altogether - trying to find a safe place to survive. However, for the poorest of the poor, this is a traumatic and extremely trying experience. The experience of 45-year old Maryan Osman and her children illustrates the challenges of finding security in Mogadishu when moving anywhere is a serious economic challenge. Maryan’s family lived in the Maanaboolyo of Shibis District, where the Western and UN-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the insurgents have been wrestling for the past 8 months.

Fearing that the fighting between the 2 groups was intensifying, Maryan moved her family from the Maanaboolyo area to Hamar-weyne District on Friday afternoon, and they took up residence in one of the many destroyed government building in Hamar-weyne District.

Maryan's experience was shared by hundreds of other poor families, as they fled the most recent advances by the opposition.

For the poorest IDPs and residents in the city, moving anywhere is extremely difficult. Without funds to pay for transport, hundreds of destitute families fled on foot, with only what they could carry on their backs. As with Aryan, most of the newly displaced fled to Hamarweyne.

Maryan has been the breadwinner of her 8 children for the past 5 years. "I am the sole breadwinner for my 8 children, because my husband passed away after a long time from an illness. I used to bake sweets, such as pies, toffee, and nuts and sometimes work for neighbourhood families cleaning houses and clothes. Life was always difficult, but we managed. Now, being displaced for a 6th time means that I have no capacity to provide for my children.

For the past 6 months, we endured the daily bombardments that came from AMISOM and the TFG, but when the opposition mounted a successful offensive, and moved the frontline close to where we lived, we had no choice but to move or be caught directly in the crossfire. In fact, just 3 months ago, my 14 year-old son was wounded by stray gunfire from this endless conflict as he worked as a shoe shiner at the Maanaboolyo Market. The bullet hit his right leg and incised the artery, and he was taken to Madina Hospital where he was admitted for 45 days. Fortunately, he survived but he is still unwell, because he can't walk as he is still bandaged. I pray to God to bless my son and make him better soon, so that he can help me again by earning some small money as a shoe shiner.



Maryan's 14 year-old son is still in a cast and cannot work

Now, we have nothing, as we had to flee with very little. We don't even have plastic sheeting to protect us from the heavy rains that have arrived. We don't have any cooking utensils; and we don't have any sleeping foam.

The most difficult problem we are having here is lack of water and toilets. Therefore, we are asking SAACID and other international organisations to support us with plastic sheets, food, water, and to build toilets to support us with the most basic things that are necessary for human life".