



Drought in Somalia

All photos by Claudia Rosel, 2022

Somalia is experiencing its worst drought in recent history that is pushing millions of people into starvation and suffering. The unprecedented climatic event has forced over one million people to abandon their homes as the land could no longer provide sufficient resources, and their animals died from hunger. People newly displaced have settled in crowded settlements in urban areas across the country, hoping to find humanitarian services and alternative livelihoods to survive.

These photographs aim to capture part of the new reality that tens of thousands of women, men and children are facing as they experience the worst consequences of climate change.

Extreme climatic events have become more frequent and intense in Somalia, leaving its population - mainly dependent on agriculture and livestock - with no time to recover in between shocks. Informal settlements in major cities and town have become a refuge of last resort for millions of displaced people who are witnessing the disappearance of its traditional lifestyle as global warming sets in.



Aerial view of a dry river near Garowe, Puntland. Four consecutive and unprecedented failed rainy seasons have led to Somalia's worst drought in decades. Boreholes and shallow wells are drying up across the country, and rivers don't have sufficient water to fulfill the needs of the population.





New arrivals sit in the ground early morning in Ladan, a site for the displaced in Dollow. People are leaving rural areas and heading to places like Dollow in search of humanitarian assistance. Most of the newly displaced can't afford paying for transportation, and have to walk for days and even weeks with little food or water, trespassing areas controlled by extremist groups. Once they arrive to settlements for the displaced, they can sleep in the open for days, as they wait for assistance or to gather enough materials to build makeshift shelters.



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Two women recently displaced from Gurriel sleep on top of mats early morning in Ladan, a site for the displaced in Dollow. Most of the newly displaced can sleep in the open for days when they arrived to the informal settlements, as they wait for assistance or to gather enough materials to build makeshift shelters.



A mother and her son recently displaced from Guriel sit on top of mats early morning in Ladan, a site for the displaced in Dollow. Most of the newly displaced can sleep in the open for days when they arrived to the informal settlements, as they wait for assistance or to gather enough materials to build makeshift shelters.



Hamdi, 37, left her hometown in Guriel, Galmudug, due to the ongoing conflict and drought. His husband was killed in battle while fighting against extremist group Al-Shabaab. "My husband died, I was fearing for the life of my children. We also had no food due to this drought. I took some of my children and came here, but I had to leave my older son behind, the journey was too risky for him. I was afraid other men would do something to him." Hamdi has been one day in Ladan, previously she stayed four months in a site for the displaced in Ethiopia. "I sometimes work as a house maid or collecting lemon in the farms, that is how we make money. I came to this site alone, some of my children are still in the Ethiopian side and will join later."



Rahma Ali, 28, sits in the outskirts of a displacement site in Dollow. She arrived to the site the day the photograph was taken together her sister and children. "We are coming from Ufro, our husbands stayed behind, I don't have a place to sleep today." Like most displaced persons, Rahma came with almost no belongings. It can take some days for the women to build their shelters as they make some money to buy materials or get assistance from others.



Women cuts tree branches to build her shelter in the displacement site of Kaxareey, in the outskirts of Dollow. Displaced persons are living in precarious shelter sthat they construct using locally available materials such as tree branches, fabrics and tarps.



Salado, 55, pose for a portrait as she builds her shelter in the displacement site of Kaxareey in Dollow. Salado and her family left her village in Gedo after loosing all their livestock. “We have been sleeping for ten days in a welcome area, now they have allocated this plot for us to build our shelter.” Displacement settlements in Dollow are managed by camp managers from IOM together with local community leaders. Each settlement has a system to allocate plots to new arrivals, usually decided by the residents and community living there. Most of the displaced are women, children and elderly. They have to build their own shelters with locally available materials and usually get support from others.



Woman building a shelter in the displacement site of Kaxareey in Dollow.



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Young girl on her way to fetch water in the displacement site of Qansaxley, Dollow.



Young girl in the displacement site of Qansaxley, Dollow.



Women collect water from an emergency water truck in Qansaxley, Dollow.



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Women and children collect water from a temporary water reservoir early morning in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow. A humanitarian agency fills up the tank every day so families can access safe water.



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A man fills up his jerrycan from a shallow well in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow.



A woman fills up his jerrycan from a shallow well in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow.



Children fetch water from a water reservoir supported in Ladan, Dollow.



Jerrycans are an essential item for displaced people to store clean water. Humanitarian agencies like IOM are distributing jerrycans to newly displaced families all across the country.



People collect water from a water reservoir in Ladan, Dollow.



View of the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow



Women and children gather around a water reservoir in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow



Camp managers from IOM speak with a displaced person in Dollow to assess the needs of the family. Camp managers play an essential role in displacement sites. They share information with new arrivals, informing them on their rights and services available at the sites, as well as refer them to the services they need. Without camp managers, many displaced persons wouldn't know how to access assistance or how things work in the sites.



People line up in the displacement site of Qansaxley to get registered for a distribution of hygiene kits.



A community leader and local government officials register people in the displacement site of Qansaxley for an upcoming distribution of hygiene kits.



Women and children in a displacement site in Dollow.



Dainabo with her 22 month-old baby in Dollow's stabilization centre. The centre is the only facility in the region treating children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.



Hawa gives her two years old baby Abdiweli a nutrition supplement in Dollow's stabilization centre. "I came here today, we were displaced from Bay region, we had to walk for nine days to reach Dollow." A few days after the photo was taken, Abdiweli's health deteriorated and died from malnutrition. Seven children have died from malnutrition in the centre since January 2022.



Habibo holds her grandson Alamin, severely malnourished, in Dollow's stabilization centre. The centre is the only facility in the region treating children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. "We have been in the hospital for two nights. We lost all our livestock to drought and came to find support. My daughter just gave birth to another child and that is why I am here with my grandson."



Farhia, 30, left her hometown as she could no longer provide for herself due to the ongoing drought. She now lives in a makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Buulo Buf, Baidoa. "I struggle to feed my baby, he is sick, I don't have where to take him."



Farhia reveals a set of burn scars on her malnourished six-month-old son. Farhia had taken him to a traditional healer who practiced “Guboow” on the infant by pressing burning wood against his flesh to destroy the illness. In Somali, the word “Guboow” means scar burning.



Woman and child in the displacement site of Buulo Buf, Baidoa.



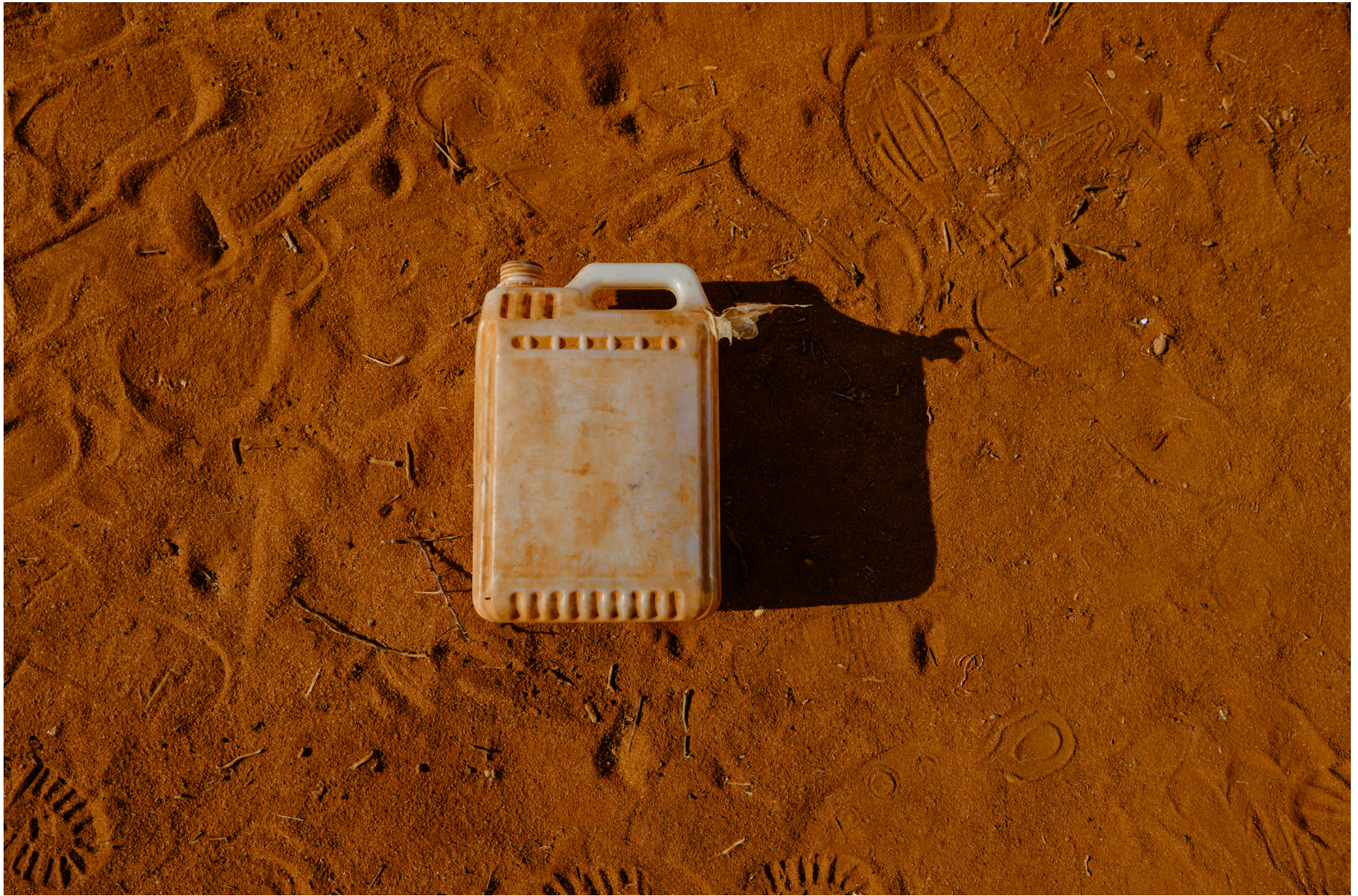
Young boy in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow.



"I left my husband behind and came to this settlement with some of my relatives. Our livestock died, we run out of water and could not find anything to eat," said Nimo speaking from her makeshift shelter in Dollow. She is one of the over 1 million people displaced by drought.



Abdinur, 50, photographed in his makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Kaxareey, Dollow. "I have been here for a month now with my wife and six children. We came here with another 25 families from our village. I used to have goats and cows, but now they are all dead. I never been in a place like this before and I am struggling to get a job in the nearby farms because I don't have the skills they ask for. I get credit from the shops, that is the only way I can get food now. There are many who have died due to this drought. We don't know why this is happening."



Jerry can lays on the ground in a displacement site in Dollow.



Abshiro, 27, in her makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow. "I have been here for seven months. My brother has a disability and we have not received any assistance yet. We were farmers in Ethiopia but lost everything to drought and conflict." Abshiro arrived to the site with some female relatives, leaving their husbands behind. "We women support each other. We don't feel place since our husbands are not here, so we sleep all together."



Young boy on his way to fetch water from a nearby water reservoir in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow.



Young girl sits in the displacement site of Kaxareey, Dollow.



Abdi, 65, in her makeshift shelter in Qansaxley, a site for the displaced in Dollow. "I have been here for three months. The drought killed all our animals."



Abdi's shelter is a traditional nomadic hut, known as Aqal.



Young girl in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow.



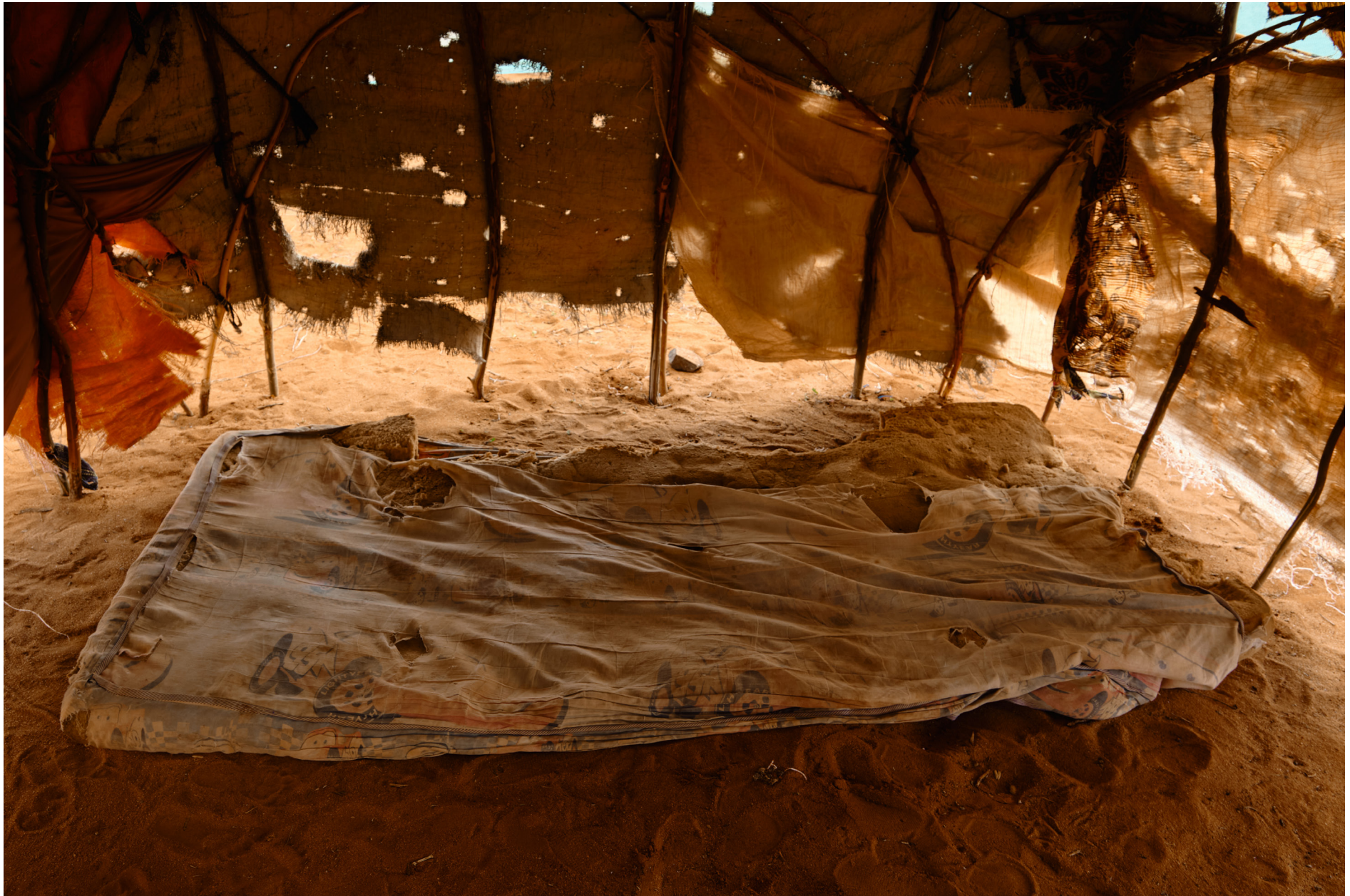
Woman sits in her makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Kaxareey, Dollow.



Muslimo, 70, sits in her makeshift shelter in Dollow. “We were farmers, we used to have fruits that were enough to provide for ourselves, but my farm turned into dust over the years due to poor rains. My older son was very weak, one day he did not wake up. The day he died was the day we decided to leave, we were fearing for our lives, that was six months ago. We fled our town with our donkeys, but even they died on the way and it took us almost ten days of walking to arrive in Dollow. All we have now is this shelter. Our pot has been empty for days,” she said. “I lived in my village all my life. I don’t think we can go back to our farm, I hope I can start a small business here so I can stop worrying about my livelihood.”



Woman sits with her baby in their makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Kaxareey, Dollow.



Old and dirty mattress inside a makeshift shelter in a displacement site in Dollow



Young girl in the displacement site of Kaxareey, Dollow.



Makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Qansahley, Dollow.



Gedio Adam sits in her makeshift shelter in the displacement site of Ladan, Dollow. "I came from Bay region with my daughter; we left some of our family behind. We lost everything we had. I can't walk well and some people assist me, but I need to beg to survive."



Graveyard in the outskirts of Dollow. Some of the drought victims are buried here.



Food prices have skyrocketed since the water crisis started. In Kabasa's Women Market in Dollow, women business owners struggle to make ends meet and are reducing the items they have for sale to prevent further losses.



Displacement site in Dollow.



Private security escorts a UN mission in the displacement site of Kaxareey, Dollow.



Gobobqa, a displacement site in the outskirts of Burao, Somaliland, hosting over 1,000 people who were mostly displaced due to drought between 2017 and 2022.



A displaced woman sits inside her makeshift shelter in Gobobqa, a displacement site in the outskirts of Burao, Somaliland



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