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## **UN Declares Famine in Somalia**

[http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

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**21st July, 2011**

# THE ARTICLE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

The United Nations has officially declared Somalia's food crisis a famine in two parts of the country's south. The region is experiencing its worst drought for six decades and millions of people are at risk of starving to death. The situation is worsened because of the difficulty of supplying aid to those who need it. The decades-long conflict between Islamist militants and the government is making it hard and dangerous to deliver aid. The United Nations said tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition in the past few months. Spokesman Mark Bowden spoke of the urgency of the situation: "If we don't act now, famine will spread to all eight regions of southern Somalia...Every day of delay in assistance is literally a matter of life or death."

Mr Bowden, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, called it a "desperate situation." He said: "We estimate that almost half of the Somali population, 3.7 million people, are affected by this crisis...It is likely that tens of thousands will already have died, the majority of these being children." Bowden explained to Voice of America how the situation has become so bad, saying: "We had been hoping to avoid famine, we spent a lot of our resources...specifically to help those communities that we thought might migrate, to stop migrations which is one of the major causes of death." He added that he ran out of funds. "We spent our money, we didn't have enough to scale up as we now need to," he said. The U.N. urgently needs \$300 million just to see the crisis through the next two months.

# WARM-UPS

**1. FAMINE:** Walk around the class and talk to other students about famine. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

*United Nations / food crisis / drought / militants / aid / urgency / life and death / humanitarian / estimate / population / majority / resources / migration / urgently*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

**3. NEEDS:** What would life be like without them? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	What would life be like?	What would you do?
food		
water		
shelter		
warmth		
medicine		
education		

**4. AID:** Students A **strongly** believe the world will come to Somalia's aid; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

**5. RESOURCES:** What are most important in a famine? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- aid workers
- army
- 4WD trucks
- water tablets
- blankets
- basic medicine
- wood for fire and cooking
- peace

**6. CRISIS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'crisis'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

# BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

## 1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. Famine has hit the whole of Somalia.                                | T / F |
| b. The drought is the worst in Somalia for the past 60 years.          | T / F |
| c. Internal conflict is making the aid-delivery situation worse.       | T / F |
| d. A U.N. worker said there is time so some delays are OK.             | T / F |
| e. The U.N. worker said 11 million Somalis may be at risk of starving. | T / F |
| f. Hundreds of thousands of children have already died.                | T / F |
| g. The U.N. said it had run out of money to provide aid to Somalia.    | T / F |
| h. The U.N. needs \$300 million for Somalia for the next year.         | T / F |

## 2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. declared     | a. key          |
| 2. region       | b. postponement |
| 3. conflict     | c. area         |
| 4. malnutrition | d. evade        |
| 5. delay        | e. bulk         |
| 6. desperate    | f. announced    |
| 7. majority     | g. disaster     |
| 8. avoid        | h. war          |
| 9. major        | i. despairing   |
| 10. crisis      | j. starvation   |

## 3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- |                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. a famine in two parts of the   | a. situation            |
| 2. experiencing its worst drought | b. of starving to death |
| 3. at risk                        | c. causes of death      |
| 4. hard and dangerous             | d. of life or death     |
| 5. literally a matter             | e. already have died    |
| 6. a desperate                    | f. for six decades      |
| 7. tens of thousands will         | g. the next two months  |
| 8. We had been hoping             | h. country's south      |
| 9. one of the major               | i. to deliver aid       |
| 10. see the crisis through        | j. to avoid famine      |

# WHILE READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

**GAP FILL:** Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The United Nations has (1) \_\_\_\_\_ declared Somalia's food crisis a famine in two parts of the country's (2) \_\_\_\_\_. The region is experiencing its worst drought for six decades and millions of people are at (3) \_\_\_\_\_ of starving to death. The situation is worsened because of the difficulty of supplying (4) \_\_\_\_\_ to those who need it. The decades-long conflict between Islamist militants and the government is making it hard and dangerous to (5) \_\_\_\_\_ aid. The United Nations said tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition in the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ few months. Spokesman Mark Bowden spoke of the (7) \_\_\_\_\_ of the situation: "If we don't act now, famine will spread to all eight regions of southern Somalia...Every day of delay in assistance is (8) \_\_\_\_\_ a matter of life or death."

*past*

*risk*

*literally*

*officially*

*aid*

*south*

*urgency*

*deliver*

Mr Bowden, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, called it a "desperate (9) \_\_\_\_\_." He said: "We (10) \_\_\_\_\_ that almost half of the Somali population, 3.7 million people, are affected by this crisis...It is likely that tens of thousands will already have died, the (11) \_\_\_\_\_ of these being children." Bowden explained to Voice of America how the situation has become so bad, saying: "We had been hoping to (12) \_\_\_\_\_ famine, we spent a lot of our resources...specifically to help those communities that we thought might (13) \_\_\_\_\_, to stop migrations which is one of the (14) \_\_\_\_\_ of death." He added that he ran out of funds. "We spent our money, we didn't have enough to (15) \_\_\_\_\_ up as we now need to," he said. The U.N. (16) \_\_\_\_\_ needs \$300 million just to see the crisis through the next two months.

*major*

*avoid*

*estimate*

*urgently*

*scale*

*situation*

*majority*

*migrate*

# LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

The United Nations has officially declared Somalia's food crisis a famine in two parts \_\_\_\_\_. The region is experiencing its worst drought for six decades and millions of people \_\_\_\_\_ death. The situation is worsened because of the difficulty of supplying aid to those who need it. The \_\_\_\_\_ between Islamist militants and the government is making it \_\_\_\_\_ to deliver aid. The United Nations said tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition in the past few months. Spokesman Mark Bowden spoke of \_\_\_\_\_ situation: "If we don't act now, famine will spread to all eight regions of southern Somalia...Every day of delay in assistance is literally \_\_\_\_\_."

Mr Bowden, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, called it a "desperate situation." He said: "We \_\_\_\_\_ half of the Somali population, 3.7 million people, are affected by this crisis...It is likely that tens of thousands \_\_\_\_\_, the majority of these being children." Bowden explained to Voice of America how the situation has \_\_\_\_\_: "We had been hoping to avoid famine, we spent a lot of our resources...specifically to help those communities that we \_\_\_\_\_, to stop migrations which is one of the major causes of death." He added that he ran out of funds. "We spent our money, we didn't have enough \_\_\_\_\_ need to," he said. The U.N. urgently needs \$300 million just to \_\_\_\_\_ the next two months.

# AFTER READING / LISTENING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'food' and 'crisis'.

<b>food</b>	<b>crisis</b>

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• officially</li><li>• region</li><li>• worsened</li><li>• past</li><li>• urgency</li><li>• matter</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• desperate</li><li>• 3.7</li><li>• majority</li><li>• resources</li><li>• major</li><li>• needs</li></ul>
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# STUDENT FAMINE SURVEY

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

Write five GOOD questions about famine in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.



# FAMINE DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'famine'?
- c) What do you think about what you read?
- d) Why does the world never do enough to help famine victims in time?
- e) How can the militants help the dying?
- f) Should the U.N. send troops to help protect the aid?
- g) Do you think the world will act now to stop the spread of famine?
- h) Why would there be a delay in giving aid when it's a matter of life and death?
- i) Does the world see the life (or death) of a Somali to be of less value than someone dying in a rich country?
- j) What will be the outcome of this famine?

*UN Declares Famine in Somalia – 21st July, 2011*  
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# FAMINE DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What three adjectives describe this story and why?
- c) Why didn't the world act sooner if they knew famine was coming?
- d) Countries can find billions of dollars to bail out failing banks but cannot find millions of dollars to help stop people dying. Why?
- e) How could the U.N. run out of the money it had to help prevent famine?
- f) How do you think stopping migration helps lessen the effects of famine?
- g) Will the Somalia famine be another example of the world letting millions of Africans die of starvation?
- h) What can you do to help the famine victims?
- i) What would you ask your country's leader to do?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Mark Bowden?

# LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

The United Nations has (1) \_\_\_\_ declared Somalia's food crisis a famine in two parts of the country's (2) \_\_\_\_\_. The region is experiencing its worst drought for six decades and millions of people are (3) \_\_\_\_ risk of starving to death. The situation is worsened because of the difficulty of supplying aid to those who need it. The decades-(4) \_\_\_\_ conflict between Islamist militants and the government is making it hard and dangerous to deliver aid. The United Nations said tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition in the past few months. Spokesman Mark Bowden spoke of the (5) \_\_\_\_ of the situation: "If we don't act now, famine will spread to all eight regions of southern Somalia...Every day of delay in assistance is (6) \_\_\_\_ a matter of life or death."

Mr Bowden, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, called it a "desperate situation." He said: "We estimate that almost half of the Somali population, 3.7 million people, are (7) \_\_\_\_ by this crisis...It is likely that tens of thousands will already have died, the (8) \_\_\_\_ of these being children." Bowden explained to Voice of America how the situation has become so bad, saying: "We had been hoping to (9) \_\_\_\_ famine, we spent a lot of our resources...(10) \_\_\_\_ to help those communities that we thought might migrate, to stop migrations which is one of the major causes of death." He added that he ran out of (11) \_\_\_\_\_. "We spent our money, we didn't have enough to scale up as we now need to," he said. The U.N. urgently needs \$300 million just to (12) \_\_\_\_ the crisis through the next two months.

**Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.**

- |     |                |                  |                  |                |
|-----|----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1.  | (a) officially | (b) officialdom  | (c) officials    | (d) official   |
| 2.  | (a) southern   | (b) southernmost | (c) south        | (d) southerly  |
| 3.  | (a) of         | (b) in           | (c) by           | (d) at         |
| 4.  | (a) length     | (b) long         | (c) longing      | (d) longest    |
| 5.  | (a) urgent     | (b) emergent     | (c) emergency    | (d) urgency    |
| 6.  | (a) literal    | (b) literary     | (c) literally    | (d) literature |
| 7.  | (a) effected   | (b) affected     | (c) affect       | (d) effect     |
| 8.  | (a) majority   | (b) majorly      | (c) major        | (d) majors     |
| 9.  | (a) avoid      | (b) void         | (c) avid         | (d) provide    |
| 10. | (a) specify    | (b) specifics    | (c) specifically | (d) specially  |
| 11. | (a) fund       | (b) findings     | (c) finds        | (d) funds      |
| 12. | (a) watch      | (b) see          | (c) look         | (d) view       |

# WRITING

From [http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia\\_food\\_crisis.html](http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1107/110721-somalia_food_crisis.html)

Write about **famine** for 10 minutes. Correct your partner's paper.

[illegible]

# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find out more about famine. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. SOMALIA:** Make a poster about Somalia. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

**4. FAMINE:** Write a magazine article about Somalia and its famine and internal conflict. Include imaginary interviews with people who are there.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a Somali who lacks food. Ask him/her three questions about the famine. Give him/her three pieces of advice on how to stay healthy. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

# ANSWERS

## TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. T      d. F      e. F      f. F      g. T      h. F

## SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. declared     | a. announced    |
| 2. region       | b. area         |
| 3. conflict     | c. war          |
| 4. malnutrition | d. starvation   |
| 5. delay        | e. postponement |
| 6. desperate    | f. despairing   |
| 7. majority     | g. bulk         |
| 8. avoid        | h. evade        |
| 9. major        | i. key          |
| 10. crisis      | j. disaster     |

## PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. a famine in two parts of the   | a. country's south      |
| 2. experiencing its worst drought | b. for six decades      |
| 3. at risk                        | c. of starving to death |
| 4. hard and dangerous             | d. to deliver aid       |
| 5. literally a matter             | e. of life or death     |
| 6. a desperate                    | f. situation            |
| 7. tens of thousands will         | g. already have died    |
| 8. We had been hoping             | h. to avoid famine      |
| 9. one of the major               | i. causes of death      |
| 10. see the crisis through        | j. the next two months  |

## GAP FILL:

### UN Declares Famine in Somalia

The United Nations has (1) **officially** declared Somalia's food crisis a famine in two parts of the country's (2) **south**. The region is experiencing its worst drought for six decades and millions of people are at (3) **risk** of starving to death. The situation is worsened because of the difficulty of supplying (4) **aid** to those who need it. The decades-long conflict between Islamist militants and the government is making it hard and dangerous to (5) **deliver** aid. The United Nations said tens of thousands of Somalis have died of malnutrition in the (6) **past** few months. Spokesman Mark Bowden spoke of the (7) **urgency** of the situation: "If we don't act now, famine will spread to all eight regions of southern Somalia...Every day of delay in assistance is (8) **literally** a matter of life or death."

Mr Bowden, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, called it a "desperate (9) **situation**." He said: "We (10) **estimate** that almost half of the Somali population, 3.7 million people, are affected by this crisis...It is likely that tens of thousands will already have died, the (11) **majority** of these being children." Bowden explained to Voice of America how the situation has become so bad, saying: "We had been hoping to (12) **avoid** famine, we spent a lot of our resources...specifically to help those communities that we thought might (13) **migrate**, to stop migrations which is one of the (14) **major** of death." He added that he ran out of funds. "We spent our money, we didn't have enough to (15) **scale** up as we now need to," he said. The U.N. (16) **urgently** needs \$300 million just to see the crisis through the next two months.

## LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a      2 - c      3 - d      4 - b      5 - d      6 - c      7 - b      8 - a      9 - a      10 - c      11 - d      12 - b