

Iran sends relief cargo to Somalia

Several Iranian humanitarian aid cargo have already reached Aden-Adde International Airport in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, IRNA reported. The 40-ton consignment of humanitarian aid includes rice and legumes. IRCS Secretary General Zaher Rostami told IRNA that Iran plans to dispatch seven more shipments of humanitarian aid to Somalia. The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei called on Iranians to rush to the aid of the Muslim people of Somalia. "These days, the Horn of Africa and particularly the catastrophe-ridden country of Somalia are witnessing one of the most painful human crises in which the lives of millions of Somali women and children are in danger due to drought, famine and the silence of international organizations," read a statement by the Leader.

The main part of Iran's humanitarian aid to Somalia will also be handed over to the country's relief organizations. The United Nations has warned that more than 13 out of every 10,000 children aged less than five die in the Somalia famine zone every day. "This means that 10 percent of children under five are dying every 11 weeks. These figures are truly heart-wrenching," UN representative to Somalia Augustine Mahiga said. The drought and famine have affected more than 11.8 million people across Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Somalia has been the hardest-hit country in what is being described as the worst drought in the Horn of Africa in 60 years.

According to the United Nations, it is estimated that a quarter of Somalia's population of 9.9 million are now either internally displaced or living outside the country as refugees. The UN has declared famine in five regions in Somalia and said that the international humanitarian response to the crisis has been insufficient. Somalia thanks Iran for relief aid. Meanwhile, Somali Minister for Women and Family Affairs Maryan Qasim Ahmed expressed gratitude to Iran for delivering humanitarian aid to famine-hit people of Somalia. The Somali official thanked Iran for helping the famine-stricken people of Somalia in the harsh conditions facing the African country, according to an IRNA dispatch.

Although Somalia is going through a severe crisis, the amount of international aid allocated to the country to solve problems is insufficient, she said. The minister pointed out that the number of displaced Somalis rushing to the capital Mogadishu to settle in camps was increasing day by day but she did not provide an exact number of the refugees. Iran has so far dispatched several humanitarian aid convoys to Somalia as part of an intensifying effort to provide relief for people of the African country who are grappling with severe famine and drought. The UN says 3.2 million Somalis, which is almost half the population, are in need of immediate life-saving assistance.