The grid divides Somalia into 404 rectangles each corresponding to the internationally recognized topographic map files. Each of these rectangles is given a unique alpha-numeric reference number. Each of these squares is then further divided into 80 smaller squares, each representing an area of 25 square km. The square cells are referenced from A to K horizontally and from 1 to 8 vertically.

To report your position:

- Locate the square cell you are in on the map using estimated distance and direction from a known point such as a Clinics, schools or settlements as a guide.
- Note that the alpha-numeric rectangle code (e.g. NA-38-003)
- Note the numeric reference of the square cell
- Note the Alphabetic reference of the square cell.
- When reporting your position, quote the full grid reference by combining the two references (e.g. NA-38-003-4K).

The boundaries and names on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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The Humanitarian Reference Grid is a common reference system for all agencies working in Somalia. The system has been designed for reporting of geographic location in the field, without the use of a GPS.

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