

Ethiopia

August 2023

Ethiopia remains Africa's third-largest refugee host, offering shelter to more than **942,000** individuals, primarily from South Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea. Women and children make up **81%** of this population.

UNHCR, in partnership with Government's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), regional authorities, UN agencies and NGOs, provided vital protection and aid to over **35,000** refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in Ethiopia following the eruption of conflict in Sudan in mid-April.

UNHCR and its partners mitigated a **Cholera outbreak** at the Kumer refugee site, Amhara, by identifying cases, providing treatment, and preventing further spread through education, WASH activities, and vaccination preparations.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

40,500 Somali refugees from Lascanood registered

8,846 refugees issued with work permits

244 Cholera-related admissions in Kumer CTC

460,000 IDPs supported with shelter & CRIs

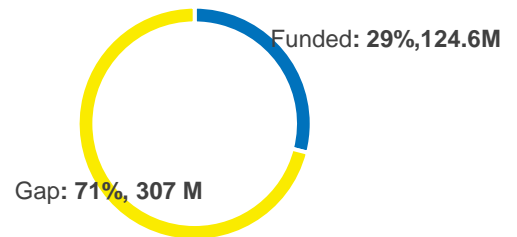
22.1% current Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate across all refugee camps/settlements

2,775 refugees submitted for resettlement

FUNDING (31 AUGUST)

\$431.6 million

requested for Ethiopia.



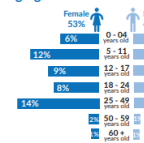
942,792
Individuals registered
(936,613 refugees) (6,177 asylum seekers)

222,845
households
(average family size: 4)

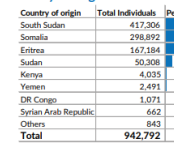
81% Women & Children
56% Children (0-17 years)
42% Adults (18-59 years)
2% Elderly (60+)

Context
Ethiopia is the third largest refugee hosting country in Africa, home to over 942,000 refugees and asylum seekers—mainly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. Following the recent outbreak of armed conflict in Sudan (April 2023) and Lascanood Somalia (February 2023), Ethiopia is receiving thousands of forcibly displaced people at several points of entry. UNHCR and the Government of Ethiopia through the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), in partnership with regional authorities, other UN agencies and NGOs are working to provide safe asylum access, documentation, protection and solutions to those who need humanitarian support.

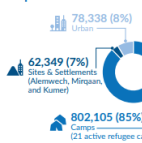
Age-gender breakdown



Country of origin breakdown



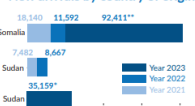
Population distribution



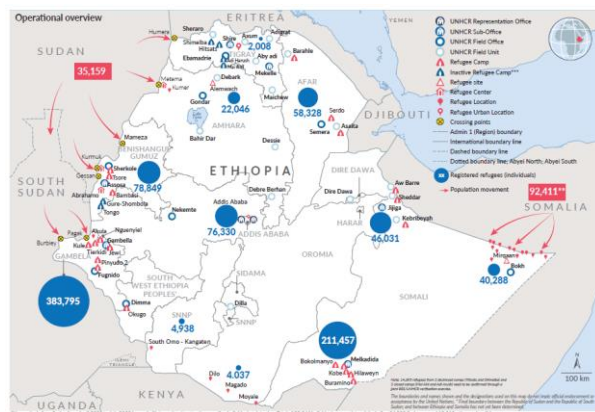
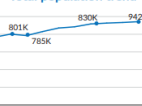
New arrivals per year



New arrivals by country of origin



Total population trend



Operational Context

Ethiopia continues to face substantial humanitarian challenges and is reeling from inflation, conflict, and climate shocks, which have resulted in massive displacement of civilians. IOM, in its latest Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), [reported](#) 4.4 million IDPs in the country as of June 2023. According to the [Ethiopia 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (HRP), more than 20 million people are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

Ethiopia hosts over 942,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, predominantly from South Sudan, Somalia, and Eritrea. The majority live in refugee camps and settlements established across different regional states, while over 76,000 reside, as urban refugees, in the capital Addis Ababa. UNHCR maintains a robust field presence including in Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella, Oromia, Somali and Tigray regions, as well as in the city of Dire Dawa. Side by side with emergency response and the provision of protection and lifesaving humanitarian needs for the over 127,000 new arrivals from Somalia and Sudan, as well as millions of IDPs, UNHCR continues to promote self-reliance of refugees and host communities, and search for solutions.

Main achievements



PROTECTION

Protection response to new arrivals from Sudan: UNHCR and the Government's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) screened over 35,000 new arrivals at the border crossing points in the Amhara (Metema), Benishangul-Gumuz (Kurmuk) and Gambella (Pagak & Burbiey) regions, providing protection counselling, healthcare, and lifesaving humanitarian assistance. By the end of the month, 10,700 of them were relocated to Kumer (9,383) in Amhara and Sherkole (1,400) in Benishangul Gumuz regions, where UNHCR and partners are regularly providing critical protection support, especially to survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) and Persons with Special Needs (PSN).

Level 2 registration in Mirqaan: The RRS has been conducting Level 2 (L2) registration for Somali refugees in Mirqaan, Somali region. This comprehensive approach gathers detailed individual information, aiding UNHCR and partners in tailoring assistance and protection to the needs of the beneficiaries. To date, more than 40,500 individuals have undergone L2 registration, after having been relocated to Mirqaan settlement, where they coexist with host communities. Since February, 100,000 Somali refugees fleeing the conflict in Lascaanood, Somalia, have arrived in the Doolo zone of the Somali region, where Mirqaan is situated.

Free legal aid to IDPs: UNHCR, in partnership with the universities of Arbaminch, Bule Hora and Dilla, provided free legal aid to 380 internally displaced families in the Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNPS) regions. An additional 1,332 individuals, including 652 women, benefitted from legal awareness services. These services, including legal advice/counselling, preparation of legal pleadings, and court litigation and representation, are needed to address challenges that IDPs face in obtaining and restoring identity and civil documentation, and housing, land, and property rights, as well as to facilitate access to justice.



EDUCATION

Preparations ongoing for new academic year: As the summer break draws to a close, thousands of refugees across the country are gearing up for the reopening of schools for the new academic year in September. Back-to-school campaigns and student registration have officially kicked off in all refugee camps and sites across the country, with nearly 180,000 refugee students attending classes before the summer break in June.

Meanwhile, UNHCR and the Somali Regional Education Bureau conducted a mission to Bokh in the Somali region, to assess arrangements for the integration of newly arrived Somali refugees into the existing educational system. UNHCR, together with RRS and local authorities, is taking steps to expand and strengthen local schools so refugees can attend the same classes as their hosts. To address the urgent need for additional educational infrastructure, UNICEF provided eight special tents that will serve as emergency classrooms for pre-primary education. UNHCR and partners are also supporting with recruitment of additional teachers and construction of more latrine blocks, among other essential improvements.

**HEALTH**

Primary healthcare: UNHCR and RRS, in collaboration with partners, continued to provide basic healthcare services for refugees residing in camps, settlements and urban areas, with 72,445 medical consultations conducted in August. Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI), Malaria and Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) were identified as the three leading causes of morbidity. Out of 1,321 live births recorded during the month, 98% were assisted by skilled healthcare attendants.

Emergency and outbreak health response: UNHCR, in collaboration with the respective Regional Health Bureaus and the World Health Organization, is actively engaged in responding to health crises affecting refugees in the Amhara and Gambella regions. In the Amhara region's Kumer settlement, where some 10,000 refugees who arrived from Sudan are sheltered, a Cholera outbreak has led to the admission of 244 patients to the Cholera Treatment Centre, of whom 199 have meanwhile recovered. Unfortunately, Cholera-related six fatalities have been recorded. The response strategy encompasses critical areas such as planning, coordination, resource mobilization, laboratory services, active infection prevention and control measures, surveillance, and monitoring, as well as risk communication and community engagement. These efforts are geared towards mitigating risks, supporting ongoing regional preparedness for vaccinations, and bolstering response plans.

In the Gambella region, a separate health emergency has arisen with a measles outbreak, already affecting three camps (Kule, Nguenyiel and Tierkidi). There were 42 reported cases at the end of August, including 30 involving children under the age of five. While 29 patients had shown improvement and were discharged from health facilities, regrettably, three deaths have occurred, underscoring the urgency of the situation. Currently, 10 patients remain in isolation and are under the care and follow-up of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). UNHCR has continued to work closely with all partners to ensure the health and well-being of these vulnerable populations, as well as to prevent further outbreaks and provide the necessary support for those affected.

**FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION**

Conditions met for resumption of food aid for refugees: WFP, UNHCR and the RRS have met all donor requirements to reinstate food aid for refugees, which remains suspended as of June 2023. While the existing food distribution model for refugees had already integrated a suitable targeting system, any identified shortcomings in the food distribution process have been diligently rectified in preparation for the resumption of food aid.

Update on the status of nutrition: UNHCR, in collaboration with its nutrition partners, continued to prioritize nutrition-specific programmes across all the refugee camps and sites, focusing on providing vital assistance to newly arrived refugees from Somalia and Sudan. These programmes involve a range of initiatives, notably facility and community-level screening to promptly identify acute malnutrition in children and refer them to specialized nutrition treatment programmes, to ensure timely medical attention.

The year-on-year Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate has shown a concerning increase from 15.5% in August 2022 to 22.1% in August 2023. This is due to a range of factors, including lack of adequate food (due to food aid pause, drought, conflict, economic inflation, etc.), limited access to WASH and health services, and limited livelihood opportunities. To address this concerning trend, there is an urgent need for funding for food and nutrition and other sectors that directly impact the nutritional wellbeing of refugees and host communities. The ultimate and more sustainable solution is improved investment in refugees' livelihoods, ensuring alternatives to food aid.

**WATER AND SANITATION**

Water supply: UNHCR and its partners continued to work to ensure sustainable water supply in refugee sites across the country through an effective management of water systems and maintenance of associated infrastructure. In August, refugees in refugee camps and sites across the country had access to an average of 15 liters of water per person per day (l/p/d), which is much lower than the required minimum standard of 20 l/p/d. The sanitation coverage

in the refugee camps and sites remains low at 40% against the minimum standard of $\geq 85\%$. More resources are needed to improve the water and sanitation situation in the refugee camps and settlements.

Emergency WASH response: UNHCR and partners supplied on average 10 liters of water per person per day to thousands of new arrivals from Somalia and Sudan who have been sheltered in in the Somali (Mirqaan), Amhara (Metema) and Benishangul-Gumuz (Kurmuk) regions. As this is significantly lower than the emergency threshold of at least 15 l/p/d, UNHCR and partners are working to bring it to an acceptable level. 45 blocks of gender-segregated latrines and/or showers were completed in Mirqaan, Metema and Kurmuk, with 15 more blocks under construction. Routine hygiene promotion activities are ongoing to ensure proper usage and management of the facilities and to prevent communicable diseases.

Cholera prevention: As part of the effort to contain the Cholera outbreak at Kumer settlement, additional 16 hygiene promoters were trained to educate the communities on how to prevent the spread of the diseases, including by avoiding using water from the nearby river. The local water office distributed water treatment chemicals received from UNICEF, while UNHCR and WASH partners distributed soap and enhanced WASH activities, including by increasing water trucking from six trips per day to eight.

SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS

Support to refugees: UNHCR and partners completed construction of 17 emergency shelters and five communal hangars in August to respond to the shelter needs of new arrivals from Somalia and Sudan. This brings the total number of emergency shelters erected so far to accommodate the new arrivals in the Amhara (Metema), Benishangul-Gumuz (Kurmuk) and Somali (Mirqaan) regions to 6,773. In addition, 109 communal hangars were installed, including five in August, to temporarily host refugees until they move to family shelters. Construction of 575 transitional shelters was completed in August in the Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella regions.

Despite these investments to address the shelter gap, 64% of the refugee families in Ethiopia continued to be accommodated in emergency and old and/or overcrowded shelters, increasing the protection risks. Additional resources are required to further bridge the shelter gap.

Support to IDPs: In August, UNHCR and its partners provided shelter support and core relief items (CRIs) to over 34,000 IDPs in the Amhara, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray regions. So far this year, over 46,000 IDPs have received this type of assistance.



ACCESS TO ENERGY

Close to 600,000 trees planted: As part of the environmental rehabilitation and local habitat restoration initiatives, UNHCR, with the participation of refugees, host communities and partners, planted close to 600,000 multipurpose tree seedlings across refugee camps/settlements and surrounding areas inhabited by host communities. The initiative, which is in line with the Ethiopian Government's 'Green Legacy' programme, demonstrates refugees' contribution to the rehabilitation and restoration of the natural environment.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

More refugees received work permits: RRS issued work permits to 3,725 refugees in Gambella, bringing the total number of refugees with work permits in Ethiopia to 8,846. This figure includes 2,396 in the Somali (Melkadida & Jigjiga), 1,383 in Benishangul-Gumuz, 429 in Afar, 494 in Amhara (Alemwach) regions, as well as 419 permits issued in Addis Ababa, to refugees who are either self-employed or have secured wage-earning employments. Meanwhile in Gambella, refugees and members of the host community have covered 332 hectares of land with various types of crops as part of the drive to achieve self-reliance.

Livestock cooperatives generated over 1 million Birr: Somali refugees and their hosts in the Melkadida area, who partake in 'livestock cooperatives' (comprising livestock traders, meat, and milk sellers) generated a combined gross revenue of over ETB 1 million (US\$ 19,300) with a profit margin of 14%. Meanwhile, 32 hectares of land around two agricultural irrigation sites were cultivated with maize and watermelon crops.

Elsewhere in the Somali region, 213 IDP families in Goro Gutu Woreda were granted Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) memberships, a part of our collaborative efforts with IOM, IRC, and OHCHR to expand social protection for forcibly displaced populations.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Resettlement: Facilitating resettlement as a protection tool and a durable solution remains UNHCR's top priority in Ethiopia. In August, 215 refugees were submitted to various resettlement countries for consideration, bringing the total submissions so far in 2023 to 2,775. This month, 237 individuals departed on resettlement and other legal pathways to different countries, bringing the total departures so far this year to 3,273, including 1,190 on resettlement and 2,083 on other legal pathways. During the reporting period, UNHCR counseled 46 individuals on family reunification, education pathways and labor mobility.

Repatriation support: During the reporting period, UNHCR provided a six-month reintegration cash assistance to 31 former Ethiopian refugees who returned home by their own means from Yemen.

Solutions from the onset: In response to the emergency refugee influx from Sudan and Somalia, UNHCR and partners pursue "solutions from the onset" by reinforcing existing services and systems to facilitate the inclusion of refugees in national systems, but also to benefit the communities hosting them.

Working in partnership

Together with its main government counterpart, the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), UNHCR coordinates the response to the refugee situation in the country, extending protection, providing assistance and promoting sustainable solutions. UNHCR works closely with dozens of partners in the refugee response and is part of the Humanitarian Country Team, where refugee programmes are discussed strategically to ensure their needs are adequately presented and addressed across the UN System. UNHCR builds on well-established coordination fora, including the inter-sector Refugee Coordination Group together with national and regional sectorial working groups. Committed to pursuing refugee inclusion in national services and economies, as per the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR is furthering partnerships with Ethiopian line Ministries, regional and local authorities, development partners and the private sector.

UNHCR is an active part of the government-led Inter-Agency response to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), leading and co-leading the Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters, contributing to the shelter and non-food items clusters, and strengthening sub-national coordination with better information sharing and communication. It distributes emergency aid supplies and related support to IDPs and IDP returnees across the country as well as to communities that are affected by the worst drought in decades.

Financial situation

As of 31 August, the UNHCR Operation in Ethiopia has received **USD 124.6 million**, representing only **29%** of the 2023 requirements. UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors that have contributed to its work, as well as to those that have contributed to UNHCR programmes globally with unearmarked or softly earmarked funds.

Contributions to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation in 2023

USA| Denmark| Japan| European Union| CERF| Netherlands| Canada| UN Children Fund| IKEA Foundation| France| Germany| "la Caixa" Banking Foundation| Switzerland| Sweden| Country-Based Pooled Funds| Republic of Korea| Luxembourg| Dr. Wael Al Mahmeed| UN Programme on HIV/AIDS| Latter-day Saints Charities| MasterCard International Incorporated| Spain| Other private donors.

Other softly earmarked contributions in 2023

Private donors Australia| USA| Private donors Germany| Finland| Canada

Unearmarked contributions in 2023

Sweden| Norway | Netherlands| Denmark | Private donors Spain | United Kingdom | France | Germany
| Private donors Japan | Switzerland| Private donors Republic of Korea| Belgium| Ireland

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