

Resumption of food distributions for refugees in Ethiopia

General context

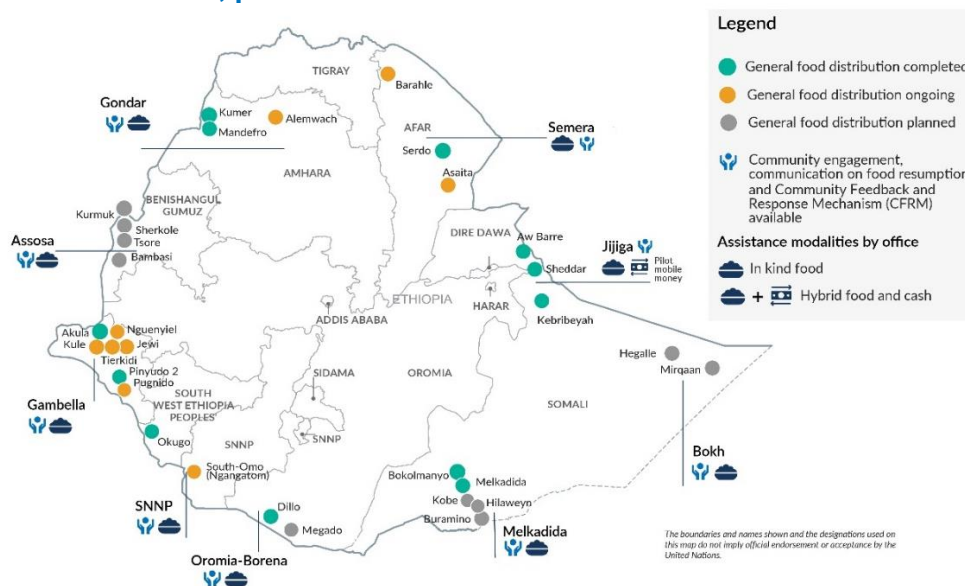
Since USAID announced the resumption of food assistance to refugee populations on 6 October, UNHCR, WFP, Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) and its partners have worked intensively to prepare for food distributions in all refugee locations in Ethiopia.

There are 29 refugee camps, sites, settlements across Ethiopia hosting 946,682 refugees, with some 878,320 being dependent on food assistance. As of 26 October, 21 locations have been covered by the distribution. Out of these, 12 locations have seen the completion of the distributions, including in; Serdo camp (Afar region), Kumer site and Mandefro transit center (Amhara region); Akula, Okugo and Pinyudo II camps (Gambella region), Borena-Dillo camps (Oromia region); Aw-barre, Kebribeyah, Shedder and Boklomayo and Melkadida (Somali region). Distribution is on-going in 9 locations.

As of 26 October, 318,034 refugees have been reached (being 36% of the target). In Mirqaan refugee settlement (Somali region), preparations and food prepositioning have been finalized, with distribution planned to start on 27 October 2023. The first consignment of food trucks arrived in Kurmuk transit center, Benishangul Gumuz region, during the reporting period. Distributions are planned to begin on 30 October for the newly arrived refugees from Sudan and staying in Kurmuk as well as in the three existing refugee camps.

Refugees targeted for the food distribution 878,320 individuals 203,339 households	Refugees reached by food distribution 318,034 individuals (36% of the target)	Total refugee locations targeted¹ 30
		Refugee locations where GDT² + Mobile collect + stock management available 24

Implementation overview, protection related activities and assistance modalities



¹ 21 camps; 1 site (Alemwach), 7 settlements (Kumer, Akula, Dillo, Megado, South-Omo, Mirqaan and Hegale) and 1 transit center (Mandefro)

² Global Distribution Tool (GDT) is a corporate UNHCR tool that helps operations use biometrics to verify the identity of beneficiaries during the distribution of food and other types of assistance. Currently, the GDT is available in 22 refugee locations in Ethiopia.

Main highlights

Protection Monitoring and Communication with communities: UNHCR, in partnership with WFP and their cooperating partners (CP), RRS and refugee leaders continue to disseminate key messages in Amhara, Gambella, Melkdadida, Jijiga, Oromia (Kenya Borena refugees) and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) in Ngatom South Omo (South Sudanese refugees). In every active GFD site, visibility material has been put up, with key messages regarding the steps to follow and the food entitlements to guide refugees through the process. These messages are displayed in local languages in addition to English. UNHCR and WFP conducted a joint mission to Dilo and Megado refugee settlements in Borena Zone of Oromia region in Ethiopia. The food distribution exercise in Dilo was conducted from 23-25 of October 2023 and it is scheduled to commence in Megado on 27 October 2023. Prior to food distribution in Dilo, sensitization sessions were organized by WFP and UNHCR and the jointly developed messages about the general food distribution was conveyed to the refugee community. During this mission, in a meeting held with refugee representatives, they expressed their happiness on the resumption of food distribution and extended their appreciation.



Visibility in different languages in Alemwach site ©UNHCR

In Afar, refugee leaders have appreciated the information sharing campaigns before and during distribution. They also welcome the support to persons with specific needs and provision of shades so that they are not lining up in the heat. In Amhara, some of the refugee leaders voiced concern about the fact that the distribution did not start at the same time as in other camps. UNHCR and partners will continue to engage with the community in post distribution monitoring and other activities.

Strengthened feedback and response mechanisms: Specific mechanisms are deployed by the Protection Help Desk at FDPs. To date, 328 complaints were recorded, mainly relating to refugees not receiving cash, under-scooping and lack of items to carry the food. While 125 complaints have been closed, 203 are still in the process of being resolved. The Community Feedback and Response Mechanisms (CFRM) are being used and KoBo tool is being updated based on Protection Staff feedback, while the harmonization of the various tools is ongoing.

Registration: Though registration of newborns was temporarily interrupted in the initial days of the food distribution it has now resumed in most locations as of 25 October. This will be followed with communication and sensitization for the next round of food distribution.

Social Cohesion: As of 25 October, resumption of food distribution has been taking place smoothly with no report of tensions between host and refugee communities. In Sherkole, Benishangul Gumuz, the refugees share appreciation for the support they received from host community during the pause on food aid.

In Kurmuk, Benishangul Gumuz, the regional Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) also distributed food and various relief supplies to help support the newly arrived refugees in Kurmuk to mitigate the rising malnutrition cases. The peace committees, which include representative from both the refugee and host communities were very much engaged to ensure strengthened social cohesion. In Jijiga camps, there has been a general appreciation of the resumption, even though the food assistance is only limited to the refugees, while the host community is also dependent on food aid programs.



Scooping and use of mobile collect application in Alemwach site ©UNHCR

In Gambella, the resumption has alleviated the pressure on the host communities who have been supporting refugees and has positively contributed to enhancing social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. No tension has been reported between the IDPs and refugees in the region since the start of food assistance.

Next steps

Additional items/assistance: In many locations, refugees have requested whether items such as sugar could be added in the food basket for the next food distribution. They have also requested necessary hygiene items, such as soap and sanitary pads in the Oromia and SNNP regions in particular.

Visibility materials: In Gambella, the visibility materials will be translated into local languages and audio recordings of the key messages will also be played in all sites during the distribution.



Sensitization session with refugee community representatives in Dilo (SNNP region) @UNHCR

Annex I: Food distributions: state of play by refugee location

Locations		Start date for the dispatch of food	Start date of the GFD	Expected end date of GFD	Refugee population	Comments/Status
Somali region						
Melkadida	Bokolmayo	9 Oct	13 Oct	19 Oct	33,3042	Completed
	Melkadida	12 Oct	20 Oct	27 Oct	43,371	Completed
	Kobe	17 Oct	27 Oct	1 Nov	39,195	Distributions are still in the planning phases. Heavy rains may delay the arrivals of food trucks from Jigjiga
	Buramino	tbc	tbc	tbc	51,261	
	Hilaweyn	tbc	tbc	tbc	48,556	
	Kebribeyah	6 Oct	7 Oct	11 Oct	18,043	Completed

Jigjiga	Aw-barre	15/16 Oct	17 Oct	20 Oct	13,387	Completed
	Shedder	21/22 Oct	23 Oct	27 Oct	14,700	Completed
	Mirqaan	23 Oct	27 Oct	tbc	42,325	
	Hegalle	23 Oct	tbc	tbc	28,930	
Gambella region						
Gambella	Pinyudo II	10 Oct	11 Oct	18 Oct	11,563	Completed
	Pinyudo I	10 Oct	12 Oct	26 Oct	52,008	On-going
	Akula	12 Oct	12 Oct	13 Oct	1,946	Completed
	Okugo	13 Oct	21 Oct	26 Oct	14,163	Completed
	Nguenyiel	16 Oct	18 Oct	8 Nov	113,680	On-going
	Jewi	16 Oct	20 Oct	3 Nov	68,914	On-going
	Kule	23 Oct	24 Oct	31 Oct	53,753	On-going
	Tierkidi	23 Oct	24 Oct	10 Nov	73,525	On-going
Benishangul Gumuz						
Assosa	Kurmuk	14 Oct	30 Oct	10 Nov	16,461	
	Tsore	tbc	tbc	tbc	43,380	
	Sherkole	tbc	tbc	tbc	15,296	
	Bambasi	tbc	tbc	tbc	20,555	
Amhara						
Amhara	Alemwach	16 Oct	25 Oct	tbc	22,046	On going
	Kumer	15 Oct	17 Oct	23 Oct	9,712	Completed
	Mandefro	21 Oct	23 Oct	25 Oct	1,222	Completed
Afar						
Afar	Serdo	9 Oct	10 Oct	13 Oct	8,745	Completed, though with limited turn out
	Berhale	13/14 Oct	23 Oct	31 Oct	26,396	On-going
	Assayita	18/19 Oct	15 Oct	27 Oct	23,198	On-going
SNNP						
SNNP	South-Omo (Ngangatom)		23 Oct	25 Oct	4,933	On-going
Oromia						
Oromia	Dillo		23 Oct	25 Oct	1,494	Completed
	Megado	tbc	tbc	tbc	2,536	