

DADAAB REFUGEE CAMPS, KENYA

UNHCR BI-WEEKLY UPDATE

01 - 15 December 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

Pilot Project of voluntary return of Somali refugees

A first group of Somali refugees left Dadaab refugee camp to cross the border from Kenya to Somalia to return home. The first convoy of 91 Somali refugees/18 households took place on 8th December followed by another convoy of 88 individuals/13 households left Dadaab on Thursday 11th December.

Before departure, the UNHCR Return Help Desk provided refugees with return related information, counselled them on the right to return, helped them to make an informed decision and verified the voluntary nature of the return. UNHCR's partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provided refugees with country of origin information relevant to conditions in designated return areas, including available assistance and services. The first convoy of returnees crossed the border to Somalia and reached Dhobley town around 14:40 on Monday, 8 December, following official opening of the Kenya-Somalia border by the Kenyan and Somali authorities to allow lawful cross border movement for the returning refugees.

Officials from both the Government of Kenya and the Interim Juba Administration (IJA) conducted a ceremony at the border point to show their commitment to support returnees at both sides of the border. The Somalia Government was represented by key ministers from the Interim Juba Administration, included the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, while Kenya was represented by members of Parliament from Garissa County and senior officials from Department for Refugee Affairs (DRA).

This marks the beginning of the six months Pilot Phase of the Voluntary Refugee Return Project from Kenya to Somalia as an initiative to support Durable Solutions to what for many have been years if not decades of displacement. The initiative is being carried out in the context of the Tripartite Agreement signed on 10th November 2013 by the Governments of Kenya, Somalia and UNHCR. The agreement governs the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees in Kenya and ensures that this takes place in conditions of safety and dignity.

Infrastructure on both sides of the border has been established by UNHCR in collaboration with partners to support refugees deciding to voluntarily return and resume lives in Somalia. The infrastructure comprises of Return Help Desks in Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya, and across the border in Somalia is a Border Way Station (Dhobley) as well as Home Way Stations in three areas identified for returns during the pilot phases, namely in Luuq, Baidoa and Kismayo.



Refugee who decided to return back to their places of origin in Somalia are boarding the bus in Dadaab.

Photo: UNHCR/Dadaab

The Pilot Project will only include Somali refugees in Kenya, from these areas, who freely and voluntarily decide to return home after undergoing counseling by UNHCR and its partners on the prevailing conditions in Somalia, especially with regard to security.

The return support package to returning refugees comprises assistance to secure safe transport, an unconditional cash grant, essential travel and hygiene kits for use during the journey home, tools, food and other basic needs assistance to support the sustainability of return and reintegration in Somalia. Reintegration projects are already being implemented in the three pilot areas of return to improve livelihood and access to basic services, in order to support sustainable return and reintegration.

SECTION UPDATES

Protection

Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

The RSD Handover process to the government was still in transition during the reporting period. Seven DRA staff have been recruited and are receiving on the job training with respect to RSD functions and activities. These activities include file management, file tracking, RSD interview schedule, RSD interviews and RSD assessments. UNHCR is fully engaged in the supervision of the RSD handover process to the government. During the reporting period, the average number of days taken from the time of first Instance RSD interview to decision notification is noted to be 90 days. It is worth noting that since 01/07/2014, all RSD decisions are being endorsed by the Commissioner of Refugee Affairs.

Registration of Unregistered Individuals

- A total of 157 new arrival refugees who had been registered by DRA on 28th November were also registered in UNHCR proGres database on 1st December. Compared to an annual performance target of 10,400 Person of Concerns (PoC) registered on an individual basis with minimum set of data required, a total of 12,135 unregistered have been registered as at 15th December, representing 117% of progress above the target.
- During the reporting period, 56 new born were registered. Compared to an annual performance target of 14,300 children registered and issued documentation under regular birth registration procedure, a total of 9,921 children have been registered as at 15th December, representing 69% of progress towards the target.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

- The **16 Days of Activism campaign** against SGBV ended on 10th December. This was an annual international campaign that usually starts on 25th November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ends on 10 December, Human Rights Day. This year's campaign called for an end to child marriage as commonly practiced in some societies. During the campaign, there were community radio discussions, sports tournaments, focus group discussions and film screenings that advocated behavioral change and an end to child marriages. Emphasis was placed on including boys and men in prevention of SGBV. During the same period three calendar days were celebrated; World Aids Day whose theme was "Return to Zero" emphasizing on reducing the numbers of infections in the camps. Voluntary counselling and testing was done within the camp for those who wanted to know their status and the community was enlightened on various myths surrounding HIV/AIDS and services available within the camps.



16 Days of Activism campaign against SGBV ended on 10th December.

Photo: UNHCR/Dadaab

Education

- The Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER) program held its first onsite learning for certificate in Education studies- elementary (CES-E) and Diploma in Teacher Education- Secondary (DTE-S) in August 2014. The enrolment in the classes is CES-E 115 student teachers and DTE-S 87 students. The population of female students in the CES-E class is 63 and 5 in the DTE-S. The December lessons comprised of courses in General Science teaching methods, teaching mathematics, principles of teaching and chemistry for the Diploma students all done by University of British Columbia and Moi University. The Certificate students are currently learning integrated arts and human development taught by lecturers from York University. The current learning session started on 29th November and is expected to end on 20th December.

Health

- The Polio campaign and immunization programme came to a close on 10th December after one year. No case of polio was reported during the one-year period. This achievement was recognized by all stakeholders as a great milestone.
- Visit of consultant Gynecologist was performed on 26th November – 1st December. 130 women with various gynecological problems benefited from specialist review and management. Sub national Polio campaign targeting children under five was conducted in Dadaab camps from 6th to 10th of December with successful administrative coverage more than 95%.
- UNHCR in collaboration with Kenya Red Cross continues to support the Garissa Medical Referral Center. The center supported 48 PoC's of which 28 were female, 20 male, 02 referred to Nairobi for further management. The center conducted two health education talks and distribution of soap to improve hygiene awareness among patients.



Photo. UNHCR/Dadaab

Polio vaccination campaign in Dadaab refugee camps.

Food Security and Nutrition

- The 1st cycle of December food distribution concluded on 8th December with 13 Biometrics staff carrying out their duties at their respective Food Distribution Points. 50% food cut announced by WFP remained in place with no major incident being reported. General Food Manifest for 2nd cycle of December with 80,582 Households (343,497 Individuals) set to benefit. Food collection statistics with 75,170 verified households, 74,881 collected, 285 no match and 11,554 food collected by AFCs for the 1st cycle of December.

Water and Sanitation

- UNHCR will support NRC WASH activities in Hagadera by providing a tractor to offload the garbage in the skips. This will improve garbage collection in the camp. In addition, NRC trained 80 community workers on spraying techniques before the commencement of the spraying exercise that is expected to rid the camp of crawling insects that are attributed to infections in the camp.
- UNHCR and NRC in conjunction with the community leaders participated in a mass cleaning campaign of Hagadera market which is expected to improve the health levels and the standards of hygiene.



Photo. UNHCR/Dadaab

Refugees participating in a mass cleaning campaign in Dadaab camps.

- In Kambioos, World vision Kenya constructed 12 disability accessible public taps and at the protection area under the WASH disability mainstreaming program. This is expected to improve access to water for Persons with disabilities in the camp.

Shelter & Access to Energy

- With the advent of the short rains, there is an expected increase in the demand for shelter materials. Consequently a total of 500 plastic sheets were distributed to vulnerable individuals in Hagadera on 25th and 26th November.
- Hagadera has not benefitted from shelter in the past and will therefore benefit from shelter in 2015. UNHCR and DRA are currently undertaking a joint shelter assessment with the aim of identifying the critical gaps and the most in need groups to benefit from the limited support that will be available.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

Community Participation and Livelihoods

- In Kambioos camp, youth elections were conducted for the umbrella Kambioos youth group that will consist of 52 groups. The seven officials elected are expected to steer the affairs of the youth in Kambioos to articulate their issues and realize their potential.
- The International Labor Organization conducted trainings in Garissa Town for 294 host community youth around Garissa County including Ijara, Hulugo, Fafi and Garissa Township on 2nd December. The training focused on skills and participation for sustainable development to be to complement UNHCR ongoing support especially in Fafi sub-county.
- UNHCR attended the graduation of 18 (5 female) refugees, who went through a Functional Rehabilitation course run by Handicap International. The objective of the training is to boost community empowerment in supporting persons with disability, while enhancing opportunities for durable solution.
- During the reporting period, in Dagahaley camp, some 4500 seedlings were distributed among them, 60% went to refugee household, 20% went to greenbelt and 15% went to agency planting.



Photo: UNHCR/Dadaab

Dagahaley tree nursery and seedling distribution point.

Resettlement

A total of 43 cases (including women and girls at risk) underwent resettlement case composition interviews. 60 cases comprising of 204 individuals were interviewed for processing Refugee Resettlement Form and possible onward submission to resettlement countries. During the reporting period, 16 cases comprising of 64 individuals were submitted to UNHCR Branch Office Nairobi for onward submission to USA and Sweden.

During the reporting period, 72 individuals departed Dadaab for onward resettlement to US (52) and Sweden (5), Slovenia (7), Canada (2), Norway (4). A total of 15 movement passes for 72 individuals departing for onward resettlement were prepared and issued during the reporting period.

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Web portal on Somali Displacement:
<http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>

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