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UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Ethiopia

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

As of 31 December 2016

793,321
registered refugees
and asylum-seekers
in Ethiopia



57.6%
below the
age of 18

15.6%
are youth



86,556
new arrivals in 2016

54,739 in Gambella

24,689 in Shire

3,084 in Melkadida

2,101 in Assosa

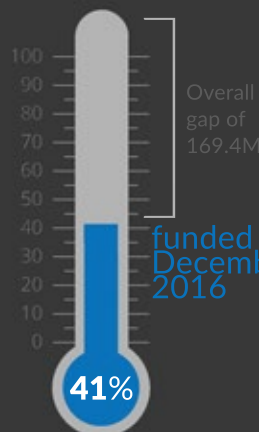
1,532 in Samara

411 in Addis Ababa

PROVIDING PROTECTION,
ASSISTANCE AND FACILITATING
DURABLE SOLUTIONS FOR REFUGEES
IN COLLABORATION WITH **ARRA**,
UN AGENCIES & **NGOs**

25 Camps

Shire
Assosa
Gambella
Samara
Jijiga
Melkadida
Borena
Addis Ababa



41% of the refugees' needs in Ethiopia have been covered through the regular programme and through the following situations: Somalia, South Sudan, Yemen and the Crisis in Europe.

*81,078 (10.2 percent) 81,084 Eritrean refugees are believed to have spontaneously settled elsewhere in Ethiopia. This figure will be subject to verification

FOCUS ON THE OPERATION

Addis Ababa: a microcosm of refugees in Ethiopia

Early in the sunny morning hours, life begins to fill the Refugee Community Centre run by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The youth are playing an intense volleyball match, whilst children run joyfully through the grounds and a few elderly observe the vivid scene. In common they are all refugees, but the crowd gathering daily in the small JRS compound comes from very different backgrounds in the region; Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen, as well as the Great Lakes. Together, they represent an urban 'microcosm' out of the some 785,000 refugees in Ethiopia.

Out of this huge population, some 18,000 refugees live in Ethiopia's capital as urban refugees with a recognised authorisation. "Usually, those are cases with serious medical conditions or protection concerns that cannot be addressed at camp level. In order to guarantee effective support, UNHCR and the Government of Ethiopia's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) refer refugees for (temporary) relocation to Addis Ababa," states Mr Mamadou Dian Balde, Assistant Representative for Protection in the UNHCR Representation in Ethiopia. Other exceptions include scholarship students in tertiary educational institutions outside the camps. Eritrean refugees embody a special case; if they fulfill certain criteria, they are allowed to apply for urban refugee status under the 'Out of Camp Policy' (OCP) in diverse urban settings across the country.

In various ways, the UNHCR operation in Addis Ababa is different from the work in the camps. The refugee communities in urban settings are inevitably more disconnected, making it more difficult to raise awareness and to share relevant for refugees.


Only a few places, including the JRS compound, bring the refugees together and provide access to learning facilities, as well as a way to spend leisure time. In fact, whilst urban areas often come to be associated with hope and better chances to find employment, urban refugees face a series of challenges given the independent nature of their residence.

"Limited livelihood and self-reliance opportunities imply high dependence on external support. Comparatively high and increasing living costs disproportionately affect the refugees and expose them to rent and food price discrimination, further reinforcing their need to rely on others," highlights Ms Sophia Mbui, UNHCR Associate Protection Officer in Ethiopia. To cater their basic needs and support their wellbeing, UNHCR and partners provide a blanket monthly subsistence allowance to all urban refugees who are not part of the OCP. Nevertheless, refugees often have to resort to alternative coping mechanisms, especially given the limited prospects for local integration in face of a lack of access to employment and language barriers.

**"Limited livelihood
and self-reliance
opportunities imply
high dependence on
external support"**

*-UNHCR Associate Protection Officer
in Addis Ababa*



A photograph of a man with dark skin and a beard, smiling broadly while looking at a laptop screen. He is wearing a red jacket over a grey t-shirt. His hands are on the laptop keyboard, and he is wearing a gold ring on his left ring finger. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“To effectively address the specific requirements of the structures and demographics of the urban refugee population, we must therefore also strengthen community-based protection mechanisms in Addis Ababa,” mentions Ms Rana Milhem, spearheading UNHCR’s community-based protection efforts. “Innovative approaches such as our Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROV) programme improve dialogue within the refugee communities to increase awareness of protection risks and available services, as well as to enhance coordination between refugees and refugee-supporting organisations,” She adds. Launched in late 2016, the ROV engages some 60 urban refugee volunteers from all nationalities to reach out to their communities, identify vulnerable cases, and hand out information about the availability of services. Ultimately, the ROV empowers the urban refugee community to spearhead solutions to their concerns.

In 2017, UNHCR Ethiopia and its partners strive to further improve refugees’ lives in Addis Ababa. In the context of the Leaders’ Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis in September 2016, the Ethiopian Government made numerous positive pledges to significantly strengthen the course of its refugee policy, including allowing local integration, access to lawful employment, expansion of the OCP, and improving education services for the refugees. Particularly employment is highly relevant for the urban refugees as this will open up ways towards self-reliance. Against this background, UNHCR and partners look ahead with confidence that Addis Ababa, as well as all camps, become places of hope and opportunities for the refugee population hosted in Ethiopia.

“We must therefore also strengthen community-based protection mechanisms in Addis Ababa”

- UNHCR Protection Officer
(Community - Based, in Addis Ababa)

FOCUS ON THE OPERATION

Hopes rekindled as Sudanese refugee gets chance for university education

"My name is Abdurrahman Silfor Jadeed and I'm a 41-year-old Sudanese refugee from the troubled South Kordofan region (Nuba Mountains). I have fond memories of my childhood; going to school and playing with my younger brother and sister as well as with my friends in our village in Sallara Delling County.

My father was a hardworking farmer and he supported our family of five very well. It was a happy family until that fateful day in 1992 when my father succumbed to his illness and our life suddenly turned upside down. My father died for lack medical attention and that is deeply regrettable. There was no medical facility in our village nor could we take him to a nearby town as we were living in the midst of a conflict zone with all the roads blocked.

As the eldest child in the house, I had to assume full responsibility at the tender age of 16. Life became unbearable. My dreams and ambitions were shattered. Deep sorrow, lack of peace and economic hardship forced us out of our home and we embarked on the long, dangerous and arduous journey to Khartoum.

Life in Khartoum was not easy either, but at least we had relative peace there. It was a constant struggle for survival, characterized by harassment and security problems. Overcoming all these, I pursued my college education and graduated with diploma in science & technology. But I could not find a job and I suspect that was because of my tribal origin as a Nuban.

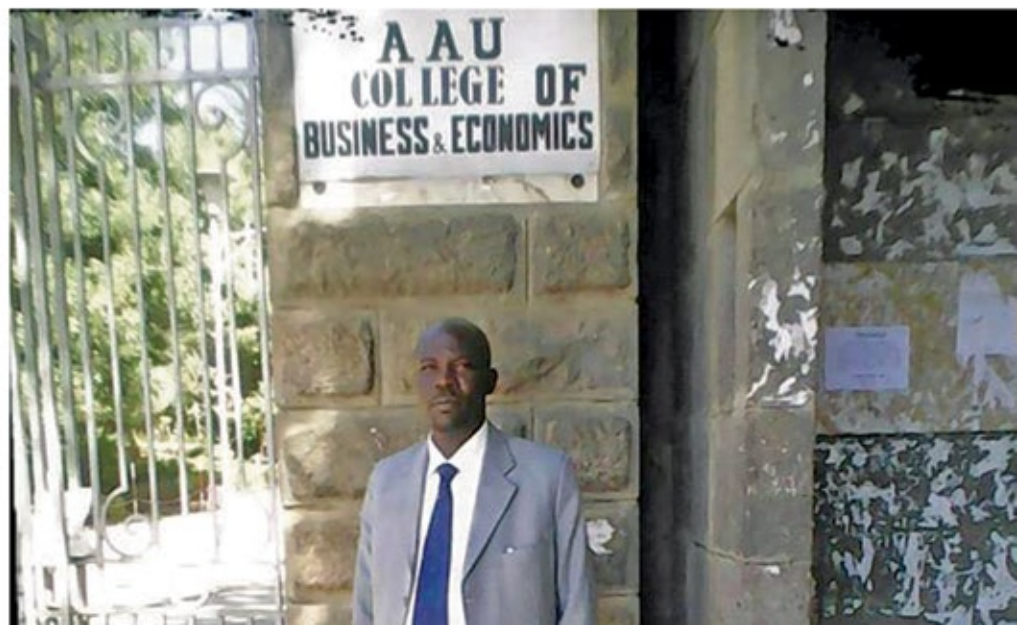
In desperation, I left Khartoum for South Sudan and became a refugee in Yida camp. When the war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, I was once again displaced to Malakal and Nasir before I crossed the border to Ethiopia in March 2014. I had endured a lot in between, including detention for three weeks by one of South Sudan's warring parties.

Now, it looks like that my woes are over and that I can dream again. Thanks to UNHCR, I've joined the Addis Ababa University in October 2016 where I'm studying for my degree in information technology. My hopes have now been fully rejuvenated and I'm now looking forward to the day of my graduation. After that I will be able to work and support my mother and siblings who are still in Khartoum. I will also be able to get married, establish a family and once again lead a normal life."

UNHCR Ethiopia is actively promoting higher education for refugees. To date, more than 1,800 qualified refugees are studying in different institutions of higher learning across the country. More than 81% are sponsored by the Ethiopian government and enrolled in state-owned universities whilst the rest are supported by the German government-funded DAFI Scholarship Programme.

By Kisut Gebre Egziabher in Addis Ababa

**"My hopes
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OPERATIONAL UPDATES

REFUGEE OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS: EMPOWERING URBAN REFUGEES

Two three-day training sessions between 5 and 10 December 2016 signaled the start of the innovative 'Refugee Outreach Volunteers' (ROV) programme aimed at enhancing cooperation between urban refugees in Addis Ababa and refugee-supporting organizations. The ROV seeks to empower refugees to effectively solve their problems in close collaboration with UNHCR, its government partner, the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), and urban implementing partners, notably DICAC and JRS.

After a careful selection process which took account of nationality and gender balance, the training brought together some 60 urban refugees from Eritrea, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, South Sudan and the Great Lakes. All of them share the passion for and commitment to the cause of serving their communities. They learned about the work with vulnerable refugees and the concept of community-based protection as envisaged by UNHCR and partners. Looking ahead to 2017, the ROVs will undertake home visits to particularly vulnerable refugees, assist them in accessing services, provide related information, assist in preventive health promotions, as well as inform UNHCR and ARRA about protection concerns and relevant developments within their communities. Ideally, the ROVs will significantly strengthen existing links and create new dialogues within their communities and serve as a 'bridge' between refugee community and UNHCR.



OPERATIONAL UPDATES

TELLING THE REAL STORY TO SOMALI REFUGEES: THE 'VOICE OF HIS GENERATION' IN JIJIGA

In mid-December, Somali-British singer-songwriter, actor, and music producer Mr Aar Maanta visited the Somali refugee community in the Jijiga operation in southeastern Ethiopia, featuring as the second high profile supporter of the 'Telling the Real Story' campaign to raise awareness about the risks of onward movement. Maanta has been described as the Somali 'voice of his generation'; with a loud and positive echo from the refugees in all camps, the impact of his visit did not come as a surprise. "I connected very well with the refugees and gave several performances, some of which were spontaneous gigs with refugee bands," Maanta affirms enthusiastically. The visit included several activities, mainly music performances and dramas by both Maanta and numerous refugees, supported and facilitated by UNHCR and partners staff on the ground. The four days significantly contributed to deepen the dialogue between refugees about onward movement and human trafficking.

For some refugees the decision to embark on risky journeys is the only way towards a hopeful life. 'Telling the Real Story', launched in April 2016 in Ethiopia, aims at comprehensively informing Eritrean and Somali refugees about the dangers and strings attached to a journey to Europe, and the realities the refugees face when moving onwards from their country of asylum.



WORLD AIDS DAY AND 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM ON SGBV: COMMEMORATIONS & AWARENESS-RAISING THROUGHOUT ETHIOPIA

Between 25 November and 10 December, 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) are celebrated to enhance action to end violence against women and girls around the world. During this period, the world joins efforts to raise awareness and show support for people living with HIV during the World Aids Day (1 December). UNHCR Ethiopia, together with its partners and the refugee communities in Addis Ababa and in the camps, organized a series of events and activities, including dramas, musical performances, games, panel discussions and creative sessions.

All activities found widespread acclaim; they significantly contributed to raise awareness and share information on HIV prevention and GBV-related risks, as well as to entertain the Ethiopian refugee community for several days.



OPERATIONAL UPDATES

2016-overview of high-level visits to refugee camps

“We will do our best to create opportunities here and to improve resettlement placements and other legal ways of migration so that refugees will not expose themselves to danger”

In 2016, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency- Ethiopia operation- attracted a number of visitors, including media correspondents, high-level political leaders and representatives of the donor community who boosted UNHCR's profile through various outlets. These are in addition to routine project monitoring and technical visits by donor countries.

Less than a month after assuming his role as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees at the start of the year, Mr. Filippo Grandi, visited Ethiopia between 29 January and 1 February 2016. He attended the 26th African Union Summit, met with the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and visited the Hitsats camp and Endabaguna Reception Centre in northern Ethiopia where Eritrean refugees are sheltered. During his first visit to Africa as High Commissioner, Mr. Grandi saw firsthand some of the challenges of the refugee operation in the Tigray Region, including issues relating to unaccompanied and separated children and onward movements. He warned the refugees against risking their lives by embarking on dangerous journeys to Europe and other western destinations. “We will do our best to create opportunities here and to improve resettlement placements and other legal ways of migration so that refugees will not expose themselves to danger.”

In March, His Excellency Sergio Mattarella, President of the Republic of Italy and his senior advisors visited the Tierkidi camp in Gambella, western Ethiopia, where South Sudanese refugees have been hosted. Not only did the President commend the work that UNHCR and partners have been doing on the ground, but he pledged upfront 200,000 Euros for projects focusing on water and education.

UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Mr Ger Thabach Duany's also visited Jewi and Tierkidi camps in Gambella. A former refugee in Gambella himself in the late 1980s, Duany, a Hollywood actor, used the visit to draw parallels between the two periods. After the visit, Mr. Duany appeared on TEDx event (www.tedxplacedesnations.ch) and skillfully presented the plights of South Sudanese refugees in Gambella.

Around the same period, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Norway, alongside the Ambassador of Norway to Ethiopia and other officials, visited Eritrean refugee camps in northern Ethiopia. The purpose of the visit was to get a first-hand impression of the humanitarian situation of the Eritrean refugees, as well as to gain better understanding of the dynamics of onward movements, driving thousands of Eritrean refugees on the perilous trek across the Mediterranean Sea.

In May, the Ambassador of France to Ethiopia, Ms. Brigitte Collet, visited Kebribeyah refugee camp in eastern Ethiopia-the oldest camp in the country hosting Somali refugees who arrived in the early 1990s. The ambassador was there to see the impact of projects financed by the government of France on the lives of the over 14,000 refugees in the camp.



UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, during his visit to Eritrean refugees.
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Ms Brigitte Collet, Ambassador of France to Ethiopia with a Somali refugee who runs a successful retail shop in the Kebribeyah camp.
©UNHCR/Kisut Gebre Egziabher



Ms Clementine Nkweta-Salami during a field visit to South Sudanese new arrivals in Gambella
©UNHCR/Kisut Gebre Egziabher

Later in the year, a series of high-level missions were organized to camps in Dollo Ado, Shire and Jijiga. These included the visit of the UNHCR Special Envoy on the Somali Refugee Situation, Amb. Mohamed Affey, who seeks to refocus global attention on. The Special Envoy toured all five refugee camps in the Dollo Ado region and had extensive discussions with refugee representatives, humanitarian partners as well as representatives of the Dollo Ado and Bokolmanyo woreda administrations.

The representatives of UNHCR's key donors also visited different camps to assess the situation on the ground and discuss with UNHCR and partners, in particular on the challenges faced in the response effort to the South Sudanese refugee emergency. Moreover, the UNHCR Representative

to Ethiopia, Ms. Clementine Nkweta-Salami and the new Deputy Director of ARRA, Ato Zeynu Jemal, visited different camps in the various field offices to see the situations for themselves, to encourage humanitarian workers as well as to provide guidance and support.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Ikea Foundation, Mr. Per Hegggenes visited Dollo Ado to monitor the progress of projects that are funded by his Foundation. Assessed sectors included education, energy, environment and livelihoods.

Towards the end of the year, two UNHCR high-profile supporters separately visited refugee camps in the Tigray and Somali Regional States, hosting Eritrean and Somali refugees respectively. Ms Sabrina Aman, the Eritrean-American actress, film producer and humanitarian, and Mr Hassan-Nour Sayid (Aar Maanta), a British singer, songwriter, actor, producer, were here as part of UNHCR's "Telling the Real Story" campaign to raise awareness about the risks of the onward UNHCR estimates, move than 5,000 migrants the Mediterranean, which is a record.



Mr Per Hegggenes, CEO of the Ikea Foundation, during his visit to Somali refugees in the Dollo Ado camps.
©UNHCR/Diana Diaz

REFUGEE VOICES

©UNHCR/Diana Diaz

Looking ahead with hope: a young South Sudanese dedicated to serving his community

Light floods through the spacious restaurant as John's dark eyes gaze thoughtfully across the scene. Together with 63 other urban refugees, John Youhanes, 26, a South Sudanese refugee living in Addis Ababa, made his way to the Getfam Hotel in the heart of Ethiopia's capital to attend the first UNHCR 'Refugee Outreach Volunteers' (ROV) training. John is an empathetic student of mining engineering at the Unity University who came to the training with a clear purpose: to serve his community. Ever since escaping political instability in South Sudan back in March 2012, leaving his entire family behind, he looked for ways to take meaningful positive actions for the refugees.

"I want to serve as a bridge between refugee agencies such as UNHCR and ARRA, and the refugee community," John remarks with hopeful impatience in his voice. UNHCR's newly-launched ROV initiative provides the ideal platform for him and other like-minded refugees. The programme seeks to empower urban refugees by training refugee volunteers to facilitate an engaging dialogue within the community, and between the community and external supporters. Ultimately, they are to solve their own problems.

John has not always been hopeful. After fleeing from his home and coming to Ethiopia, he experienced difficult turns and nagging uncertainty. Shortly after arriving to Ethiopia's capital, he was transferred to the Pugnido refugee camp in the Gambella region, western Ethiopia, where he was registered as a refugee. There he witnessed a major obstacle he deems essential for a person's development: lack of access to tertiary education. Perspectives for a bright future seemed far away.

Returning to Addis Ababa to start studying at Unity University, John continues to encounter more challenges. "The life as a refugee [in the city] can be tiring; there is little opportunity to plan. What is going to happen to me next semester? How can I afford the rent and health services if I become sick?" John wonders over and over again. Against this background, the ROV initiative visibly fills him with excitement; he clearly sees the opportunity to not only learn and grow, but also the responsibility to take action. "The training is very useful, it activates the mind and makes you reflect. Most importantly, I want to tell everyone about it and raise awareness on gender based violence and other protection risks for refugees, engaging everyone in a community-building dialogue."

The ROV programme features in UNHCR's redeveloped concept to urban refugee protection, emphasizing empowerment and ownership. For this purpose, the three day training introduced John and the other ROVs to community-based protection and their new role within the concept. Learning more about health services for refugees, Child Protection and Sexual and Gender based Violence and acquiring basic skills for case management, the ROVs are given the chance to better understand UNHCR's Protection role and become more aware of those who are at risk within their community. Eventually, the ROVs will also facilitate the link of vulnerable cases with the available services in Addis Ababa.

Looking ahead, John refuses to give up on his hopes and dreams. "I want to see my parents and my three brothers and sisters who are in South Sudan. Right now, even simply keeping in touch is costly. I would like to return to my home country myself, but only if there is peace." As long as a safe return to South Sudan cannot be guaranteed, UNHCR and partners will continue to explore alternatives to improve the refugees' lives. The ROV programme and intended benefits represent one exemplary approach. In 2017, UNHCR will continue to develop the ROV and related projects to comprehensively support all refugees in Ethiopia.

By Philip Graefen in Addis Ababa

"I want to raise awareness on gender-based violence"

UNHCR is grateful for the direct contributions made to the operation in Ethiopia in 2016 and so far in 2017 from:
USA | IKEA Foundation | Japan | Canada | CERF | Germany | Educate a Child Programme - EACI | Denmark | France | Sweden | International Olympic Committee | Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation | Italy | Band Aid | Priv. Donors Australia | Priv. Donors Spain

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Sweden | USA | Netherlands | Norway | Australia | Denmark | Priv. Donors Spain | Canada | Switzerland | Germany