



# REFUGEEES

## Highlights

IGAD and Somali Refugees  
**p. 2**

Nine pledges: ARRA, UNHCR  
and partners chart roadmap  
for implementation  
**p. 3**

Nine pledges: ARRA, UNHCR  
and partners chart roadmap  
for implementation  
**p. 4**

## Focus on the operation

Afar region: great hospitality  
in an inhospitable  
environment

**p. 5**

*"Services are limited due to  
funding constraints."*

Eritrean Asiya leaves shame  
aside and joins school

**p. 7**

## Refugee Voices

An insider look into the life of  
a Somali refugee living with a  
disability in Jijiga

**p. 8**

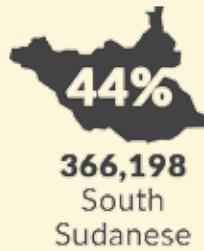
*"My family had to leave me  
behind because I couldn't move  
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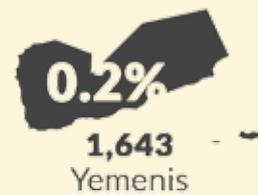
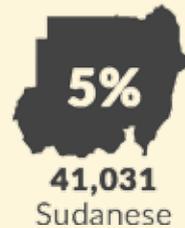
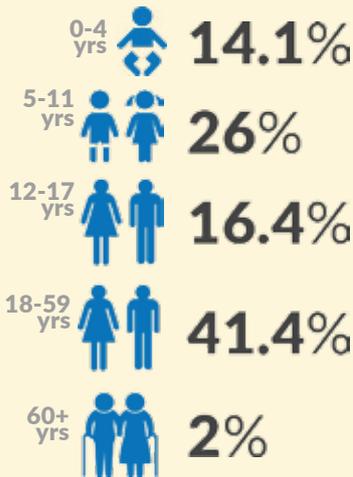
# REGIONAL OVERVIEW

As of 31 March 2017

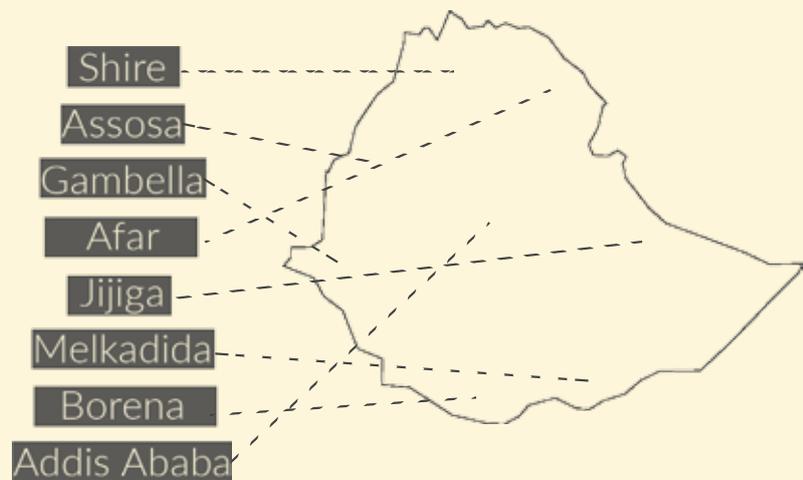
**829,925**  
registered refugees  
and asylum-seekers  
in Ethiopia



**56.5%**  
below the  
age of 18



## Locations hosting refugees



**38,434**  
new arrivals in 2017

**25,033** South Sudanese refugees

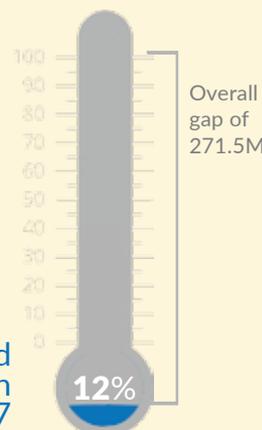
**8,293** Eritrean refugees

**4,689** Somali refugees

**419** refugees of various nationalities hosted in Assosa and Addis Ababa

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

**36M funded to 29 March 2017**



12% 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 (10.1 percent) Eritrean refugees are believed to have spontaneously settled elsewhere in Ethiopia. This figure will be subject to verification

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## Special IGAD Summit on **durable solutions for Somali refugees**

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**“UNHCR is delighted by this unprecedented regional effort that commits to providing collective protection and assistance to Somali refugees”**

East African leaders have called for a comprehensive regional approach to deliver durable solutions for Somali refugees, whilst maintaining protection and promoting self-reliance in the countries of asylum.

At a Special IGAD Summit held in the Kenyan capital Nairobi on 25 March 2017, the Heads of State and Government of the regional block adopted a communiqué calling for support in line with international responsibility-sharing as outlined in the New York Declaration's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The communiqué underlined the need to maintain protection in countries of asylum and respond effectively to the drought affecting the region. At the same time, the leaders emphasised the need to strengthen the capacity of countries in the region to contribute to the protection and provision of assistance to Somali refugees.

Meanwhile, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has appealed for support to bring greater stability inside Somalia, and to the countries hosting Somali refugees.

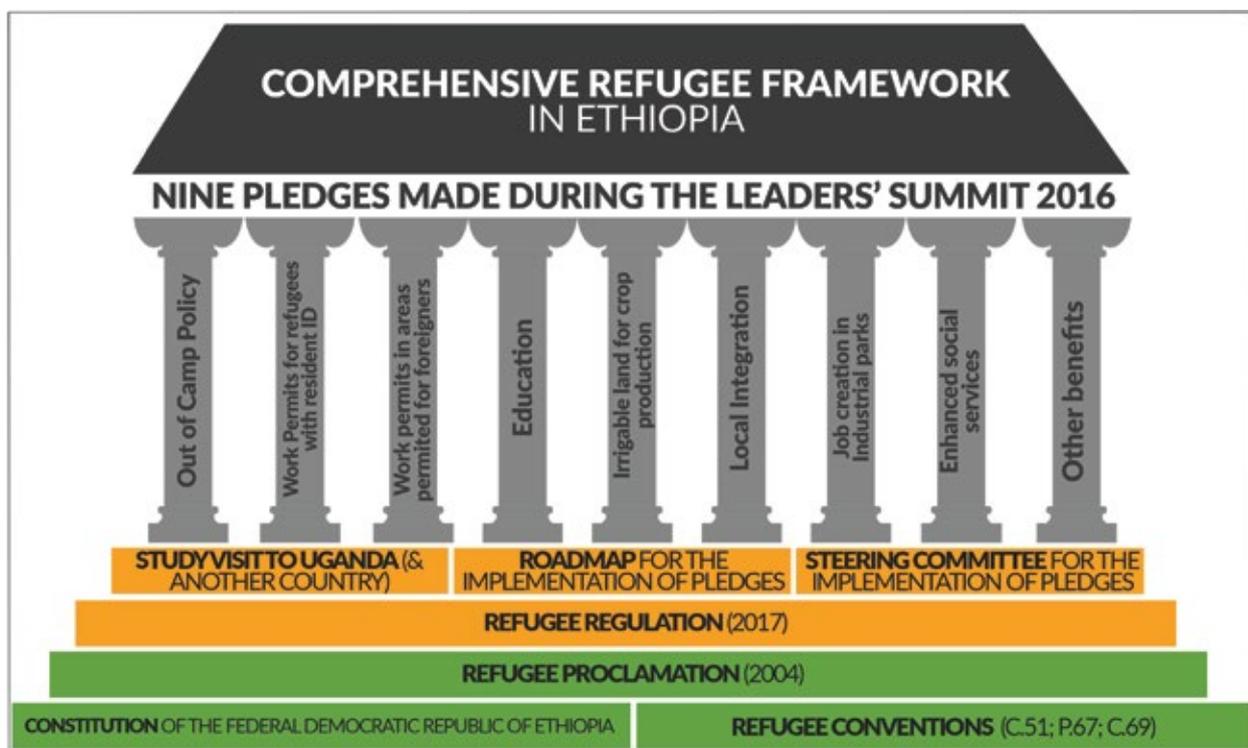
Speaking at the Special Summit of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, George Okoth-Obbo, commended Somalia's neighbours for their generosity in spite of their own socio-economic, national security and environmental challenges.

“UNHCR is delighted by this unprecedented regional effort that commits to providing collective protection and assistance to Somali refugees,” said George Okoth-Obbo, welcoming the outcomes of the Summit.

More than two million Somalis have been displaced in one of the world's worst displacement crises that has now entered its third decade. Today, an estimated 1.1 million people are internally displaced (IDPs) within Somalia, whilst nearly 900,000 - mostly in the third generation - are refugees in the region, including 247,000 in Ethiopia.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## NINE PLEDGES: ARRA, UNHCR AND PARTNERS CHART ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION



The Government of Ethiopia has continued to reiterate its commitment to improve and enhance opportunities for refugees in Ethiopia. “[The Pledges will] “bring about significant shifts in the planning approaches from humanitarian, life-saving assistance to a more innovative, sustainable, development-oriented self-reliance focus in order to minimize the dependency of refugees on aid,” said Ato Zeynu Jamal, ARRA’s Deputy Director, during a meeting with donors, UN Agencies, line Ministries and NGO partners. In collaboration with UNHCR - the UN Refugee Agency, ARRA aims to mobilize different stakeholders to operationalize the nine pledges announced at the Leaders’ Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis on 20 September 2016.

Progress made to date includes a draft Refugee Regulation which would soon be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. This new legally binding document is foreseen to complement the Government’s 2004 National Refugee Proclamation, which aims to create a conducive environment for the implementation of the pledges. Moreover, a draft Roadmap to guide the implementation of the pledges as well as a proposal to set up a multi-agency Steering Committee and a Secretariat to help coordinate the effective implementation of the pledges add to the current achievements. In recognizing the donors’ and other partners’ support, ARRA’s Ato Zeynu called for a renewed commitment to support the implementation of these important commitments.

On behalf of UNHCR “we would like to express our appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia for the important pledges and echo the Deputy Director in recognizing the contribution of donors and other partners towards the effective protection of refugees in Ethiopia,” highlighted Ms Clementine Nkweta Salami, UNHCR’s Representative in Ethiopia. Ms Salami went on the call for their continued support towards the realization of the pledges which, she said, “would significantly improve the refugee protection landscape in Ethiopia”, while noting the need for effective coordination to effectively manage the potential overlap and proliferation of initiatives that seek to support the implementation of the pledges.

Ethiopia co-hosted the Leaders’ Summit in New York where world leaders pledged to increase global responsibility sharing for refugees worldwide. Seventeen UN Member States, including Ethiopia, who current host significant refugee populations pledged to enact policy changes that will ensure an additional one million refugee children will be able to attend school, together with an additional one million refugees securing formal employment and livelihood activities. The Leaders’ Summit also resulted in the adoption of the New York Declaration, urging signatory states to develop a holistic approach to refugee protection and durable solutions. This approach, known as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) will be piloted in a selected countries, including Ethiopia.

# ACHIEVEMENTS



## ASSOSA BENISHANGUL-GUMUZ

With the support of ECHO and SIDA, an integrated volleyball and basketball court, four gender segregated shower rooms, a youth centre and six gender segregated toilets in a child friendly space were completed in Tongo Refugee Camp. These achievements will enhance child and youth protection initiatives whilst also improving their access to WASH facilities.



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## GAMBELLA GAMBELLA REGION

With the support from donors and partners, South Sudanese new arrivals continue to be registered in Pagak and timely relocated to Nguenyyiel Camp. To date, 50,337 refugees have found safe haven in Nguenyyiel camp, some of whom are accommodated in ten hangars until emergency shelters are ready.

## MELKADIDA SOMALI REGION

While new arrivals from Somalia continue to be registered, education materials have been made available for students at the Bokolmanyo and Kobe camps. 5,000 exercise books, 480 school bags, 668 pencils and 76 sanitary pads and underwear were distributed to children and youth. In addition, indoor and outdoor play materials were procured, a sign language teacher was hired and tea talk sessions continue to take place with parents. School-age girls and boys amongst the new arrivals are expected to join their peers in the different schools.



## MEKELLE AFAR REGION

The main pipeline driving water to the Barahle Refugee Camp underwent maintenance. The 10,250 Eritrean Refugees registered in the camp have access to clean and safe-drinking water.



## SHIRE TIGRAY REGION

With the support from the Spanish organization ALIANZA, 60 public street lights have been installed in the Adi Harush Refugee Camp. 18 refugees were trained to carry out maintenance and repairs. Following the provision of light in the streets, protection is expected to be enhanced.

# FOCUS ON THE OPERATION



## Afar: Great hospitality in an inhospitable environment

**A**far, the northeastern region of Ethiopia, is famous for 'Lucy', an Australopithecus afarensis discovered in 1974, who lived about 3.2 million years ago. However, little is known of the largely desert scrubland region's reputation as a safe haven for thousands of refugees.

Over the last decade, the Afar region has been playing host to thousands of ethnic Afar Eritrean refugees. The majority of the Afar people live in the Afar region of Ethiopia, although there are significant minorities in neighbouring Eritrea and Djibouti. As of the end of February 2017, Afar sheltered 34,524 refugees in two camps-Barahle and Aysaita- and three other sites, with more refugees arriving at an average rate of 100 persons per camp per month.

"When I came to Barahle Camp in 2014, I was shocked to see that most of the services were very basic," said Sulaiman Ali, chairman of the Refugee Central Committee in Barahle camp, an informal body representing the interests of the refugees. Sulaiman arrived in Ethiopia in the same year and was accommodated in Adi-Harush camp, in the Tigray region, home to more than 8,000 Eritrean refugees. A few months later, he was transferred to Barahle camp upon request and on the basis of his affiliation as an ethnic Afar.

"When I was in Adi-Harush, I thought it was the most deprived camp in the whole country," said the refugee leader, "but I now see Barahle is by far worse and can only be described as a forgotten camp."

"Services are limited due to funding constraints," mentioned John Kilowoko, Head of UNHCR's office in Mekelle, adding that UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, the government refugee agency, ARRA, and other partners were working hard to improve services with any means at their disposal.

"We are providing protection and other essential services as best we can, but there are gaps in many key sectors. We need to secure more resources and work harder to address them," he added. According to the Head of Office, shelter, alternative energy sources and education stand out as major critical gaps that need to be addressed immediately.

Sulaiman noted that refugees feel safe and secure in Ethiopia with many of their children having the opportunity to go to school every day. "There are livelihoods activities benefitting women in particular but this needs to be improved and expanded."

The statistics indicate that shelter coverage in the camp is at only 50%. It means that the majority of the refugees without shelter find solace within the host community who strive to provide shelter for them.

**"Services are limited  
due to funding  
constraints"**

*-UNHCR Head of Office in Mekelle*

# FOCUS ON THE OPERATION



At the same time, to cope with the lack of sufficient alternative energy sources, women walk long distances to fetch firewood, exposing themselves to protection risks and contributing to the degradation of the already fragile natural environment. During discussions with refugees, their hosts and the humanitarian community, it was clear that firewood collection was becoming a source of friction between the refugees and host communities, potentially compromising the quality of protection in the area.

Nonetheless, the Afar region has offered safe haven when the refugees needed it the most. Its people's solidarity is reflected not only in providing land to build refugee camps, but also in welcoming refugees within their own communities.

"Approximately 12,000 refugees live in an out-of-camp setting in Dalool Woreda, Ayinedib and Erebti Kebeles akin to villages and the support they receive from the hosting communities and the regional authorities is commendable," said Kilowoko.

Despite the goodwill and generous hospitality afforded to the refugees in the area, severe underfunding means that services are extremely limited, making life in this harsh environment even tougher. According to Kilowoko, addressing gaps in shelter and energy will be prioritized in the implementation of UNHCR's programmes in 2017 and beyond.



# FOCUS ON THE OPERATION

## Eritrean Asiya leaves shame aside and joins school

Education is key to restore hope, culture, and skills of displaced persons. Asiya Ahmed, 25, knows that having an education will ensure a better life for her and her five year-old child. With the support from UNHCR- the UN Refugee Agency- she and 19 women above the age of 14 have joined school to finish their primary education in Barahle refugee camp managed by the government refugee agency-ARRA.

"I never had the chance to go to school in Eritrea as it was far from our village. Now, I am in grade 1B. I don't look back and waste my time. We learn in our mother tongue in the camp school," says Asiya who fled Eritrea in 2012.

It is not always easy for adult women to join school. "Many of the women who join the classes drop out quickly as they feel ashamed to share a classroom with little children. But not me; I will not be discouraged and will finish my education."

ARRA, UNHCR and other partners encourage all refugees to access education regardless of their age. "Beyond primary, secondary and tertiary education, non-formal education and vocational training foster stability within the community and provide opportunities for both women and men," mentioned John Kilowoko, the Head of UNHCR's office in Mekelle.

Asiya does not let cultural obstacles to get in her way, and in spite of the many responsibilities she has as a single mother, she is determined to succeed. "The level of awareness on education in our community is very low. They want women to remain as housewives and to work only at home. I want to change the way we are seen and show everyone that women are more than just stay-at-home mothers," she adds.

As of 31 March 2017, 34,618 Eritrean refugees are hosted in Ethiopia's Afar region, 65% of whom are sheltered in the Barahle and Aysaita refugee camps. 50% of the camp-based refugee population are women and girls.

"At the School we try to raise awareness amongst the parents to increase the enrolment of girls and parents who have not finished or started their education. We aim at having all refugees educated," mentions Yetnayte Girma, the school director.

In the 2016/2017 academic year, a total of 2,480 refugee students, including adults like Asiya, have been pursuing their primary education in Barahle and Aysaita refugee camps. Due to limited space and facilities in the camp school, refugee children beyond fifth grade must travel more than two kilometres a day to attend classes in the host community school.

Asiya currently ranks seventh in her class but she is motivated to keep learning to one day be at the top of her classmates. "I must study hard to catch up. I can now read and write and will keep pushing myself until I finish secondary school."

Additional support is required for other adult women to continue their education, including classrooms, uniforms and textbooks. "I am happy going to school, we even get a meal. But we do not have enough space or supplies to be like normal students," she concluded.

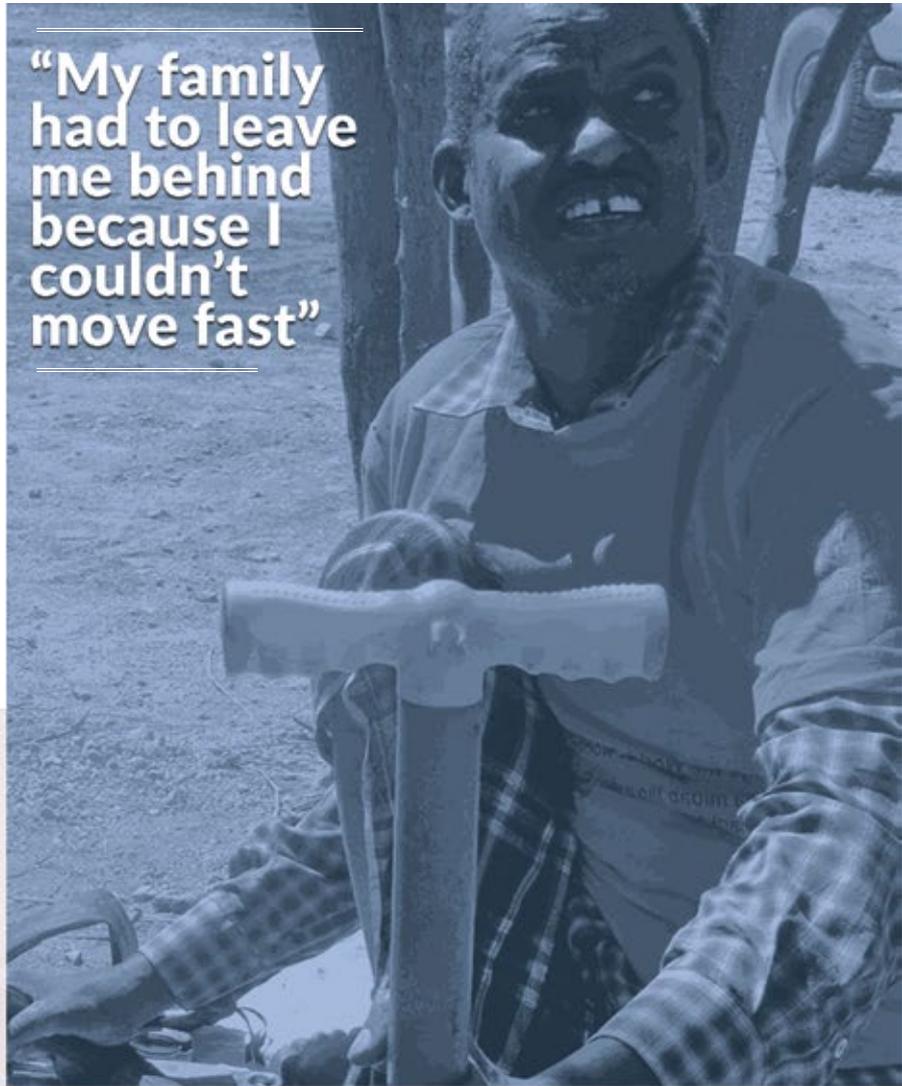
*Story and photo by Solomon Tazeb in Mekelle*

**"I never had the  
chance to go to  
school in Eritrea  
as it was far  
from our  
village"**



# REFUGEE VOICES

“My family had to leave me behind because I couldn’t move fast”



## Abdirizak Ahmed Ali proves disability is not inability

Living with a disability is not equal to inability, and certainly not in the case of Abdirizak Ahmed Ali. Like many of the Somali refugees in Sheder refugee camp, near Jijiga, capital of Ethiopia’s Somali region, the 40 year old fled his home in Mogadishu in April 2008, to escape the war in the African nation.

Despite relying on a wheelchair to move around, Mr. Abdirizak has overcome his condition by becoming an active member in the camp. He splits his time to fulfil his tasks as a refugee social worker, volunteer teacher for fellow refugees, helping at a maintenance workshop run by UNHCR’s partner RaDO. In addition, he runs a small business of restoring text, exercise, and religious books for his fellow refugees in the camp.

Being happily married and fathering four children, his savings are used to purchase basic daily supplies, mostly food and clothes. He recalls that “in a number of times, my family had to leave me behind because I couldn’t move fast. They had to stay safe.” In Ethiopia, he is coping extraordinarily well with his disability. After receiving basic maintenance training for his wheelchair in 2009, he is now working in the RaDO maintenance workshop repairing tricycles along with two of his children.

He says his mission is to not only make a living and support his family, but also to give hope to other persons with disabilities. “The fact that I give maintenance services in the camp has saved a lot of time and energy for people who would otherwise travel long distances out of the camp for such services.” Because of the support he provides, more and more refugees with physical disabilities are now able to freely move within the camp and access basic services such as education and health.

There still is a lot of room for improvement. Only 36 of the 265 children with disabilities in the Sheder camp are now attending schools. Children account for 42% of the refugee population with disabilities in the camp. Mr. Abdirizak, however, is optimistic about his and his family’s future. “I am thankful to the Ethiopian people and its government, as well as their international partners for generously hosting the Somali refugees,” he said. Mr Abdirizak’s proactive and creative nature serves as an inspiration for other refugees in the Sheder camp and makes a difference where it is most needed.

*Story and photos by Abdullahi Sheik Barri in Jijiga*



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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