

Bi-weekly Operational Update: 1-15 August 2019

UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia assumes new role as UNHCR Regional Director

On 30 July, UNHCR's Representative in Ethiopia, Ms. Clementine Nkweta-Salami, concluded her deployment in the country. Ms. Nkweta-Salami is assuming a new role as UNHCR Regional Director of the Eastern Horn and the Great Lakes Region, based in Nairobi. UNHCR Deputy Representative Mr. Vincent Parker is currently the acting UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia until the newly designated Representative arrives.

UNHCR Deputy Representative visits Shire after heavy windstorms

As part of a mission to the Afar Region, UNHCR's acting Representative Mr. Vincent Parker visited Aysaita Refugee Camp to assess the damage following the windstorm that hit Aysaita on 29 July. Due to the heavy winds, 15 refugees were injured, food and NFIs were lost, 153 shelters and 205 latrines were damaged as well as infrastructure, including a WFP food storage facility and a youth centre. Mr. Parker was briefed by ARRA, partners and UN agencies on the assistance provided thus far to affected families, as well as the remaining gaps and challenges.

Relocation of new arrivals from South Sudan to the Beneshangul-Gumuz Region

Following renewed hostilities in Maiwut County in South Sudan, an increase in the rate of new arrival in the Gambella Region has been observed. The majority of some 5,000 new arrivals are assessed to be refugees previously registered with UNHCR, who have been advised to return to camps of habitual residence in the Region. Those entering Ethiopia for the first time to claim asylum and protection are advised of their onward relocation to the Beneshangul-Gumuz Region. In coordination with IOM, WFP and ARRA, UNHCR is financing an airlift to relocate approximately 300 new arrivals currently residing in Pagak in the Gambella Region to Assosa in the Beneshangul-Gumuz Region following initial transfer to the Pamdong Reception Centre.

More Somali refugees from Eritrea to be relocated to the Somali Region

During the first week of August, 175 Somalis arrived at the border town of Zalembesa from Eritrea. The transfer of new arrivals began on 6 August to Jijiga in the Somali Region. UNHCR, in partnership with ARRA, WFP and IOM, has earlier completed the relocation to Melkadida and Jijiga of 1,013 Somali nationals who were previously registered as refugees in Eritrea. During the second week of August, 26 additional Somalis arrived at the border town of Zalembesa from Eritrea. The Somalis are currently staying at the transit center in Zalembessa where ARRA is providing food two times per day. The provision of sufficient quantities of water remained a challenge, particularly to ensure adequate sanitation practices.

Telling the real story about irregular movement

Mass awareness raising activities have been conducted in Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps in the Tigray Region for more than 300 refugees as part of the project "Telling the Real Story". Through book readings and screening of videos, the mass awareness raising activities focused on sensitizing refugees on the risks associated with irregular movements. As part of the project, UNHCR supports Eritrean, Nigerian and Somali survivors to share their experiences of crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach Europe.