

ETHIOPIA

February 2021

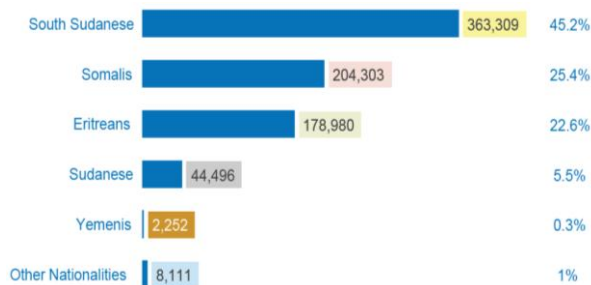
Ethiopia is the **third largest refugee-hosting country** in Africa, sheltering **801,451** registered refugees and asylum-seekers as of 28 February 2021. The overwhelming majority originate from **South Sudan**, **Somalia**, **Eritrea** and **Sudan**.

Protection and other critical services resume in **Mai-Aini** and **Adi-Harush** camps while **Hitsats** and **Shimelba** camps remain inaccessible. Work is ongoing to update the records and issue documents to refugees who may have lost them during the conflict. Distribution of monthly food rations continues.

UNHCR continues to respond to the **situation** of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia, leading the **Protection Cluster** and providing protection, emergency aid and other support to **IDPs** and **IDP returnees**, including the 200 IDP families in the remote Wabi-Ugur IDP site in the Somali Region.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Countries of Origin



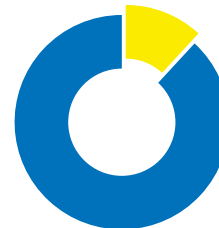
At the end of February 2021, Ethiopia hosted over 801,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly sheltered in 26 refugee camps established in five Regional States. There is a sizeable group of refugees and asylum seekers living out of camp, including over 35,000 who are registered as urban refugees in the capital Addis Ababa.

FUNDING (As of 2 March 2021)

USD 323.1 M

Requested for Ethiopia

Funded
9%



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

384 National staff

110 International staff

137 Affiliated work force

Offices:

1 Representation in Addis Ababa

5 Sub-Offices in Assosa, Gambella, Jijiga, Melkadida and Shire

8 Field Offices in Embamadre, Mekelle, Pugnido, Sherkole, Tongo, Dire Dawa, Bule Hora and Nekemte



A young woman carries home some critical relief items which UNHCR recently distributed to 200 displaced families at the Wabi-Ugur IDP site in the Somali Region. ©UNHCR/Hanna Qassis

Working with Partners

UNHCR's main government counterpart in the refugee response in Ethiopia is the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). UNHCR also works closely with 57 humanitarian and development partners and is part of the Humanitarian Country Team, where refugee programmes are discussed strategically to ensure the needs of refugees are adequately presented and addressed across the UN System. UNHCR builds on well-established coordination fora, including the inter-sector Refugee Coordination Group together with national and regional sectorial working groups. Committed to pursuing refugee inclusion in national services and economies, as per the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR is furthering partnerships with Ethiopian line Ministries, regional and local authorities, development partners and the private sector.

Main Activities

Protection

- Together with ARRA, UNHCR coordinates the delivery of protection and assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, as well as the promotion of solutions. It works to strengthen refugee protection through the expansion of improved community-based and multi-sectorial child protection and GBV programmes. Moreover, UNHCR works with government, national and international partners, including NGOs and UN agencies, to provide protection and assistance to IDPs and IDP returnees in different parts of the country.
- UNHCR also provides technical support to ARRA in the registration and status determination of new arrivals using an advanced biometric registration system (BIMS), which provides a more reliable means for the identification of refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, thereby enhancing their protection.
- UNHCR is working with UNICEF on a model and transformative Blueprint partnership to secure refugee children a fair deal in line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and as reflected in the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The main objectives of the Blueprint encompass strengthening existing national child protection systems, including birth registration systems; developing the capacity of national partners on refugee protection; and integrating refugee children into the national child protection systems.
- UNHCR is strongly committed to ensure consistent and effective communication with refugee communities. Therefore, social media groups throughout the operation were mapped and analysed. Key findings show that (i) 22% of refugee households in Ethiopia own one telephone, (ii) 90% of refugees in Addis Abba have connectivity compared to only 16% in refugee camps throughout Ethiopia and (iii) 3 out of 6 refugee locations in Ethiopia have WhatsApp groups in place. UNHCR actively makes use of these results for communication with refugee communities, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and the need to disseminate prevention messages on a regular basis.

Durable Solutions

- Providing resettlement opportunities remains a top priority, as conditions for voluntary repatriation are unfavorable for most refugee nationalities in Ethiopia, and local integration programmes are yet to be put in place. In 2021, UNHCR's resettlement submission target so far is 1,625 individuals, subject to ever changing country pledges. By the end of February, 182 individuals were processed for Resettlement. No cases departed in January and February this year due to the Department of Immigration's hold on exit permits for refugees. 99 individuals were supported in family reunification cases during the month.
- Fifty-one Anuak Ethiopians in 16 families, who had been refugees in South Sudan and Kenya for years, spontaneously returned home through the Raad border crossing point in Gambella. 36 of them came from Gorom Refugee camp in South Sudan while the remaining 15 were refugees in Kenya's Kalobeyei refugee camp. The returnees have been temporarily sheltered at the TVET college in Dimma Woreda, near Okugo camp where they were screened for COVID-19 and other health concerns. They will eventually head to their respective homes after completing the necessary formalities and receiving support.

Shelter

- Access to adequate shelter remains below the standard in all the refugee camps with only about half of the refugee population living in adequate shelter. UNHCR and its shelter partners continue to improve coverage of adequate shelters in all refugee camps including by constructing 1,073 transitional shelters in 2021. Site selection and mobilization of construction materials is underway. A total of 303 emergency shelters have been completed in Mai-Aini and Adi-Harush camps to accommodate newly relocated refugees. More shelters are in various stages of the construction process.

Education

- Following the extended closures due to COVID-19, all schools in the refugee camps, except those in Tigray Region, have reopened. To date, a total 150,697 refugee students (88,094 males and 62,603 females) have registered in pre-primary (24,724 boys and 23,486 girls), primary (55,373 boys and 36,712 girls) and secondary (7,997 boys and 2,405 girls) levels of education. Schools in camps in the Tigray Region remain closed. The current enrollment figure represents 70% of the students that were enrolled prior to the COVID-19 situation.
- However, meeting the minimum guidelines set by the Ministry of Education to curb the spread of coronavirus in the schools remains a challenge for most schools. Shift systems and alternate learning are being used as a temporary measure to maximize the use of available resources. Despite the good efforts, over 60% of all refugee schools in Ethiopia do not meet the standards of safe learning environments.

Health

- UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and its partners, facilitates access to primary and emergency secondary and tertiary healthcare services for refugees and asylum-seekers. It supports the operational costs of primary healthcare services in the different refugee camps, as well as the referral care costs for secondary and tertiary health services in regional and central referral facilities. In urban settings such as Addis Ababa, UNHCR covers the cost of medicines and investigations. Essential health service delivery has been restored in two of the four refugee camps in Tigray region.
- UNHCR, together with ARRA, Regional Health Bureaus and other health partners continued to carry out prevention and response to COVID-19 in refugee camps and other locations sheltering refugees in the form of risk communication and community engagement, service reorientation, training of health personnel, case identification, contact tracing and referrals, distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) and essential medicines and materials to strengthen health services. UNHCR is also supporting the Inter-agency COVID-19 response to the IDP situation by providing PPE and sanitation materials, equipping isolation and quarantine centres and providing community sensitization. UNHCR continues to advocate for the inclusion of refugees, other persons of concern as well as humanitarian workers in national anti-COVID-19 vaccination programmes. Indications are that the Ministry of Health will ensure that refugees and other person of concern are part of the national vaccination programme.

Food Security and Nutrition

- UNHCR contributes to the preventive and curative aspects of nutrition programmes through the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) model. It monitors the nutrition status of refugees through Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) assessments and coordinates with partners in nutrition response programming. UNHCR works with the World Food Programme (WFP) on food distribution to ensure refugees have sufficient access to basic food, they continue to receive only about 84% of the minimum standard food ration of 2,100 kcal per person per day. This has kept the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate in most camps higher than the acceptable standards. UNHCR is advocating for additional resources, so that refugees can receive the minimum standard of food in-take per day.
- The results of a rapid nutrition assessment conducted by Concern Worldwide in Adi-Harush and Mai Aini camps in Tigray show that the malnutrition rate measured using the Mid Upper Arm

Circumference (MUAC) remains at or <5%, which is within the acceptable range. The nutrition situation remains the same as the result of a similar survey in 2019. The situation did not deteriorate, apparently because food distributions were made prior to the conflict.

Water and Sanitation (WASH)

- UNHCR works with its partners to provide access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to refugees and asylum-seekers. An average of 19 litres of water was provided per person per day in the 20 camps from where data were available. Water and sanitation services continue to be reinforced in Mai-Aini and Adi-Harush refugee camps in the Tigray Region after UNHCR regained access to the sites.
- COVID-19 prevention activities such as the provision of adequate water and soap and hygiene promotion activities continued in all other camps except in the Tigray region. Almost the entire populations in the other camps have been reached with COVID-19 related hygiene promotion messages. 38,492 handwashing stations were functional in the camps at the end of February.

Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)

- UNHCR continues to provide monthly cash assistance to a small number of urban refugees in Addis Ababa (some 4,400 individuals) to cover their basic needs, with an additional amount for extra hygiene and sanitation support for the prevention of COVID-19. There are ongoing efforts to expand this assistance modality to the different refugee and IDP hosting areas in Ethiopia. UNHCR also advocates for provision of cash assistance to other vulnerable groups including to: a) the significant number of 'out-of-camp' refugees mainly in Addis Ababa, who previously sustained themselves by working in the informal sector and/or received remittances, but whose income has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, b) Eritrean refugees who were recently displaced from Tigray to Addis Ababa and have since been living in deplorable conditions.
- Following the piloting of cash assistance for shelter construction in two refugee camps -Awbare and Shedder- in Jijiga in 2019, UNHCR is working to scale up the intervention in the two camps and expand the same to other refugee hosting locations. CBI is also used to provide reintegration support to Ethiopian refugees, who voluntarily return to their country of origin. It will also be used to a limited extent to respond to the basic needs of IDPs in various locations.
- A joint cash and market feasibility assessment conducted in Gambella Regional State will provide evidence for the programming of cash or a combination of cash and in-kind assistance based on the contextual appropriateness. UNHCR will also participate in a cash feasibility assessment in Tigray Region in order to identify gaps and any opportunities to work with the various stakeholders in supporting both the basic needs of individuals and the local economy.

Access to Energy

- UNHCR continues to be part of the multi-actor partnership working to improve refugees' access to energy for cooking, lighting, and other uses. In 2021 access to alternative cooking fuel coverage will be scaled-up with a mix of briquettes, grid electricity, ethanol, and firewood interventions. The production of briquettes will be boosted mainly in camps in the Afar and Benishangul Gumuz regions while four new briquette machines will be installed in the Gambella camps. Three grid-connected communal kitchens will be operational in in camps in the Afar Region, while one of the three camps near Jijiga will have access to electricity through solar mini-grid connection. To improve the coverage of lighting energy for refugees, UNHCR and partners will continue to invest in the installation of solar streetlights, distribution of solar lamps and solar home systems. Priority will be given to sustainability and linkages with livelihood in line with the UNHCR Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy. As part of environmental rehabilitation and natural resource management, UNHCR and partners will continue to raise and transplant multipurpose trees across all refugee camps and hosting communities.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- To support the Government of Ethiopia's commitments to foster refugee economic inclusion, UNHCR continues its technical support to ARRA, bolstering their lead role in bridging the

humanitarian and development nexus. ARRA continues to issue resident permits to qualified refugees and UNHCR is supporting to ensure the process addresses protection related concerns.

- UNHCR continues to engage with strategic development partners to include refugees in upcoming development projects in Ethiopia. Such initiatives include the World Bank-funded Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), where design of a second phase is ongoing to include refugees as primary beneficiaries. The Bank's pilot Urban Productive Safety Net and Jobs Project (UPSNJP) is also being designed with UNHCR's input and will also target refugees in urban areas. Other initiatives include the implementation of IKEA Foundation-funded projects in the Somali region, where sustainability is a priority, as well as the support for expanded advocacy for additional partnerships to create an enabling environment for refugee inclusion.
- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been positive advancements with respect to the planned roll out of projects designed by development partners in 2020. The £24m SHARPE Project funded by FCDO will start market systems development activities in February 2021, targeting 200,000 beneficiaries in the Gambella and Somali regions over a period of three years. Similarly, the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) will kick off the Inclusive Digital Economies Action in Ethiopia: (IDEA). The project will ensure financial inclusion to 18,000 beneficiaries in 500 groups in the Somali region. The Poverty Alleviation Coalition consortium, led by World Vision Ethiopia will be fundraising to design and implement Graduation Programmes in all refugee hosting regions, expected to reach 14,000 households over a period of five years. UNHCR is working closely with these partners to ensure that refugee inclusion and protection is realized and that these projects support the COVID-19 economic recovery efforts in refugee hosting areas.

External / Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the direct contribution to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation in 2021

Denmark | IKEA Foundation | Japan | European Union (ECHO) | Netherlands | Education Cannot Wait | The Lego Foundation | Ireland | Sweden | Czechia | Other private donors

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2021

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 22.1 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Spain 13.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million

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LINKS

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