

# Ethiopia

10 June 2021

**806,541**

 Refugees and asylum seekers  
 as of 31 May 2021

**31,748**

 Handwashing  
 facilities in camps

**2,469**

 Health and  
 community workers  
 trained

**2,800** refugees  
 vaccinated for  
 COVID-19

## COVID-19 Operational Context

As of 09 June 2021, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health (MoH) reported **273,398** corona virus (COVID-19) cases and **4,226** related deaths in the country. A total of **1,901,363** people have been vaccinated against COVID-19, including **2,800** refugees. According to an update by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Ethiopia is one of the top five African countries that have registered the most COVID-19 related deaths to date. The Ethiopian Ministry of Health has issued a statement requiring travellers exiting, entering or transiting through Ethiopia to present digital negative COVID-19 certificates at all points of entry based on the African Union's Trusted Travel guidelines. "Paper certificates shall cease to be acceptable and only AU



*Refugees are part of the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Ethiopia, with 2,800 already vaccinated. ©UNHCR/Reath Riek*

Trusted Travel or Global Haven COVID-19 test certificates shall be allowed from July 1", the Ministry said.

## COVID-19 Prevention and Response

While vaccinations continue to be administered to priority groups including frontline health workers, individuals with severe underlying medical conditions and elderly people, UNHCR, ARRA and their partners, including the Regional Health Bureaus, continue to reinforce prevention measures in the refugee camps and sites hosting Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). They are enhancing communications on personal and environmental hygiene, reducing overcrowding, and promoting handwashing with soap. Supplies of water and soap continue to be provided, together with the installation of handwashing stations, enhancing health services and the provision of available personal protective equipment for health care workers, first responders and others.

- A total of **31,748 handwashing stations** have been installed in communal centres and households in the different refugee camps to promote regular handwashing with soap. More capacity is needed

however, to ensure that every refugee household is equipped with a handwashing facility and to facilitate distribution of soap in a more consistent manner.

- **2,469** trained **health and community outreach workers** are actively engaged in awareness raising, case investigations and management, as well as mitigation and prevention activities to control the virus. In addition, refugee representatives, Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs), women, youth and children's committees and other community representatives have been trained and are actively engaged to ensure that basic preventive measures are observed in the communities.
- The daily average per capita **water distribution** in the refugee camps stands at **20 litres**. While some of the camps have access to more than 20 liters per person, per day as per the UNHCR standards, others are receiving less than the emergency threshold of 15 liters per person per day. UNHCR, ARRA and partners continue to work to ensure that all refugees have access to adequate potable water, in keeping with the minimum international standards.
- **Isolation facilities**, known as Temporary Assessment Units, have been set up in all refugee camps to temporarily quarantine possible suspected COVID-19 cases, pending their transfer to Government isolation and treatment facilities, as needed. UNHCR has provided hospital beds, mattresses, coverall gowns and other supplies to equip the facilities and the health staff while extending support to the Government-run treatment centers, which are also accessible to refugees.
- In the capital Addis Ababa, where approximately **48,000** urban refugees reside, UNHCR is **communicating with refugees via WhatsApp and Telegram groups**. Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) and refugee leaders are also helping to raise awareness. In addition, telephone helplines and an online portal (**Digital Request and Complaints System**) are fully functional. Concerned UNHCR staff are processing and responding to requests that are received on daily basis.
- To meet additional expenses for soap and other sanitary materials, UNHCR provides an allowance of 300 Ethiopian Birr (\$6.88) per person per month, to urban-based refugees entitled to monthly living allowances. The intervention is monitored through post-distribution phone interviews by Protection staff.
- Registration services have resumed (interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic) at the UNHCR's office in Addis Ababa, to issue refugees with registration documents and update their data. Limited numbers are received per day in line with health measures in place, to ensure the safety of refugees and staff.
- UNHCR continues to **support the inter-agency COVID-19 response to the IDP situation** in the country, distributing non-food items, equipping isolation and quarantine centers and providing community communications on health messaging.

## COVID Impact and Challenges

**Health Impact:** Pivoting of much of UNHCR's limited health budget to the COVID-19 prevention and response efforts is resulting in a strain on the provision of regular essential health services in the refugee camps. This, in turn, will pose challenges in continuity of maternal and child health services, disease control programmes such as for HIV, TB and Malaria, among others. The reallocation of funds to combat COVID-19 could undermine the gains already made to control non-communicable diseases including diabetes, hypertension and mental health.

**Economic impact:** Despite the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, economic activities in the different refugee hosting areas continue, including the IKEA Foundation-supported livelihoods, resilience, and energy projects in the Somali Region. In the Gambella Region, UNHCR is partnering with an Ethiopian social enterprise 'Entoto' to support women groups to commercially produce bracelets that will be procured by an international brand UNIQLO. In Addis Ababa where thousands of urban-based refugees are hosted, UNHCR has engaged a local organization known as Women In Self Employment (WISE) to implement an urban refugee economic inclusion project which will also benefit Ethiopians.

## Operational Response Updates

**Tigray Emergency:** The humanitarian situation across the Tigray Region remains deeply concerning for refugees, the internally displaced and host communities. Civilians have endured seven months of conflict with only extremely limited basic services and assistance available, leading to a significant escalation in humanitarian needs. According to OCHA, while there are some improvements on humanitarian access, the situation in Tigray remains fluid and unpredictable. Blockades by military forces have in late May severely impeded access in rural areas, where humanitarian needs are most severe. In addition, armed hostilities continue in North-Western, Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Zones, while the humanitarian needs remain high. According to the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA) and the Early Warning Response (EWR) regional directorate of the National Disaster and Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), the conflict in Tigray has displaced an estimated 1.7 million people.

**Refugee Response:** A total of 8,359 refugees from the closed Hitsats and Shimelba camps have relocated to Adi Harush and Mai-Aini camps either on their own or transported by the Government from Shire. They continue to receive food and Core Relief Items upon arrival as well as key services including education. In Addis Ababa, of the 3,428 refugees identified thus far who previously resided in Hitsats and Shimelba camps, a majority have expressed their intention to have temporary residence in Addis Ababa, while others either requested to be safely returned to the camps in Tigray or to be supported in obtaining an "Out of camp" status to be able to live in Addis Ababa by sustaining themselves.

Regular Ethiopia country and regional UNHCR updates on the crisis can be found at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/rbehagl>



### Protection

**New arrivals from Somalia:** Including 642 new arrivals in May, a total of 3,215 Somali nationals have sought asylum at the Dollo Ado Reception Centre in Ethiopia's Somali Region since the beginning of the year. The majority have been relocated to the different camps while 450 people are still at the reception centre awaiting registration and relocation. UNHCR and partners continue to provide humanitarian assistance and key services including health, WASH and nutrition. In the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, 123 new arrivals have been received and processed, while a group of 328 previously registered refugees from South Sudan were relocated to Tsore and Gure- Shombola camps.



### Education

**796 refugees scored university passing marks:** 796 of the 924 refugee students who sat for the 12<sup>th</sup> grade national examinations in the current academic year in Ethiopia scored university entrance marks. This represents a 86% promotion rate compared to 50 - 60% in the past several years. The success rate in the Gambella camps is even higher at 92.4%, with 461 of the 499 students scoring passing marks.

UNHCR donated soap, face masks, sanitizers and blackboards to the East and West Wollega Zonal education office to ensure students have the protective equipment they need to attend classes in a safe learning environment.

## **Shelter & CRIs**

**Emergency Shelter construction:** Construction of 460 of the planned 500 emergency shelters at the Five Angles site near Shire was completed. UNHCR and its partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) constructed 250 of the shelters while the balance was covered by other partners. Following advocacy by UNHCR and others, the Government has approved an extension to the site to accommodate an additional 3,000 families. Installation of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities is ongoing before displaced families can be relocated from the public facilities they currently occupy. In Mekelle, 2,000 of the planned 3,300 emergency shelters have been completed in the new Sabacare site, expected to accommodate 19,000 internally displaced persons. Installation of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities is ongoing, with a planned completion by mid-June. Together with Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE), UNHCR is also constructing two community centers and installing solar lights. In preparation for the relocation, UNHCR and Partners facilitated a visit to the site by the community representatives.

**Distribution of aid items:** UNHCR and partners distributed non-food aid items to more than 9,000 displaced households in Tigray, reaching approximately 37,000 individuals in Shire, Axum, Adi Daero and Adwa. In Benishangul-Gumuz region, UNHCR, in partnership with the regional Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) and other partners distributed vital aid items to 134 families that were freshly displaced from Sedal in Kamashi zone and Ira Guliso in West Wollega zone. Kitchen sets, buckets, mosquito nets, plastic sheets, blankets, soap, sleeping mats and warm clothing for women were among the items distributed in collaboration with the local administration in Bambasi and ANE. Similar distributions were made earlier to 885 displaced families in Nekemte town and Diga locality of East Wollega zone-both located in the Oromia Region. Similarly, UNHCR distributed wheelchairs to 53 disabled IDP returnees in the Gedeo zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) and the West-Guji zone of Oromia Region. The local authorities who attended the handover appreciated the support, indicating that the wheelchairs will enhance the mobility of the beneficiaries that included children, women and older persons, and eventually strengthen their participation in socio-economic activities. Students were among those who received the wheelchairs.

## **Health**

**General Health Services:** 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. As part of the prioritized group for COVID-19 vaccination, frontline health workers and refugees fulfilling the national prioritization criteria, including frontline healthcare workers, individuals aged 65 years and above, and people with severe underlying medical conditions are being vaccinated.

**Health and nutrition screening in Dollo Ado:** New arrivals at the Dollo Ado reception centre continue to undergo health and nutrition screening with vaccination and other key health services being provided. Compared to the situation in April, a significant decline in cases of watery diarrhoea has been observed resulting in a corresponding decline in hospital admissions. Overall, 2,387 people were provided with general feeding while an additional 816 children and mothers were covered by the nutrition services. 179 individuals, mainly children, were treated for acute malnutrition. The improvements in the health and nutrition services have helped bring down the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate at the Dollo Ado reception centre to a manageable level.

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## WASH

**General WASH Services:** UNHCR works with partners to provide access to clean water and sanitation and improve hygiene practices through hygiene awareness campaigns reaching refugees and asylum-seekers. An average of 20 liters of water per person per day was provided across all the refugee camps during the reporting month. However, in some camps, water supply was quite low averaging around 6-14 liters per person per day against the desired standard of 20 liters. This is due to fuel shortage as well as systems breakdown, reducing the capacity of some boreholes to pump adequate water supplies. UNHCR is prioritizing the strengthening and maintenance of essential water systems to provide the desired 20 liters of water per person per day across all camps.

At the Dollo Ado Reception centre, latrine construction by UNHCR's partner International Rescue Committee (IRC) is 70% completed. Compound cleaning and disinfection activities continued.



## Livelihoods

**Production of fruit seedlings in Bambasi:** In Bambasi camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, nurseries have been prepared and over 12,500 seedlings, including coffee guava and papaya sown. These will be transplanted during the rainy season as a form of livelihoods support for targeted families from refugee and host communities. Different vegetable seeds were purchased and are ready for distribution.



*A view from the nursery in Bambasi refugee camp where seedlings are ready for transplanting. ©UNHCR/Fitsum M*

**Promotion of animal health in Melkadida:** In the Melkadida area in the Somali Region, approximately 90,000 livestock were vaccinated as part of the animal health promotion campaign championed by UNHCR, ARRA and partners, working in close collaboration with the local Livestock Office and the community animal health workers' cooperatives.

**Crop production in Gambella:** In Pugnido I camp in the Gambella Region, land clearance is underway to commence crop production on 25 hectares of farmland as pilot livelihoods project. 50 farmers will participate in the pilot phase including 40 refugees and 10 members of the host community who will be issued with seeds and farm implements.

## CONTACTS

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