

Resumption of General Food Distributions for Refugees in Ethiopia

General Context

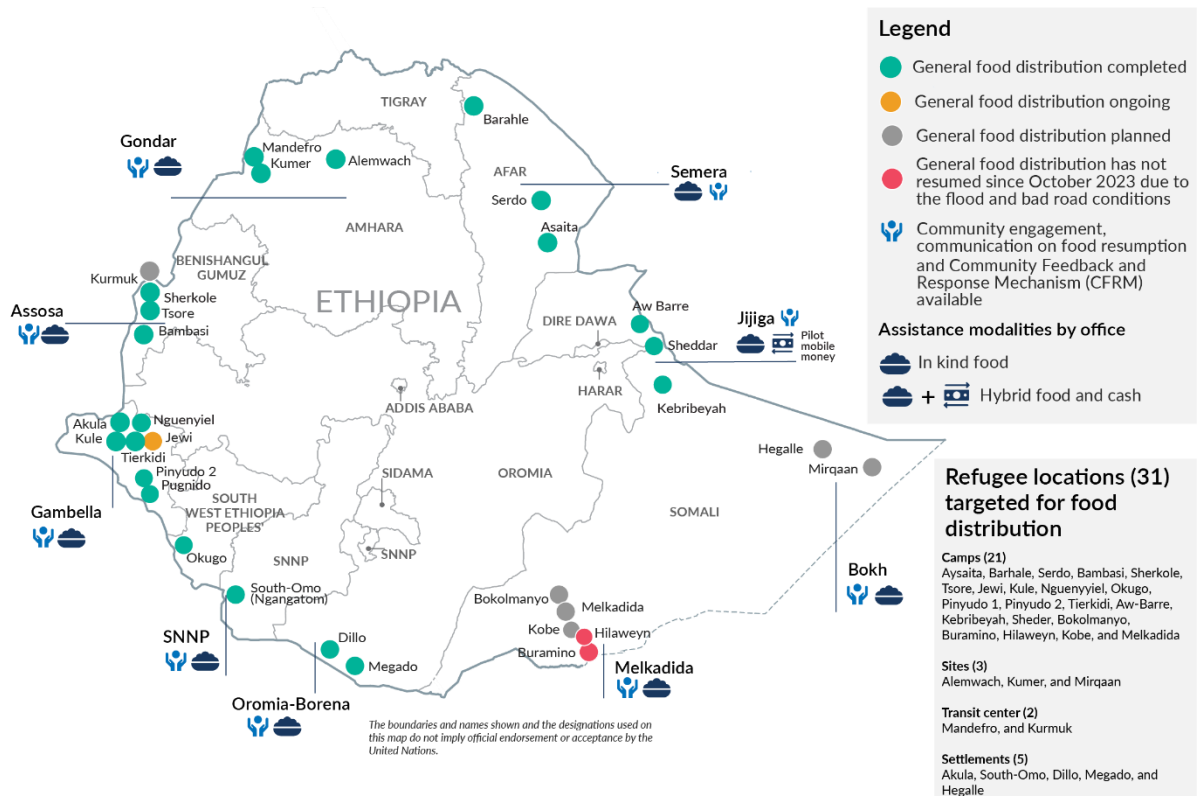
Following the resumption of food assistance to refugees by USAID on 29 September, UNHCR, WFP, its Cooperating Partners (CPs) and Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) jointly prepared for the food distributions in all refugee camps and sites in Ethiopia. This was conducted as per the roles outlined in the new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on food assistance in refugee camps, sites, and settlements signed by RRS, UNHCR, and WFP.

Across Ethiopia, there are 31 refugee locations targeted by the General Food Distributions (GFD), including twenty-one camps, five settlements, three sites, and two transit centres, where 919,586 are dependent on food assistance out of the total of 996,352¹ refugees hosted in the country.

In Buramino and Hilaweyn refugee camps in Melkadida, Somali Region, refugees did not receive food since the resumption of food distribution in October 2023 due to heavy rainfall and flooding that caused bad road conditions that hindered movement to the locations.

Refugees targeted for the food distribution. 919,586 individuals 203,339 households	Refugees reached by food distribution. 519,326 individuals 56% of the target	Total refugee locations targeted: 31. (22 completed, 1 ongoing, and 8 pending)
		Refugee locations where GDT² + Mobile collect + stock management available: 27

Implementation Overview, Protection Activities and Assistance Modalities (November 2023)



¹76,766 refugees residing in Addis Ababa and 2000 in Tigray that are not targeted in the GFD. The number of 996,352 individuals include those who have been screened for Somali and Sudan new arrivals and currently undergoing for L2 individual registration.

² Global Distribution Tool (GDT) is a corporate UNHCR tool that helps operations use biometrics to verify the identity of beneficiaries during the distribution of food and other types of assistance. Currently, the GDT is available in 27 refugee locations in Ethiopia.

Main highlights

Beneficiaries' data, Protection systems and monitoring, communication with communities

A food distribution coordination meeting was conducted at Assosa (Benishagul Gumuz Region) which was led by WFP, UNHCR and RRS. October month general food distribution process was reviewed, and the team confirmed that it was smoothly conducted and completed within a shorter period compared to previous GFD time. There was no significant challenge encountered during GFD. The team also agreed to start early sensitization of the beneficiaries for December cycles of GFD to reduce the number of absentees. Pre-distribution meetings were conducted for the December month cycle in all Assosa camps together with all stakeholders and refugee leaders noting the WFP non-retroactive policy in General food distribution.

During a recent GFD stakeholders coordination meeting (held on 12/12/2023) in Melkadida, WFP updated partners on the arrival of 27 trucks loaded with food for refugees in the operation, 25 of which are meant for Bokolmayo, Melkadida and Kobe camps while 2 (1 each) are meant for Hilaweyn and Buramino. This amounts to 50 % of the food meant for the December GFD to the 3 camps while a significant amount of food for Buramino and Hilaweyn is still pending delivery and a tentative start date for the distribution to be 10 days from the meeting (22/12/2023) if the remaining delivery arrives as planned.

In Melkadida; the current climate changes, particularly flooding, are hindering food delivery by WFP trucks to camps and noting the extended risks in prolonged lack of food resulting in the agitations of refugees in the camps and their dire situation (especially Buramino and Hilaweyn), no GFD-related engagement can be done with the community without clearly informing them about the commencement of GFD, based on recommendations of the community during previous engagements. Piloting hybrid distribution within the area was also discussed, and the steps to be taken and joint assessment to be conducted before this commences. The CP (Cooperating Partners) IMC (International Medical Corps) also updated about the challenges they are facing in recruitments for the GFD and school feeding programme due to interference of the local authorities in the process, RRS promises to intervene and help them overcome this challenge.

Accountability to Affected Populations and Strengthened Feedback and Response Mechanisms:

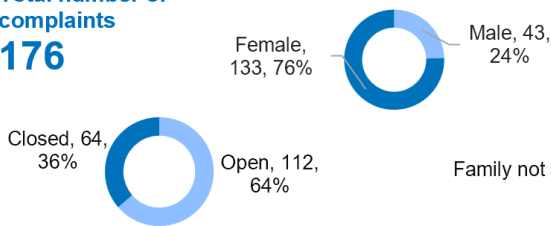
The protection help desk at food distribution points, during the reporting period, has recorded 176 complaints, mainly relating to biometric and biodata issues, as well as to lack of cash assistance. UNHCR has updated the complaints feedback response mechanism (CFRM) tool for deployment during the January cycle of distribution with lessons learnt from the implementation of CFRM tool during the October Cycle distribution and planned December pilots. UNHCR and WFP protection and Information management technical teams are discussing the interoperability of UNHCR and WFP CFRM tool to assure harmonized, and collective complaints from refugees with appropriate referrals.

WFP has recorded 827 complaints/feedback from beneficiaries through the toll-free hotline and protection monitoring helpdesk managed by CPs in all regions (Gambella, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumz, Oromia, SNNPR, and Somali) except the Tigray region. As of 11 December 2023, 47% of these reported cases have been resolved and the loop closed. The remaining 53% are pending resolution. The nature of feedback was categorized as 61% complaints, 13% requests for information, 8% requests for assistance, 13% were expressions of gratitude to WFP for providing them with food and cash assistance, 4% requests on non-WFP activities, and 1% access and protection, safety, and security.

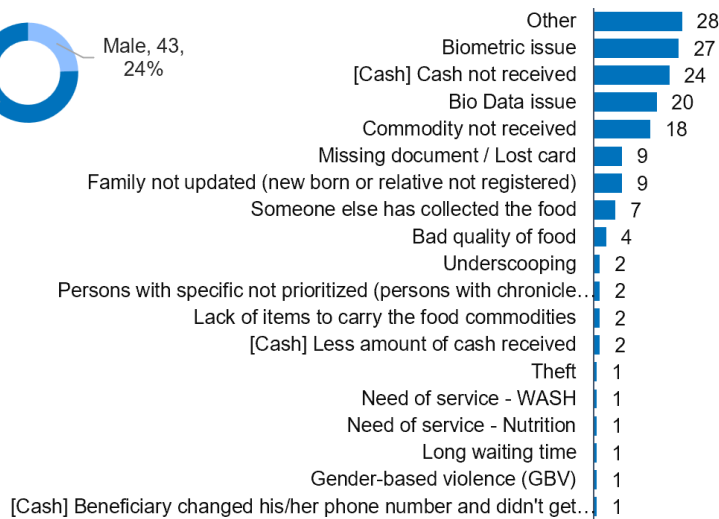
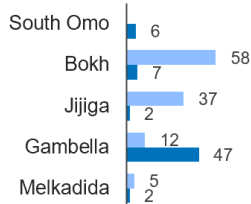
Most of the complaints (40%) revolved around delays in receiving beneficiary entitlements due to the nationwide suspension of food distribution since 4th June. 31% of complaints were related to delays in cash provision and the remaining 30% involved issues related to incorrect records relating to incorrect beneficiary data (i.e., family size, phone number), quality and quantity of the provided food, physical access challenges, registration process, and others.

Complaints and Feedback November Cycle of GFD (UNHCR System)

Total number of complaints
176



■ Open ■ Closed



Planning for December Cycle of GFD

The planning and roll out of the general food distribution for the third cycle December 2023 following GFD resumption has been shared and distributions have already begun in eight of the refugee locations targeted. To mitigate issues on food accountability and closure of distribution by month, WFP has communicated non-retroactive general food distribution policy at all locations. UNHCR is updating the key messages to reflect appropriate messaging for refugees and asylum seekers. UNHCR and WFP have agreed to gather lessons-learned and good practices for following completion of December cycle to inform all parties in preparation for a new GFD cycle in 2024.

Food Monitoring

Since the refugee response resumed in October across 30 camps, monitoring covered 847 households to collect feedback. Most recipients are women-headed, with an average household size of 5 and hosting vulnerable individuals including children under 5, orphans, pregnant and lactating women. While all other camps received in-kind assistance, camps in the Somali region (Jijiga), received a mix of cash and food assistance. On average, beneficiaries received entitled assistance with minimal variations between camps and Food Distribution Points (FDPs). However, nearly 75% reported inadequacy in food and cash quantities assisted. Delays occurred in some camps, leading to schedule adjustments, and quality concerns were noted including debris in food, damaged grain, and unpleasant taste with cereal and corn soy blend plus (CSB+) products.

Despite challenges, 92% of beneficiaries expressed satisfaction. Dissatisfaction was linked to perceived assistance quantity inadequacies and facility issues. Minimal ration sales were reported in Asayita and Awbare camps, and the complaint feedback mechanism is underutilized, signaling room for improvement in planning, execution, and communication.

Coordination and collaboration:

- **Country coordination:** Biweekly operational food coordination and collaboration meeting was conducted on 8 December 2023 with focus on matters arising GFD resumption, such as workstreams on data/GDT, protection systems and monitoring, simplification of frameworks and visualization of content for refugees, CBI/CBT solutions, refugee concerns raised at the post distribution meeting, and logistic challenge in Melkadida camp caused by the floods.
- **Social cohesion and emerging risks:** The resumption of general food distribution has enabled scale up of operations and sector activities. However, UNHCR and WFP have recently noted tension among

some of the refugee locations resulting in aggression by refugees to UNHCR and RRS in Hilaweyn and Bokolmanyo camps in Melkadida where food distribution has not been implemented due to poor road network. UNHCR and WFP are developing specific key messages following feedback from refugees and the emerging issues from the post distribution monitoring.

- **Standardised Expanded Nutrition Surveys (SENS) in refugee settings:** UNHCR and its partners have updated the Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS). So far SENS 2023 has been completed 14 of planned 26 refugee locations. SENS is currently ongoing in 7 of the remaining locations to be completed by end of December 2023. SENS is Planned for Jijiga and Bokh in January 2024. Where newly arriving refugees are settled/transit rapid SENS will be undertaken.
 - Weighted Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) prevalence was 10.3% (serious according to WHO classification) in Gambella camps (Pinyudo I 11.1%, Pinyudo II 8.1%, Kule 14.0%, Tierkidi 12.1%, Jewi 11.4% and Nguenyiel 7.9%). The latest finding of GAM prevalence is much lower than the finding of SENS in 2022, which was 17.3%. It is assumed that the figures were lower than last year because intensive malnutrition screening and treatments, and resumption of GDF overlapped with the data collection period.
 - In Afar camps GAM prevalence is noted to be very high/critical weighted at 25.3% (Aysaita 22.8%, Berhale 27.7%) an indication of severity of lack of food adequacy and coping mechanisms at household level despite data being collected post the GFD resumption.
 - In Melkadida camps data was collected within two to 3 weeks following food pause and has shown GAM prevalence of 16.7% (Bokolmanyo 16.1%, Buramino 18.7%, Hilaweyn 15.1%, Kobe 13.9%, Melkadida 19.2%) noting the situation is likely worse now from analysis of program level data due to the implications of climate actions, floods affecting access to food due extended delays in repositioning of GFD.
 - The retrospective analysis of food security indicators between June and September 2023 shows that refugees employed severe coping strategies to cater for the household food needs during the food pause. For instance, analysis of proportion households that used one or more negative coping strategies is higher than that of SENS 2022 at all the surveyed refugee locations.

Operational Challenges

- **Escalation of risks envisaged:** Refugee aggression and attacks towards UNHCR and RRS at Melkadida due to the food delivery delay caused by poor road access caused by flooding in Somali region.
- **Messaging particularly as relates to non-retroactive distributions:** Some refugees have expressed concerns about the cancellation of retroactive distributions, as they will only receive the monthly entitlement during the respective monthly cycle and will not be able to collect the ration missed for the previous month.
- **Food commodity stock reports:** Discrepancies between system-generated distribution reports and the actual quantity distributed were noted, partly due to the weight loss of commodities during extended storage and from over-scooping.
- **Lack of adequate nonfood items:** There were instances of beneficiaries selling food in the market to cover costs of other basic non-food needs.
- **Generation of countrywide food reports:** Review and closure of preceding months reports is pending since data review of the DPST files is not completed. Parties have agreed to a hybrid coaching to enable completion of the processes.

Weekly Refugee Distribution Report
Activity 3 - Refugee Response | Cycle 2 - November 2023

Data Updated: 10 Dec 2023

Table 1. Overall Totals



Table 2. Details by Camp

Region	Refugee locations	Dispatch	% MT	MT Food (In-kind)	
				Delivered (MT)	Distributed (MT)
Afar	Aysayta	317.4 MT	100%	317.42	316.97
	Berhale	327.1 MT	91%	327.15	297.34
	Serdo	59.2 MT	71%	59.21	42.20
Amhara	Alemwach	265.4 MT	89%	208.87	185.04
	Kumer (new arrivals)	166.4 MT	0%		112.55
Benishangul Gumz	Bambasi	263.6 MT	125%	184.09	229.30
	Kurmuk (new arriva..	211.3 MT	0%	96.24	
	Sherkole	197.8 MT	137%	122.61	167.66
	Tsore	552.7 MT	113%	322.96	365.61
Gambella	Akula	24.5 MT	94%	24.53	22.95
	Jewi	696.1 MT	91%	696.11	631.70
	Kule	590.6 MT	103%	590.46	608.84
	Nguenyiel	1081.0 MT	108%	1,080.98	1,163.75
	Okugu	115.0 MT	117%	114.93	134.92
	Pugnido I	682.1 MT	83%	677.38	562.17
	Pugnido II	137.0 MT	74%	137.01	101.33
	Tierkidi	819.2 MT	111%	784.18	867.99
Oromia	Dilo	22.1 MT	166%	22.14	36.72
	Megado	40.7 MT	157%	40.68	63.71
Somali (Bokh)	Hagele		0%		
	Mirkhan	543.6 MT	0%	140.91	
Somali (Dollo Ado area)	Bokolomanyo		0%		
	Buramino		0%		
	Hilaweyn		0%		
	Kobe		0%		
	Melkedida		0%		
Somali (Jijiga area)	Awbare	36.5 MT	94%	36.54	34.52
	Kebribeyah	45.5 MT	102%	45.53	46.40
	Sheder	33.8 MT	109%	33.84	36.95
Souther Eth..	Ngangatom	39.0 MT	202%	39.01	78.82
Grand Total	30	7267.8 MT	100%	6,102.79	6,107.41

Annex I: Food distributions: state of play by refugee location (November Cycle)

Region	Camps	Number of refugees in the camps (UNHCR Dashboard)	Dispatch Date from WH	CP	Potential Distribution start date	Comment/Status
Afar	Serdo	4,405		SP	22 - 24 November	Completed
	Aysaita	26,691			12 – 20 November	Completed
	Berhale	27,539			17 – 24 November	Completed
Gambella	Pinyudo II	11,385	07 November	WV	23 – 25 November	Completed
	Akula	1,917	07 November		17 – 18 November	Completed
	Okugo	13,949	03 November	ASDEPO	17 – 10 November	Completed
	Pinyudo I	51,229	09 November	WV	27 - 30 November	Completed
	Tierkidi	72,447	09 November		24 – 30 November	Completed
	Nguenyiel	112,000	09 November		23 – 30 November	Completed
	Jewi	67,895	08 November		15 – 30 November	Ongoing
	Kule	52,970	09 November		27 – 30 November	Completed
Dollo (Somali)	Bokolmanyo	32,877		IMC	10 – 16 November	Planned
	Melkadida	43,010			17 - 22 November	Planned
	Kobe	38,764			23 - 29 November	Planned
	Buramino	48,086			26 – 30 November	Planned
	Hilaweyn	50,815			22 Nov – 04 Dec	Planned
Jijiga (Somali)	Kebribeyah	18,160	17 November	NRC	–22-25 November	Completed
	Aw-Barre	13,476	17 November		23-25 November	Completed
	Shedder	14,615	24 November		28-30 November	Completed
Bokh (Somali)	Mirqaan	47,086		NRC	23 – 25 November	Planned
	Hegaalle	24,100			28 – 30 November	Planned
Oromia	Dillo	1,474	20 November	ANE	26 – 27 November	Completed
	Megado	2,563	20 November		23 -25 November	Completed
SNNP	Ngangatom	4,938		ANE	24 – 30 November	Completed
Amhara	Kumer	17,407		ANE	28 Nov – 07 Dec	Completed
	Mandefro	2,500		SP	28 Nov – 07 Dec	Completed
	Alemwach	21,934		SP	27 Nov - 01 Dec	Completed
Assosa (Benishangul Gumuz)	Bambasi	20,634			11-18 December	Completed
	Sherkole	15,517			7-12 December	Completed
	Tsore	43,251			7-15 December	Completed
	Kurmuk	16,216			14-18 December	Planned