312
Victims of trafficking identified in Eastern Sudan

3
Access to Justice Information Sessions carried out in Addis Ababa

107
Court referred onward movers / victims of trafficking to asylum authority in Kenya

UNHCR Regional Bureau EHAGL Mixed Movement Flash Update

Anti-Trafficking

AUGUST 2025

SUDAN

- Recent security operations in Kassala State have led to the arrest of individuals with alleged links to smuggling and human trafficking.
- UNHCR and the Commission for Refugees (COR) have responded to referrals of 312 individuals who had been in captivity on average between 5 to 9 months. They have all been accommodated in asylum reception centers for further legal screening and needs assessment.
- Those identified include individuals from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia. Among those screened, over 70% expressed fear of returning to their countries of origin, citing risks to life or freedom, serious human rights violations, and/or ongoing insecurity or conflict.
- It is estimated that 20% of those identified are unaccompanied children and approximately 10% are women, including GBV survivors.
- Individuals who have expressed interest in voluntary return to their country of origin remain hosted at refugee reception centers while IOM processes their return.

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Summary of assistance provided to victims of trafficking in Kasala, Sudan

UNHCR and IOM distributed hygiene items and dignity kits, while GBV survivors received immediate medical and psychosocial support from a specialized partner and the State Ministry of Health. The Commission for Refugees, alongside local partners, provided clothing to approximately 120 victims. IOM also delivered food assistance to the entire group. Survivors who agreed to testify in court were placed under witness protection protocols.

Additional needs identified through screening and protection monitoring

UNHCR's protection monitoring in Wad Sharife and Shagarab has identified urgent needs, including expanded outreach and border monitoring to address risks of trafficking, and scaled-up specialized services such as GBV support, legal aid, and MHPSS to prevent re-trafficking. Promoting safe and regular pathways is essential to reduce reliance on smugglers. Service disruptions—such as power outages affecting water supply and medication shortages—are limiting access to care, especially for trafficking survivors. Wet feeding services remain inadequate, and rising living costs in Kassala State have increased the need for additional funding to sustain protection and essential services.

Capsized Boat in Atbara River Underscoring Needs

On 7 July UNHCR received a report on the capsizing of a boat at Atbara River and a body of a young women was recovered. Following consultations with authorities and the refugee population in Shagarab Camp, it was confirmed that she was a refugee and was later buried in Shagarab Camp.

ETHIOPIA

Strengthening Access to Justice through country-wide Information Sessions

UNHCR is carrying out a series of information sessions across the country as part of its Access to Justice Strategy. The sessions, carried out so far in Addis Ababa, Afar, Gondar and Jijiga, aims to raise awareness on key protection issues, including mixed movements. For example, the session carried out in July 2025 in Addis Ababa engaged refugee communities and focused on incidents of detention, available legal remedies, as well as the risks associated with irregular onward movements-- including smuggling and trafficking.

KENYA

Enhancing Coordinated Anti-trafficking Efforts

In July 2025, 107 Eritrean individuals—believed to be victims of trafficking—who had moved onward to Uganda were returned to Kenya. Shortly thereafter, a legal ruling ordered their release into the custody of the national asylum authority for processing under refugee legislation. The court also suspended any deportation proceedings, while permitting lawful investigations by relevant agencies to continue. UNHCR will maintain engagement with key counterparts to strengthen protection-sensitive entry and admission procedures, address risks related to smuggling and trafficking, and enhance overall protection responses in the country.

Way **Forward: Urgent Need to Strengthen Anti- Trafficking Measures**

Recent developments underscore the ongoing need for sustained attention and resource mobilization to address smuggling and trafficking in the region, which continue to raise serious protection concerns. The reopening of previously inaccessible movement routes—once blocked due to conflict and insecurity—combined with funding gaps that have reduced the presence of protection actors in key areas, may be creating opportunities for smugglers and traffickers to exploit gaps.

A coordinated, multi-layered approach is urgently needed, including:

- Enhanced protection monitoring along key transit and border routes.
- Strengthened cross-border and regional coordination, with a focus on protection-sensitive entry systems and comprehensive anti-smuggling/ trafficking measures.
- Targeted advocacy, coordination, and capacity-building with government counterparts, NGOs, and Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs).
- Community sensitization and risk awareness campaigns to inform and protect.
- Expanded protection and assistance services for victims of trafficking, including psychosocial, legal, and other services.