

DADAAB REFUGEE CAMPS, KENYA

SUPPORT TO THE SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTARY RETURN OF SOMALI REFUGEES FROM KENYA

27 January 2015

LATEST KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The UNHCR, Government of Kenya and partners have, as of 27 January 2015, supported 1,166 refugees to return home from Kenya to Somalia under the current voluntary return pilot project.
2. The first group of refugees travelled to Somalia from the Dadaab refugee camps on 8 December 2014, when the pilot project was launched. Refugees travel using pre-arranged bus service transport. 11 convoys have departed since then. The Kenya Police Service provides security to ensure a safe and secure journey.
3. All refugees have reached their final destination in safety and dignity. There are no reports of security incidents affecting the returnees, or of return to a situation of internal displacement.

POPULATION OVERVIEW

The current population in the Dadaab refugee camps is 353,590 persons of concern (of which 336,695 are refugees from Somalia). At the height of the humanitarian crisis in 2011 the population had increased to 486,913 persons of concern. Since then the population has decreased by 133,323 persons of concern. It is important to note that during the course of 2014 alone there was a general population decrease of 52,269.



Photo UNHCR Dadaab

Families prepare for their departure from Dadaab

KEY RETURN SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR has launched a pilot project to support 10,000 Somali refugees to return home by 30 June 2015. The pilot will provide an opportunity to examine any impediments to returns in safety and dignity and address them. UNHCR and the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA) of the Government of Kenya are implementing the pilot project, in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Organisation of Migration (IOM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), Islamic Relief Kenya (IRK) and World Food Programme (WFP).
- Integrated Return Help Desks, comprising UNHCR, DRA and NRC, have been established in all camps in the Dadaab Operation. The Return Help Desks have UNHCR, DRA and NRC staff members assigned exclusively to each desk, in order to be consistently available to counsel refugees who are considering return options and assist them to realize their intention to return home, including information regarding the processing of return formalities. For this purpose, UNHCR, DRA and NRC have each recruited 5 staff members to provide Return Help Desk services. As of 26 January 2015, 4,777 refugees have presented themselves at the Return Help Desks and made return-related inquiries.
- The UNHCR Return Help Desk provides refugees with return-related information, counselling on the right to return, helps them to make an informed decision about return and verifies the voluntary nature of the return. This is also where refugees complete the Voluntary Return Form once they have made the choice decision to return. The UNHCR Help Desk also generates the Government of Kenya Movement Pass, which facilitates unhindered travel to Somalia.
- The NRC Return Help Desk provides refugees with country of origin information relevant to conditions in designated return areas, including available assistance and services. The refugees also receive initial mine-risk education.
- The DRA Return Help Desk issues the Government of Kenya Movement Passes and gives final clearance to refugees to depart. Immigration formalities are completed in Dadaab one day before departure. The DRA Return Help Desk also maintains a database for the government of Kenya on return.
- UNHCR Kenya and UNHCR Somalia have agreed on a detailed data transfer and sharing mechanism for refugees who return, in order to support return and facilitate reintegration. UNHCR produces a weekly summary statistical report (herewith attached) and a detailed monthly statistical report (herewith attached).
- A pre-paid bus service has been arranged for transportation of refugees to Somalia. The bus service departs at least twice a week from Dagahaley and Hagadera refugee camps in Dadaab. A third bus service has been made available this week. There are plans to introduce a fourth bus service should the need arise and depending on the number of refugees wishing to return and the reception capacity in the UNHCR/IOM Transit Centre in Somalia. Currently the reception capacity has been set at 120 persons per day. Somali refugees based in urban areas or Kakuma who wish to return can transfer to Dadaab refugee camps and access the return support and services.
- RCK, with funding from UNHCR, provides an independent and objective monitoring of the return process in Kenya. 15 monitors have been deployed to border areas and another 15 in other key locations in the operational area.
- Core relief items and hygiene kits are being distributed to departing refugees by NRC. The assistance has been pre-positioned, in containers, in Dagahaley and Hagadera refugee camps. The material assistance being distributed is comprised of jerry cans, mosquito nets, sleeping mats, blankets, solar lanterns, soaps, female underwear, sanitary pads, eating utensils, jugs and cups. UNHCR has provided this assistance, which is being distributed, under agreement, by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).



Core Relief Items for distribution to returnees

Photo UNHCR Dadaab

- Departing refugees receive an unconditional cash grant in the amount of US\$80. Refugees with special needs receive US\$100.
- Pre-departure health screening is undertaken by health service providers (Kenya Red Cross Society in Ifo 2, Islamic Relief Kenya in Ifo and Dagahaley and International Rescue Committee in Hagadera and Kambioos).
- WFP provides high energy biscuits to departing refugees.

OTHER RELATED ACTIONS

Go-and-See Visit

- UNHCR organised a “go and see” visit by 19 refugees (10 women and 9 men) to Kismayo, Somalia, from 4 to 8 August 2014. Participating refugees came back to the Dadaab refugee camps and shared their impressions and experiences with other refugees, through a live radio talk show, focus group discussions and camp leadership structures, to ensure the widest possible dissemination.

Operational Coordination Mechanisms

- Operational Coordination mechanisms have been established. The Dadaab inter-agency return forum (co-chaired by DRA and UNHCR) comprising all humanitarian agencies working in Dadaab, meets regularly. Representation is at senior level, to ensure effective coordination and decision-making. The next inter-agency coordination meeting will be held on 29 January 2015. Similarly, cross border coordination meetings are taking place between the Government of Kenya, The Federal Government of Somalia and UNHCR officials. UNHCR Kenya and UNHCR Somalia held a coordination meeting on 23 January 2015. The next one will be held on 23 March 2015 and will include UNHCR and its partners.



Marabta In ad Kulaabatid Soomaaliya? Go'aankaaga dib u Noqoshada iskaa Miyaa?

Wanting to Return to Somalia? Is Your Decision to Return Voluntary?

Weydii UNHCRta inta aadan go'aan Qadhan!

Ask UNHCR Before You Make Your Decision!

Weydii UNHCR sidi add ugu noqon laheed dalkaaga hooyo si nabad iyo sharafleh

Ask UNHCR How You Can Travel Home In Safety and Dignity



Documents and Communication

- A detailed Return Intention Counseling Questionnaire is in use by UNHCR Return Help Desks. The Questionnaire is linked to the UNHCR *proGres* database, to facilitate timely production of reports. A return departure database has been constructed by UNHCR for DRA and is in use.
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers leaflets for refugees have been produced and disseminated since 13 January 2014. NRC and UNHCR have produced information leaflets which are presented to refugees after counseling at the Return Help Desk.
- A Voluntary Return Form has been prepared for use during the pilot. In addition, to facilitate the return movement the Government of Kenya issues a Movement Pass that has been specially designed for the project.

Return Intention Survey



Photo UNHCR Dadaab

- A comprehensive return intention profiling survey of Somali refugees in Dadaab was jointly undertaken by IOM and UNHCR. The survey confirmed the initial UNHCR planning figure of 10,000 refugees having an intention to return.

Working in Partnerships

- Standard Operating Procedures and Modalities for the Provision of the Return Support Package have been elaborated and disseminated to relevant staff members in UNHCR and partner agencies for reference purposes. The relevant UNHCR, DRA and NRC staff members have been provided with terms of reference to ensure complementarity of roles and responsibilities.
- An ad hoc technical tripartite working group has met at the Nairobi level on a regular basis since the signing of the tripartite agreement. The ad hoc working group has ensured better coordination of ongoing activities including the preparation of the draft work plan for the implementation of the tripartite agreement and the drafting of terms of reference for the technical working group.
- DRA, UNHCR, NRC, DRC key staff involved in the voluntary return support operation have been fully trained on all mechanisms and procedures.

KEY TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN THE RETURN PROCESS

1. More than 83% of the returnees are refugees who arrived in Kenya after 2010;
2. The returning refugees are evenly distributed between male and female (587 Females and 579 Males);
3. 74% are single persons (almost evenly distributed between male and female);
4. 22% are married couples returning together;
5. All returnees thus far have returned either to Baidoa or Kismayo (support to those going to Luuq will commence this week);
6. Most returning refugees are in family groups with children.



Photo UNHCR Dadaab

Young refugee returning to Somalia with his family

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Web portal on Somali Displacement:

<http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>