

Ethiopia

February 2018

Ethiopia Launched the **2018 South Sudan Refugee Response Plan**, outlining the collective response of 24 participating organizations.

10,781 South Sudanese refugees have been registered in Ethiopia since the beginning of year.

51 children in Addis Ababa received protection support from the Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVs) in February. The ROVs help link UNHCR and partners with the refugees in the city.

KEY INDICATORS

909,301*

Refugees and asylum seekers registered in Ethiopia
[As of 28 February 2018]

56%*

Percentage of refugees below the age of 18

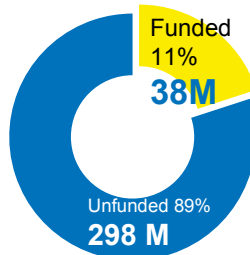
15,097

New arrivals registered in Ethiopia in 2018
[As of 28 February 2018]

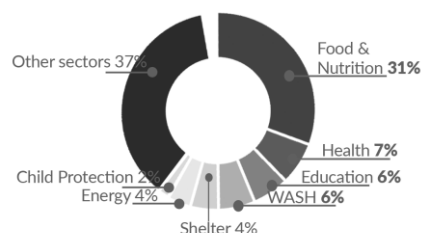
FUNDING (AS OF 29 JANUARY 2018)

USD 335.8 M

requested for the Ethiopia operation

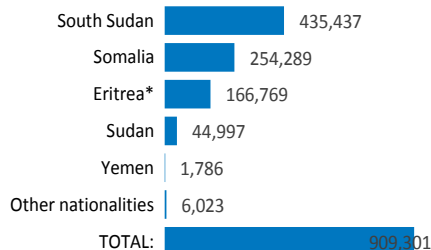


Budget allocation by sector



POPULATION OF CONCERN

Refugee Nationalities



* 73,078 Eritrean refugees previously registered as living in camps have settled in urban areas. This confirmed figure represents a reduction of 8,000 refugees, following the conclusion of a comprehensive verification exercise.



High Profile Supporter Betty G visited Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region, appealing for further support to enhance protection and solutions. UNHCR/Diana Diaz

Update On Achievements

Operational Context

The [South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan](#) (RRRP) was launched in Ethiopia outlining the collective response of 24 partner organizations, calling for USD 342.1 million to cater to the prioritized humanitarian needs of South Sudanese refugees, which currently constitute a population of 435,437 individuals in the country.

Due to the political situation in South Sudan, RRP partners in Ethiopia are committed to continue efforts in stabilizing and refocusing interventions towards capacity building of refugees and host communities, self-management and reduction of dependency on assistance. Life-saving protection support will remain the most significant priority. At the same time, fundamental gaps remain in the provision of shelter, WASH, education and livelihoods due to critical resource constraints.



UNHCR, ARRA and partners launch the South Sudan Refugee Response Plan in Addis Ababa. UNHCR/Diana Diaz

Ethiopian High Profile Supporter Betty G visits Eritrean refugees



Betty G met Eritrean refugee youth, including unaccompanied and separated children who are now living in four camps during a mission to Ethiopia's Tigray Region.

Refugees cite forced military conscription and widespread human rights abuses as the principal drivers of their flight, which has hindered their rights to self-determination and a childhood. Many of the refugees are children who have either left their families behind or are seeking to reunite with family members abroad. They told the High Profile Supporter their personal stories and their hopes for the future.

Betty G said:

When you think about the generations that arrived here, the thousands of children that come here or are born and raised here as refugees, when you walk the streets they walk and see what they see, it can't help but leave a lasting impression. In their eyes, you see their dreams shining; in their voice, you hear their determination, their strength and will to carry on. This is when you understand what life is really worth. They have risked it all to come here; to have the opportunity to dream, to keep their hopes alive. They want to live their lives to the fullest; fulfill their dreams, not just to survive but to thrive.

This was Betty G's second official mission with UNHCR – the UN Refugee Agency. Some 166,000 refugees have fled Eritrea and are currently residing in Ethiopia, 22% of whom reside in the Tigray Region and are dependent on protection and assistance provided by the Government of Ethiopia, UNHCR and its partners. The provision of psychological support for refugees is often limited, making it difficult for thousands of children to recover from the scars of displacement.

Beyond where they choose to go, and which shores they arrive to, we should think more about what we can all do to protect them. How can we work with them, so their lives are better? Grab their hands and work alongside them, and learn what a life worth living means to them. When you provide refugees with alternatives and with means to live meaningful lives, you open opportunities for them to live in dignity, to ensure they will not risk their lives looking for brighter futures and to allow them to contribute to Ethiopia as active members of society, said Betty G.

Dangerous Crossings campaign launched in Ethiopia



©UNHCR/Kisut Gebreegzabher

Every week, more than five thousand people, refugees and migrants, cross the red sea or Gulf of Eden to reach war-torn Yemen, on-route to the wider middle gulf region, and beyond. The smugglers are organized in criminal gangs to move people across the borders, often exploiting those at their mercy. Many lose their lives during the journey.

UNHCR has long warned against the risk of crossings to and through Yemen. Prolonged conflict and insecurity facilitate the proliferation of criminal networks targeting new arrivals. Women and children are also at particular risk of sexual violence and trafficking. UNHCR has received reports of physical and sexual abuse, deprivation of food and water, abduction, extortion and forced labour by smugglers and criminal networks as well as arbitrary arrest, detention and deportation.

To address this situation, UNHCR launched in February 2017 a major information campaign across the Horn of Africa to raise awareness of the dangers of crossing to and through Yemen. A year later, the campaign was launched in Ethiopia. Its main feature is the use of [music](#), audiovisuals and social media as tools to draw the attention of refugees who consider pursuing onward movements.

UNHCR High Profile Supporter Betty G was present during the launch sharing the perspective of refugees she met days before in Ethiopia's northern Tigray Region.

Second group of refugees travels to Italy thanks to the country's Humanitarian Corridors Programme



114 refugees departed to Italy on 26 February thanks to the country's Humanitarian Corridor Programme. This is the second group to depart from Ethiopia, with the first having departed in December 2017. Amongst those who departed, refugees were drawn from Eritrea, South Sudan and Somalia, many of whom with specific needs, including those previously held captive in Libya.

A joint press event was held prior to their departure, during which the Deputy Director of ARRA, Ato Zeynu Jamal, praised the Programme as an expression of international responsibility sharing, and an important contribution towards the Comprehensive Refugee Response in Ethiopia. He also encouraged an expansion of the programme to further support highly vulnerable refugees.

By opening up options for the some of the most vulnerable people to move to third countries of asylum under the Humanitarian Corridors Programme, Italy continues to help in the global effort for more comprehensive response to the needs of refugees.

Achievements

ASSOSA

- The first solarized water pump began operation in Bambasi Camp, supporting the initiative to solarize the entire water system. This is part of a multi-year strategy funded through the IKEA Foundation's Brighter Lives for Refugees project.



SHIRE

- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was commemorated in Shimelba Camp with poem competitions, cultural dances and the sharing of personal experiences with FGM. Shimelba is in its majority of the Kunama ethnicity, known for high incidences of FGM.



GAMBELLA

- The Biometrics Registration of South Sudanese refugees have begun in the Gambella Region, beginning with the some 90,000 refugees registered. This exercise seeks to update all registered refugees' information and ensure a comprehensive dataset is available to inform the delivery of increasingly targeted assistance.

MELKADIDA

- Refugees in Buramino Camp have begun the production of briquettes to be used for household energy saving stoves. 700 briquettes were produced in February, which were distributed to refugees and host communities.



Refugee Voices

The COMPASS girls give crucial direction to Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia



UNHCR/Diana Diaz

The sounds of sweet music and chants fill a section of Bambasi Camp, in Ethiopia's western Benishangul-Gumuz region. This vast community of over 17,000 Sudanese refugees is home to a group of excited young girls who now sing and clap as they welcome each other to another weekly session of fun-filled learning - the COMPASS sessions.

COMPASS is a group for girls of all ages who have one goal - to acquire the skills to protect themselves from sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The acronym stands for Creating Opportunities through Mentorship, Parental involvement and Safe Space.

"We learn how to build our self-confidence, how to protect ourselves and how to respect others," says Siham, 18, a Sudanese refugee and one of the COMPASS girls.

"We also shine bright in the process," she smiles as she explains that the group is also referred to as Girl Shine, a direct translation from the Arabic word 'Noor Albanat'.

"We learn how to build our self-confidence, how to protect ourselves and how to respect others."

As a young girl, Siham was caught up in the ravaging conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State, constantly plagued by the sounds of bombs and gun shots. At only nine, she was forced to flee to Ethiopia where she has lived for seven years.

She has grown up to be courageous and has found acceptance in COMPASS – a group of like-minded girls who she views as something greater than her - something that is potentially changing the lives of over 8,000 refugee girls and women in the camp.

“This camp has saved us. This project has saved us,” explains Siham.

Every week, the COMPASS girls meet in a safe space funded by DFID, the UK’s Aid and Development Agency and a key donor for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. The programme is managed by UNHCR’s partner agency, International Rescue Commission (IRC).

“We are empowering these girls to have a voice in their communities and families.”

Through audio lessons translated in Arabic, mentors who share their culture and language, discuss issues related to violence. The girls also learn various life skills that help them address issues such as early marriage and gender violence in their communities.

“We are empowering these girls to have a voice in their communities and families,” explains Timbit Essayas, IRC’s COMPASS Officer in Bambasi.

She adds that the group guides the girls and helps them to “have a voice and help their parents understand their situation.”

Not only has Siham and her friends learned how to prevent and report cases of SGBV, but they have also been inspired to become advocates for girls’ and women’s rights.

“We are learning how to live life without fear and violence and about our right to education,” she says. “Before I didn’t know anything about life. I think all generations of girls need to come and join and learn with us.”

She hopes to finish her education and become a teacher for girls.

Half of the over 900,000 refugees in Ethiopia are women and girls who are at risk of sexual and/or gender-based violence. This includes survival sex as a coping mechanism, harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation and early marriage, limited access to justice mechanisms and the lack of safe energy sources.

“We are learning how to live life without fear and violence and about our right to education.”

Today, on International Women’s Day, the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi reiterates that the ‘Time is Now.’ He [has called for](#) further efforts to support women and girls like Siham to achieve their full potential – through better access to education, decent work, legal and health services.

UNHCR and other partner agencies are already working towards this goal in Ethiopia by establishing a strategy that will in coming years, empower refugee women and girls to take part in their protection. The strategy also involves men and boys as key players in this process.

COMPASS has given previously vulnerable girls like Siham a course to follow – a path that leads them towards achieving their dreams.

“We are girls rising up to be our own compass and light, to be our own superheroes in a life where women are steadily being heard and respected,” adds Siham.

Working in partnership

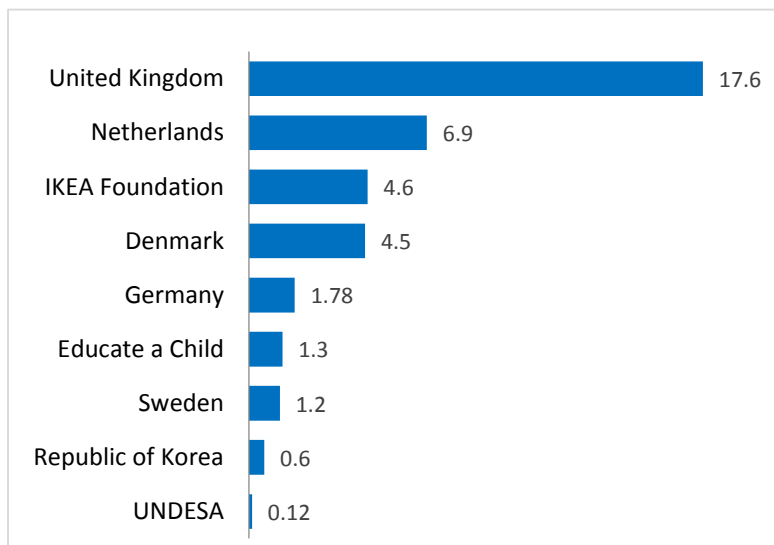
- UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, provides protection, assistance and facilitates durable solutions for refugees in Ethiopia in collaboration with ARRA, the Ethiopian Government, UN Agencies and NGOs.

Financial Information

Total recorded contributions for the operation in 2018 amount to some **US\$ 38 million**, including **US\$ 14** million for the South Sudan and Somalia situations

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

Funding received (in million USD)



External / Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the direct contributions to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation from:

UK (DFID) | Netherlands | IKEA Foundation | Denmark | Germany | Educate A Child Programme-EAC/EAA | Republic of Korea | UN Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs

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CONTACTS

Gavin David White, Senior External Relations Officer, UNHCR Ethiopia
 whiteg@unhcr.org, Cell +251 94 416 8472

LINKS

[Regional South Sudan portal](#) – [Regional Somalia Situation Portal](#) - [Twitter](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Italian project offers path to hope for vulnerable refugees in Ethiopia](#)