

Ethiopia

March 2018

As of 31 March 2018, Ethiopia hosts **916,678** refugees and asylum seekers within its borders, including the more than **22,000** who arrived during the first quarter of 2018.

The Government of Ethiopia has committed to address the concerns of refugees, including a pledge to grant local integration to those who have lived in the country for **20** years and above.

Resettlement remains the chief durable solution for refugees in Ethiopia, but limited quotas mean that only **4,150** refugees will be referred to resettlement countries in 2018.

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR supports the Government of Ethiopia in discharging its international obligations, fulfilling the organization's core objectives to provide refugees and other persons of concern with international protection, and to seek durable solutions for them. The three traditional durable solutions are complementary and are pursued together:



- Voluntary repatriation**, in which refugees return in safety and with dignity to their countries of origin and re-avail themselves of national protection;
 - Resettlement**, in which refugees are selected and transferred from the country of refuge to a third State which has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status; and
 - Local integration**, in which refugees legally, economically and socially integrate in the host country, availing themselves of the national protection of the host government.
- UNHCR and partners support livelihoods programmes for refugees in order to reduce vulnerability and dependency on humanitarian assistance. Refugees who actively support themselves are better equipped to take on the challenges of any of the durable solutions. UNHCR recognizes the stress that the presence of refugees can place on already-impooverished host communities and works closely with development actors and regional governments to mitigate the impact. UNHCR advocates for complementarity of services for refugees and host communities, and seeks to ensure that refugees are included in their intervention and development plans, thereby promoting peaceful co-existence.
- UNHCR Ethiopia is committed to assisting refugees in accessing **complementary legal pathways** including family reunification and other humanitarian migration programmes, such as private sponsorship, study and employment possibilities. UNHCR Ethiopia continues to issue refugees with proof of registration documents and provides advice on how to process family reunification cases. Specifically, UNHCR directly assists unregistered refugee children in accessing the services and documentation necessary to reunite with their family members abroad. During the first quarter of 2018, UNHCR assisted **seven** such cases to reunify with their families abroad. UNHCR Ethiopia is also involved in the issuance of Convention Travel Documents (CTDs), which permits refugees to undertake international travel for employment, education and to seek medical treatment unavailable in Ethiopia.
- The innovative Italian Humanitarian Corridor program was officially launched in 2017 and aims to relocate 500 refugees to Italy by the end of 2018. UNHCR has undertaken this project with two faith-based organizations, *Caritas Italiana* and *Sant'Egidio Community*, through which refugees with family links in Italy as well as those with protection and medical vulnerabilities are able to find a durable solution. To date, 138 refugees have departed for new lives in Italy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the Pledges

- Ethiopia's commitment to protect refugees has been further strengthened by the pledges made at the September 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees. These pledges signal an openness not only to easing the current restrictions on refugees' access to employment and right to movement, but also to offering local integration to some refugees.

- The Government of Ethiopia's Administration for Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), in collaboration with UNHCR, line ministries, donors, NGOs and other partners, is working to translate the pledges into significant outcomes that will strengthen overall refugee protection and assistance, and allow refugees to become more independent. UNHCR assists the government to incorporate the pledges into a revised Refugee Proclamation.
- Supporting the Government of Ethiopia to implement these pledges is strongly linked to the objectives of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). Ethiopia formally launched the CRRF in November 2017, which includes a renewed focus on easing the pressure on host countries, via a whole of society approach including investment by development partners. The CRRF seeks to increase the self-reliance of refugees and host communities, including by greater involvement with the private sector, as well as increased third party solutions, such as resettlement and family reunification. The pledges are aligned with the Government of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II), and the current UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

Resettlement

- Currently, resettlement remains the primary durable solution available to refugees in Ethiopia. It is also an invaluable protection tool, addressing the specific needs of individual refugees who are vulnerable due to their experiences in their country of origin, and/or whose safety, health or other fundamental rights are at risk in Ethiopia by providing them an opportunity to rebuild their lives in a new country.
- Although the reduction in the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) 2018 admissions has led to a considerable reduction in the submission target, UNHCR Ethiopia maintains an active resettlement programme, identifying and addressing needs within all refugee populations. Throughout 2018, UNHCR Ethiopia will refer resettlement cases to the USA, Canada, Sweden and New Zealand.

Voluntary repatriation

- Due to continued instability in countries of origin, the majority of refugees in Ethiopia have no immediate prospect of voluntary return. UNHCR therefore does not currently promote or facilitate repatriation to Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan or South Sudan. However, under the comprehensive approach to solutions, UNHCR tracks spontaneous returns and administers intention surveys; actively monitors the feasibility of voluntary returns, including through cross-border monitoring; and participates in regional dialogue. UNHCR Ethiopia is part of the Regional Technical Level Task Force on Voluntary Repatriation to Somalia, preparing the ground for possible return of Somali refugees.
- UNHCR continues to engage various stakeholders to establish the conditions necessary for the facilitation of voluntary return for some 4,000 Kenyan Borena refugees. These include information sharing on the progress of peace-building and reconciliation, cross-border meetings, and planned facilitation of "go and see missions".

Local integration:

- Looking at more local integration prospects, UNHCR will continue in 2019 to look into the integration of particular refugee groups, such as, the ethnic Kunama Eritrean refugees in Shire, the ethnic Uduk Sudanese refugees in Assosa and some ethnic Afar Eritrean refugees in the Afar region.

CHALLENGES



External / Donors Relations

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