

East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

17-23 April 2020

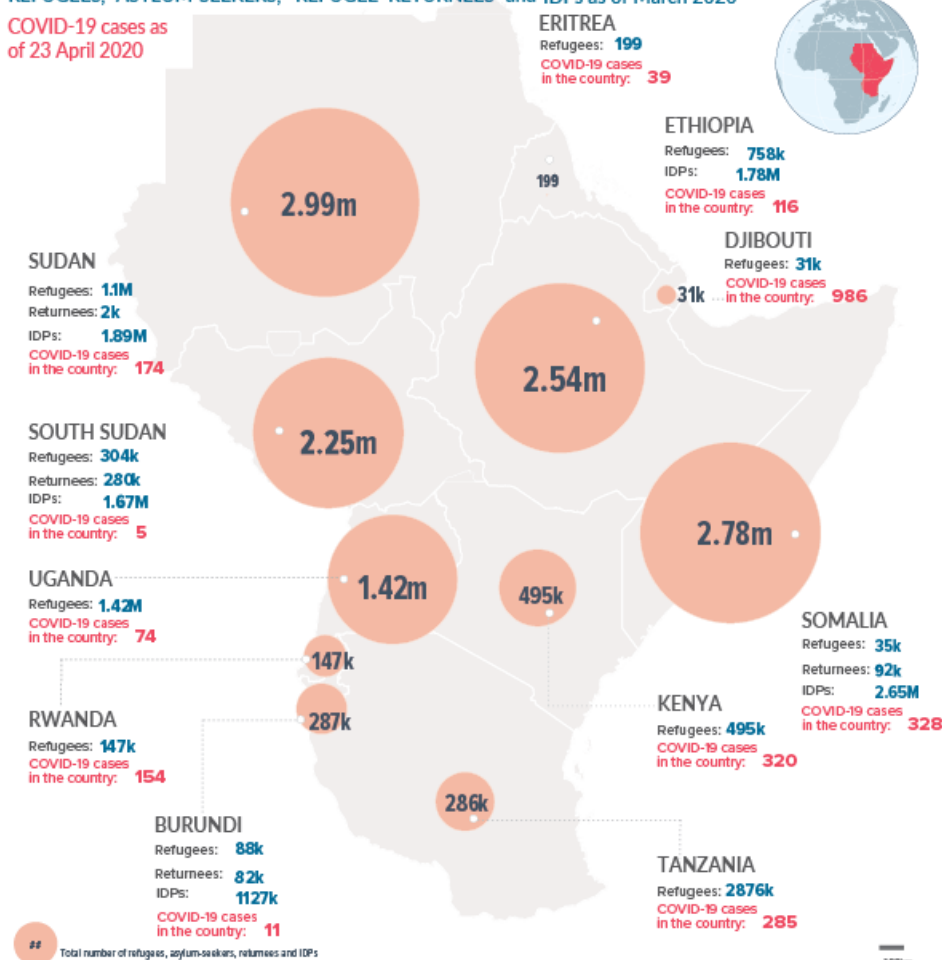


Operational Context

The COVID-19 situation in the East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region continues to evolve rapidly. As of 23 April, there were 2,492 confirmed COVID-19 cases in all countries covered by UNHCR's EHAGL Regional Bureau. While there has been no large-scale outbreak amongst UNHCR's populations of concern so far, 4.7 million refugees and 8.1 million IDPs and their host communities are at risk. The need for preparedness remains urgent. Cases of local transmission have now been reported in all countries of the region. Significant increases of confirmed COVID-19 cases have been observed in **Djibouti, Somalia and Tanzania**. Measures by governments in the region to contain the spread of COVID-19 are evolving rapidly, with frequent changes to border/entry restrictions or limitations on internal movement. In **Djibouti**, with the increase of confirmed cases over the past few days, movement restrictions inside refugee villages have intensified. In **Eritrea**, the lockdown, which was expected to end on 22 April, has been extended until further notice. On 17 April, the Government of **Rwanda** announced the extension of the existing lockdown until 30 April and the wearing of masks in public is now a requirement.

REFUGEES, ASYLUM-SEEKERS, REFUGEE RETURNEES and IDPs as of March 2020

COVID-19 cases as of 23 April 2020



Key Measures Taken

- **Assessment of protection risks – including access to asylum, potential for increased sexual and gender-based violence, and loss of livelihoods – to inform adapted responses.**
- **Emphasis on access to water and soap for handwashing.**
- **Integration of COVID-19 preparedness and response measure into UNHCR's coordination leadership of the Protection, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCCM) Clusters in IDP operations.**

*COVID-19 Case information: WHO, John Hopkins University, Ministries of Health, Governments.
 Note: COVID-19 cases refer to total cases reported in the countries of asylum.

UNHCR Response

Protection

UNHCR continues to assess the impact of border closures and travel restrictions on access to asylum. Access to registration and refugee status determination is difficult due to the current lockdown. Across the region, UNHCR has appealed for special measures to be put in place, to allow for asylum-seekers to be screened, quarantined and admitted, and for UNHCR to be granted access to areas hosting refugees. At Yida transit centre in **South Sudan**, the Commissioner for Refugee Affairs (COR), the state and local authorities, all agreed for the continued registration of new arrivals. In **Ethiopia**, a decision was taken by the Government to re-open Pagak as soon as possible as a reception center for new arrivals from South Sudan ensuring that quarantine facilities will be available under the management of local government health officials. In **Uganda**, where UNHCR is only allowed carry out critical activities, some locations are reviewing whether livelihood activities can become part of critical activities. In Yumbe, for instance, UNHCR is negotiating for land so that refugees can cultivate.

Restriction on movements as a preventative measure for COVID-19 has led to a rise in the level of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Across the region, responses to this trend are being implemented ranging from support through community volunteer networks to communication with social workers via mobile phones. In **Kenya**, efforts are being made to ensure that advocacy surrounding prevention, mitigation and response measures that have been put in place for survivors of SGBV are equally extended to refugee communities. In **Rwanda**, a Whatsapp group for all community activists, refugee committee members, women's representation and drama groups in each camp have been sensitizing their peers on the need to report and safe ways to do so.

Voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees from Tanzania has continued with 717 Burundians returning on 23 April. Additional health screening measures and protocols have been put in place while UNHCR and partners continue to advocate with the two governments to temporarily suspend the program.

Education

1.1 million refugee students out of school as result of COVID-19

The spread of COVID-19 has led to the closure of more and more schools for an indefinite period across the region. Education interventions are shifting to see what can be done to support distance learning, which most governments in the region are providing. We are looking at the need for radios, smart phones, tablets, etc. as well as resources to address connectivity and data access. The **Kenya** Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has provided UNHCR with recorded lessons that will be aired through camp-based radio stations. The recorded lessons will minimize the need to develop lessons locally, enabling teachers to focus on supporting students remotely.

11 countries have closed their borders, impacting access to asylum. UNHCR continues to advocate with Government partners to be able to carry out border monitoring activities, especially in lockdown situations.

All countries in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes have confirmed cases of COVID-19 including imported and local transmission.

Communication on prevention measures with Persons of Concern to provide fact-based information on COVID-19 through a wide variety of methods.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Over **4,000** hygiene kits to be distributed to asylum-seekers and refugees in Puntland

The supply of WASH materials remains a concern. In-country prices are increasing, and availability is decreasing across the region with difficulties getting some goods across borders. In **Kenya**, the distribution of 300 kg of soap to six community-based organizations in Nairobi was completed on 22 April. The organizations will further distribute the items to vulnerable refugees and some host community members. In **Sudan**, 450 hand washing facilities were distributed to all camps, entry points and health facilities around Kosti and arrangement made for ongoing provision of water and soap. In **Uganda**, installation of handwashing facilities at water points continued in Rhino refugee settlement in Arua, with 12 new communal handwashing facilities installed.

Health

Major health challenges include the immediate availability of trained personnel, protective materials for health personnel, equipment necessary to detect, test and treat complicated cases, medication and adequate facilities for isolation, network connectivity in most of the POC operations to support virtual training for frontline workers.

The focus remains on strengthening primary health care facilities in camps while advocating for persons of concern to be included in national response plans. We have, however, identified a number of refugee camps and settlements in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan where refugees are too far from referral hospitals and we will therefore need to establish that secondary health support is possible. Isolation centres have been developed and continue to be identified as part of the preparedness and response plans in country operations. In **Burundi**, the rehabilitation and expansion of 7 isolation centers across the camps and transit centers is under way. In West Wollega, **Ethiopia**, 6 isolation centers were established to cover IDP areas. This past week, UNHCR **Tanzania** donated 40 beds and mattresses to Kibondo and Kakonko districts to support the set up of isolation and treatment facilities at the district level and completed the set-up of an additional 5 tents for isolation of suspected cases in Mtendeli camp. Water connection and WASH facilities were also put in place. Training of frontline workers to respond to COVID-19 is ongoing and countries have adopted various training modalities, including webinars and online courses in coordination with respective Ministries of Health.



UNHCR staff in Kyaka II refugee settlement, Uganda, ensuring that food and CRI distribution modalities are carried out accordingly. UNHCR/R.Bawube

Shelter

Shelter conditions in the region undermine preventative actions being taken in the communities as huge number of refugees and IDPs continue to share confined spaces in very overcrowded conditions. In **Ethiopia**, UNHCR is working with IOM, in coordination with the Government, on decongesting some of the IDP sites. In **Somalia**, the National Displacement and Refugee Agency asked UNHCR to assist them in decongesting the IDP settlements in Somaliland. UNHCR through Protection and CCCM Clusters is following up on the request as it poses concern regarding evictions.

Inter-agency Coordination

Operations are working closely with UN Country Teams, Resident Coordinators and the World Health Organization on crisis management, personnel and business continuity arrangements, programme criticality, preparedness, and response planning. Existing refugee response coordination structures continue to function, through virtual communication where relevant.

At the regional level UNHCR is engaged with the Regional Humanitarian Partners Team to map the impact on humanitarian operations and coordinate on advocacy messaging, as well as with many sectoral groups including health, nutrition, education, and child protection which have been developing context specific inter-agency guidance on programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding needs

On 25 March, the UN launched an inter-agency [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) seeking US\$2.01 billion, which includes US\$255 million for initial, prioritized requirements in UNHCR's operations in affected countries. Monthly updates to the appeal are expected, including the addition of increased partner requirements.

On 27 March, UNHCR issued an [Emergency Appeal](#) providing more details on the initial \$255 million requirements in the GHRP, including a country and sectoral breakdown. Within the appeal, \$15 million has been requested for eight countries in the East and Horn and Great Lakes Region.

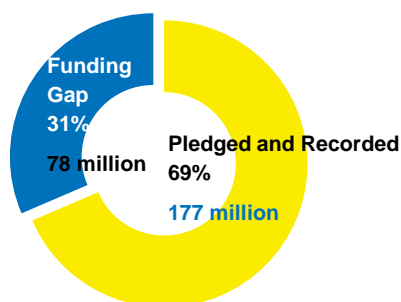
Activities covered by the appeal – and already underway – include life-saving interventions across a number of sectors: procurement of medical supplies and personal protective equipment; establishing shelter and other quarantine arrangements; upgrading water, sanitation and hygiene; and health services; emergency shelter; communications with communities; and adapting registration, refugee status determination and other protection programmes to the changing circumstances.

USD 255 million requested by UNHCR in the inter-agency Global Humanitarian Response Plan on 25 March

USD 15 million requested for 8 countries in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region on 27 March

Funding (as of 24 April 2020)

USD 255M requested on 27 March for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally:



Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal

USD 177M including:

United States \$64M | United Kingdom \$25M | Japan \$23.9M | EU \$17.9M | Denmark \$14.6M | CERF \$6.9M | Canada \$6.4M | Ireland \$3.3M | Sweden \$3M | Sony Corporation \$3M | Education Cannot Wait \$1.8M | Qatar Charity \$1.5M | Australia \$0.8M | Private donors \$0.4M | Portugal \$0.1M | Liechtenstein \$0.1M

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR's regular global programmes:

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors in Spain 20M | Switzerland 16.4M | Private donors in Republic of Korea 10.5M

Links:

Ethiopia – Weekly Operational Update: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/75745>

South Sudan COVID-19 Response Update: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/75589>

Uganda - United Nations Emergency Appeal for Response to COVID-19 and its Impacts (Apr-Sep 2020)

Press releases:

UNHCR Kenya: [UNHCR Kenya expresses continued solidarity in ongoing efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and calls for more support](#)

Joint statement by Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, and Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees: [As COVID-19 pandemic continues, forcibly displaced children need more support than ever](#)

UNHCR: [Beware long-term damage to human rights and refugee rights from the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Story: [Refugee students get lessons over radio during Kenya school shutdown](#)

Live blog - Refugees in the COVID-19 crisis: <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/stories/2020/4/5e85708a4/live-blog-refugees-in-the-covid-19-crisis.html#>

Click [here](#) to access a [live dashboard](#) providing information on COVID-19 cases in the region, as well as travel restrictions and movement and border controls put in place by Governments.

Contacts

Joyce Wayua Munyao-Mbithi, Senior Donor Relations Officer, Regional Bureau for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, Nairobi - munyao@unhcr.org, Tel: +254 20 422 2305

Kabami Kalumiya, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, Nairobi - kalumiya@unhcr.org, Tel: +254 20 422 2350