

Resumption of General Food Distributions for Refugees in Ethiopia

General context

Following the lift of the food aid pause by USAID on 29 September, UNHCR, WFP, its Cooperating Partners (CPs) and Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) jointly prepared for the food distributions in all refugee camps and sites in Ethiopia. This was conducted as per the roles outlined in the new Memorandum of Understanding and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on food assistance in refugee camps, sites and settlements signed by RRS, UNHCR, and WFP.

Across Ethiopia, there are 31 refugee locations targeted by the General Food Distribution (GFD), including 21 camps, five settlements, three sites, and two transit centres, where 878,320 are dependent on food assistance out of the total of 946,682¹ refugees hosted in the country. As of 08 November, 11 480 mt of food has been dispatched of which, 7 330 mt was delivered across all regions in Ethiopia representing 64% of total dispatch. Presently 6,796 mt of food (93%) was delivered to 25 camps.

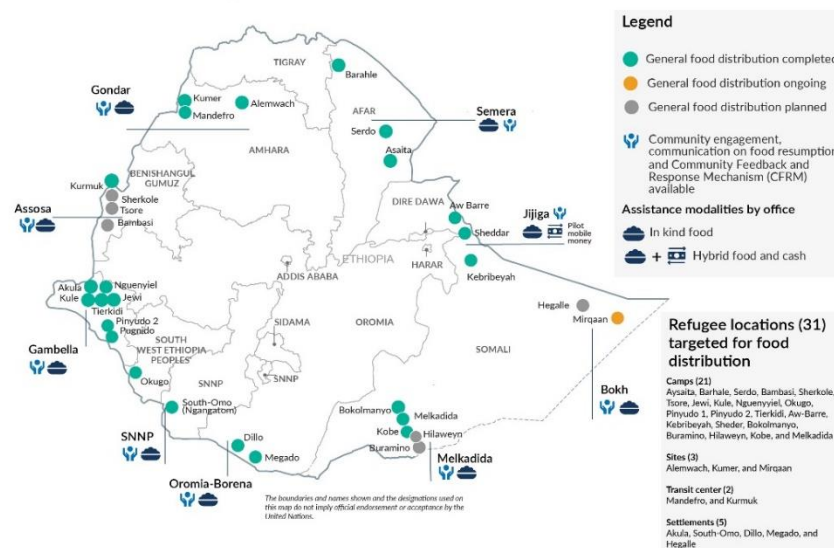
Three camps in Benishangul Gumuz, two camps and one settlement in Somali region are yet to receive their deliveries due to delays caused by insecurity and/or unfavorable road conditions. Under these unfavorable security conditions, the dispatches are on the way to the distribution points.

The prevalence of malnutrition at camps, particularly in Benishangul Gumuz region, where high incidence of Acute Malnutrition cases was reported. The proxy Global Acute Malnutrition rate (GAM) from the acute malnutrition screening data of October 2023 for children under 5 years of age is 18.6% which is very high/critical (SAM proportion reached 3.4% and MAM 15.2%). The situation is further aggravated by pipeline break in provision of treatment products for moderate acute malnutrition and suppliers of blanket supplementary feeding due to insecurity that limited access by WFP trucks.

The table below summarizes the total number of refugees reached against the targeted and the percentage of the food delivered.

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Refugees targeted for the food distribution 878,320 individuals 203,339 households | Refugees reached by food distribution 596,512 individuals 68% of the target | Total refugee locations targeted: 31 (24 completed, 1 ongoing, and 6 pending) |
| | | Refugee locations where GDT² + Mobile collect + stock management available : 27 |

Implementation overview, protection-related activities, and assistance modalities



¹ 75,000 refugees residing in Addis Ababa and 2000 in Tigray that are not targeted in the GFD.

² Global Distribution Tool (GDT) is a corporate UNHCR tool that helps operations use biometrics to verify the identity of beneficiaries during the distribution of food and other types of assistance. Currently, the GDT is available in 27 refugee locations in Ethiopia.

Food Prepositioned and dispatched by location

Planning for November Cycle of GFD: UNHCR, WFP, RRS together with CPs have initiated quadripartite discussions to plan for the November cycle of distribution, enable smooth operations and assure checks of parties' requirements for distribution are met. WFP has shared the indicative distribution plan, UNHCR has submitted GDT beneficiary data and food requests for WFP food release note (FRN) processing.

Status of Food prepositioned and Distributed and Cash Based Transfer (CBT): As of 08 November, WFP has delivered 7,330 mt of food, where food items were received through LESS/LAST Mile solution that facilitates digitized receipt of commodities at final delivery points. WFP and CPs partners have reached 596,512 refugees in 25 camps across seven regions, distributing 6,796 mt food in kind (93% of the delivery) and USD 444,318 in cash for cereal to 42,755 refugees in three camps in Jijiga using WFP contracted financial service providers.

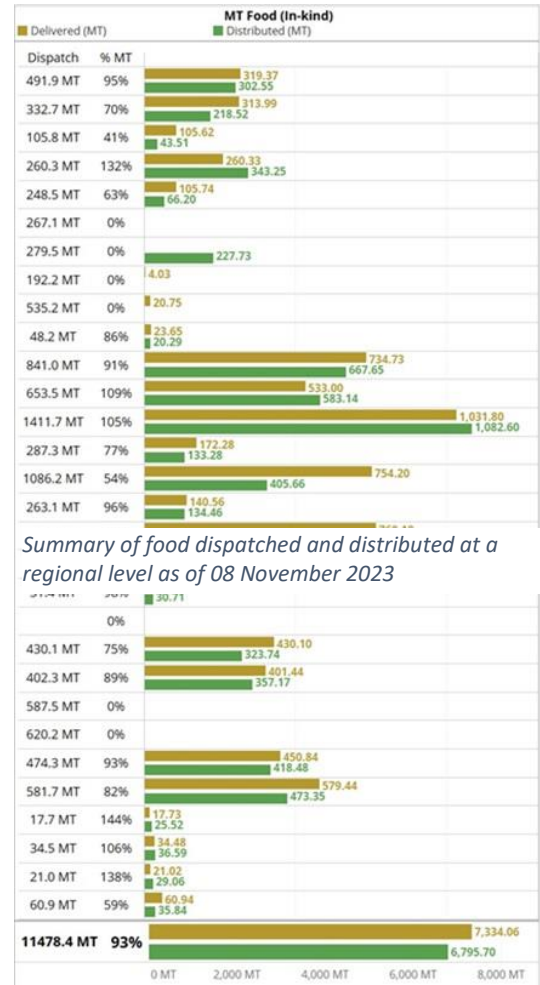
Main highlights

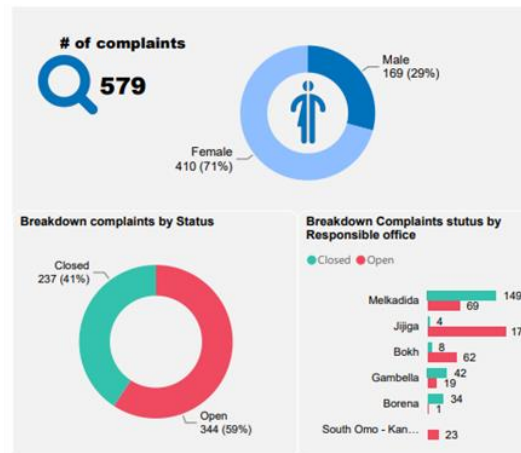
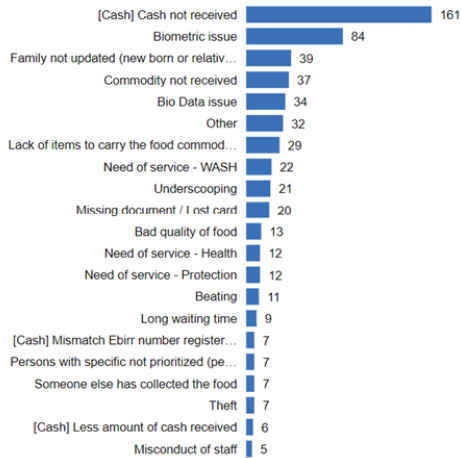
Protection systems and monitoring, communication with communities: UNHCR and WFP Accountability to Affected People (AAP) teams are conducting joint discussions on collaboration in sharing referrals, review of analysis, and collaboration at protection desks. In response to concerns on lack of messaging at Food Distribution Points (FDPs), UNHCR AAP focal points countrywide have been urged to place the PSEA/anti-fraud messages at FDPs and to monitor regularly to ensure that they are in place. Awareness raising and sharing information on Protection of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Gender Based Violence (GBV), and Child Protection, and referral pathways for services are ongoing.

During the reporting period, UNHCR and WFP jointly conducted PSEA and fraud training for 13 RRS and ANE (CP) staff covering both Dilo and Megado. The RRS and ANE also agreed to establish a PSEA prevention, reporting and referral mechanism.

WFP has planned to inspect the quality of the visibility material used at Food Distribution Points with its communication team. On the pre-distribution meetings WFP has agreed that food committees and Refugee Central Committee (RCC) to disseminate the plan of distribution that includes the amount of food distributed to refugees.

Strengthened feedback and response mechanisms:



Type of complaints


The protection help desk at food distribution points, to date, have recorded, 579 complaints, mainly relating to refugees not receiving cash, biometric and bio data issues, under-scooping, and lack of items to carry the food. In Kanganen (South-Omo) ten complaints were received about the bad quality of maize. So far, 237 (41%) complaints have been closed, 344 (59%) are still in the process of being resolved. The Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM) is being used and KoBo tool is being expanded to collect both beneficiaries requesting multi-sectoral services and complaints/feedback on services received, while the harmonization of the various tools is ongoing.

WFP recorded 301 complaints/feedback from refugees through the toll-free hot line in Gambella, Afar Amhara, Oromia and Somali regions. As of now, 56% of the calls have been closed and the remaining 44% are ongoing. The nature of these feedback was categorized as 7% observation, 18% request for assistance, 24% request for information and 51% were complaints. Majority of the complaint (60%) revolved around delay in receiving beneficiary entitlements due to the pause, 30% of complaints were related to the quantity of food entitlement which was indicated as low in relation to the time spent without receiving their entitlements, and the remaining 10% involved issues related to misplaced phones and registry of new numbers for distribution. Further, from the cash transfer in the three camps in Jijjiga about 210 beneficiaries (0.2% of recipients) did not receive their cash transfer in their mobile phones due to technical issues, which is also being addressed.

Registration: In locations where food distribution is ongoing, UNHCR is working to ensure that unregistered newborn children and new arrivals are registered for the next round of food distribution and other protection services. Most locations have reported a backlog of unregistered populations especially Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNP) and Oromia small settlements. UNHCR and RRS are discussing on resumption plan of registration to ensure all eligible refugees are included, though timelines have not been ratified.

Social Cohesion: As of 08 November, following food distribution in Kurmuk, refugees in Tsore camp who were aware of the distribution in Kurmuk raised concerns on food not having yet reached other camps. This caused slight tension among refugees who are still waiting for food distribution in the three camps in Assosa. No additional incident was reported.

General Distribution Monitoring: WFP continued to conduct site and distribution monitoring in all camps where distribution was on-going. About 852 beneficiaries and 24 partners staff have provided feedback on the quality of the distribution process and assistance. The preliminary findings of feedback gathered during the site and distribution monitoring as coordinated by field monitors using digital platforms (tablets), indicated that refugees in Megado settlement, Oromia region, were mobilised on-time, however distribution schedules changed as verification and Global Distribution Tool (GDT) readiness needed to be completed. In addition, three in every ten households reported that they were not satisfied with the assistance citing

that the ration size (60% of 2,100kcal) was not adequate, the most dissatisfaction was recorded among refugees in Somali, Oromia and SNNP regions.

In Punyindo camps, Gambella region, where some three bags of cereals were found on the market and confiscated later by the RRS, and were later relocated to WFP warehouse, a focus group discussion was coordinated to establish reasons as to why refugees were selling their entitlements. The feedback noted that refugees are selling their food to meet other immediate household non-food-items needs such as soap (for e.g. 1 kg of cereal can afford a household a bar of soap). None of the beneficiaries reported to have encountered any safety or security issue as they commuted to the distribution sites. Nevertheless, the absence of functional grinding mill in most camps force women to travel long distance to process their grain.

In Kurmuk, Benishangul Gumuz region, aside the regular monitoring team of the MFT (Multi-functional Team), an external monitoring team from African Humanitarian Action also came on a mission and monitored the ongoing distribution at the transit center.

Coordination and collaboration:

- *Country Quadripartite operational food coordination:* A quadripartite coordination meeting was held on 3 November to discuss matters arising from the ongoing general food resumption by location. Discussions included updates from all sub/field office, with a focus on data management /Global Distribution Tool, protection systems and monitoring, Communication with Communities, simplification of frameworks and visualization of content for refugees, human resources and capacities, warehouse security, food monitoring and food distribution planning. A lessons learnt review is planned on 10 November 2023 to inform better distribution flow during the November cycle.

Next step

WFP post-distribution monitoring will start next week in refugee camps and sites in the Afar and Amhara regions following the completion of the food distribution cycle. The initial report of the monitoring is planned to be completed by mid-December 2023.

WFP is finalizing the Field Level Agreement (FLA) amendment with their CPs to expand their geographical coverage to two transit points for newly arrived individuals in the Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, who are currently assisted by WFP and UNHCR directly.



Resumption of food distribution in Bokolmayo refugee camp in Somali region ©WFP/Michael Tewelde

Annex I: Food distributions: state of play by refugee location

| Locations | Start date for the dispatch of food | Start date of the GFD | Expected end date of GFD | Refugee population | Comments/Status |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Somali region | | | | | |

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|--------------------------|------------|-----------|--------|--------|---------|--|
| Melkadida | Bokolmayo | 9 Oct | 13 Oct | 19 Oct | 33,3042 | Completed |
| | Melkadida | 12 Oct | 20 Oct | 27 Oct | 43,371 | Completed |
| | Kobe | 17 Oct | 27 Oct | 1 Nov | 39,195 | Completed |
| | Buramino | tbc | tbc | tbc | 51,261 | Distributions are still in the planning phases. Heavy rains may delay the arrivals of food trucks from Jigjiga |
| | Hilaweyn | tbc | tbc | tbc | 48,556 | |
| Jigjiga | Kebribeyah | 6 Oct | 7 Oct | 11 Oct | 18,043 | Completed |
| | Aw-barre | 15/16 Oct | 17 Oct | 20 Oct | 13,387 | Completed |
| | Shedder | 21/22 Oct | 23 Oct | 27 Oct | 14,700 | Completed |
| | Mirqaan | 23 Oct | 30 Oct | 10 Nov | 42,325 | Ongoing |
| | Hegalle | tbc | tbc | tbc | 28,930 | Delivery pending |
| Gambella region | | | | | | |
| Gambella | Pinyudo II | 10 Oct | 11 Oct | 18 Oct | 11,563 | Completed |
| | Pinyudo I | 10 Oct | 12 Oct | 31 Oct | 52,008 | Completed |
| | Akula | 12 Oct | 12 Oct | 13 Oct | 1,946 | Completed |
| | Okugo | 13 Oct | 21 Oct | 26 Oct | 14,163 | Completed |
| | Nguenyiel | 16 Oct | 18 Oct | 06 Nov | 113,680 | Completed |
| | Jewi | 16 Oct | 20 Oct | 03 Nov | 68,914 | Completed |
| | Kule | 23 Oct | 24 Oct | 04 Nov | 53,753 | Completed |
| | Tierkidi | 23 Oct | 24 Oct | 08 Nov | 73,525 | Completed |
| Benishangul Gumuz | | | | | | |
| Benishangul-Gumuz | Kurmuk | 14 Oct | 30 Oct | 07 Nov | 16,461 | Completed |
| | Tsore | tbc | tbc | tbc | 43,380 | Delivery pending affected by insecurity |
| | Sherkole | tbc | tbc | tbc | 15,296 | Delivery pending affected by insecurity. |
| | Bambasi | tbc | tbc | tbc | 20,555 | Delivery pending affected by insecurity. |
| Amhara | | | | | | |
| Amhara | Alemwach | 16 Oct | 25 Oct | 31 Oct | 22,046 | Completed |
| | Kumer | 15 Oct | 17 Oct | 25 Oct | 9,712 | Completed |
| | Mandefro | 21 Oct | 23 Oct | 25 Oct | 1,222 | Completed |
| Afar | | | | | | |
| Afar | Serdo | 9 Oct | 10 Oct | 13 Oct | 8,745 | Completed, though with limited turnout due to the fact that many refugees from Serdo site returned to Berhale refugee camp with the intention to re- |

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|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| | | | | | | establish themselves there. It is important to recall that refugees residing in the Serdo site have been displaced during the conflict from Berhale refugee camp. |
| | Berhale | 13/14 Oct | 23 Oct | 31 Oct | 26,396 | Completed |
| | Assayita | 18/19 Oct | 15 Oct | 26 Oct | 23,198 | Completed |
| SNNP | | | | | | |
| SNNP | South-Omo (Ngangatom) | | 23 Oct | 27 Oct | 4,933 | Completed |
| Oromia | | | | | | |
| Oromia | Dillo | | 23 Oct | 25 Oct | 1,494 | Completed |
| | Megado | | 28 Oct | 30 Oct | 2,536 | Completed |