

East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

January – March 2025



South Sudan. With continued arrivals from Sudan and limited funding, the Renk Transit Centre is overstretched, exposing refugees and returnees to health risks. © UNHCR/Reason Moses Runyanga

KEY FIGURES (AS OF 31 MARCH 2025)

5.7M Refugees and Asylum-seekers

19.0M Internally Displaced Persons

128K Refugee Returnees in 2025

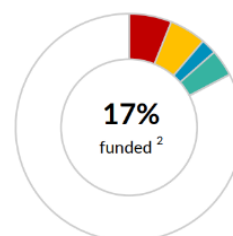
REFUGEES IN THE EHAGL REGION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

South Sudan	2,239K
DR. Congo	918K
Somalia	906K
Sudan	704K
Eritrea	382K
Burundi	271K
Ethiopia	177K
Rwanda	29K
Yemen	20K
Central African Rep.	13K
Syrian Arab Rep.	13K

FUNDING UPDATE (AS OF 31 MARCH 2025)

USD 2.185 Billion

2025 financial requirements for the EHAGL region



EAST HORN AND GREAT LAKES

as of 31 March 2025

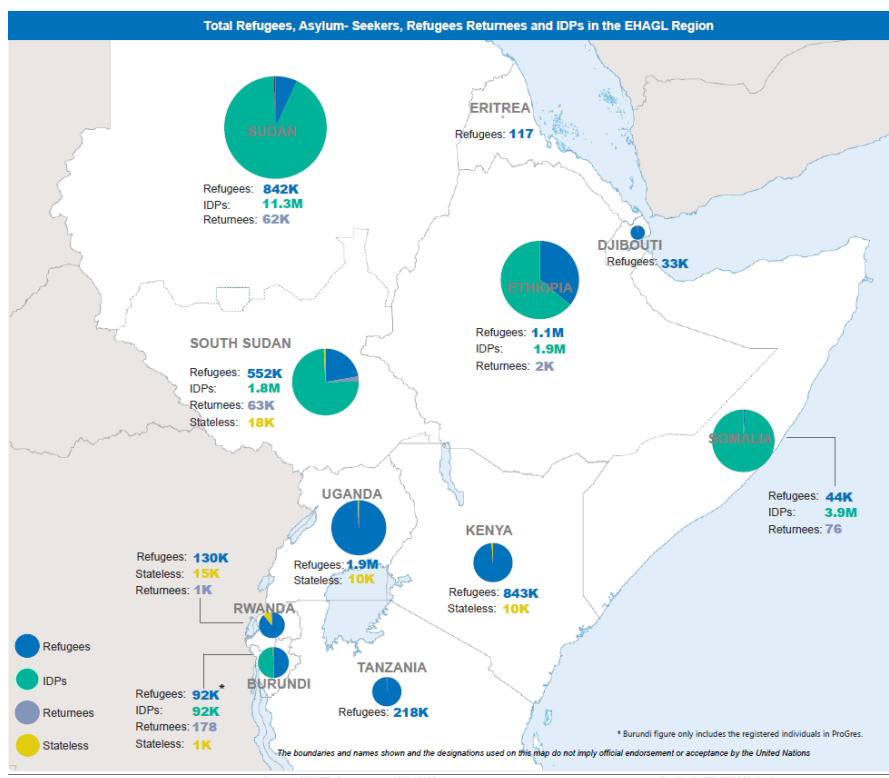
- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

By the end of March 2025, the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region hosted some 5.7 million refugees and asylum-seekers and 19 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), totalling to 24.7 million displaced people. Majority of the refugees and asylum-seekers were hosted in Uganda (1.9 million), Ethiopia (1.1 million), Kenya (843,000) and Sudan (842,000). Internally displaced persons were mainly in Sudan (11.3 million), Somalia (3.9 million), Ethiopia (1.9 million), South Sudan (1.8 million) and Burundi (92,000). Some 125,000 refugees had been documented as having returned to their countries of origin in 2025.

The region continues to grapple with multiple crises. For instance, the crisis in Sudan has added another layer of complexity and humanitarian urgency to a region already grappling with a series of overlapping crises, including protracted conflicts, chronic insecurity, and forced displacement. Neighboring countries continue to bear the brunt of the refugee crisis.

In eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), armed conflict between government forces and rebels continued displacing populations into Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Fighting intensified in January, with more people displaced as this protracted conflict persists. Reception and life-saving assistance, community-based protection and protection monitoring, analysis and reporting, health, education and livelihoods remain key priority response areas in the countries of asylum.



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

SITUATIONAL UPDATES

SUDAN SITUATION: Since the onset of fighting between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023 the conflict has escalated into the largest displacement crisis globally with over 12.7 million forced to flee. Of this, 8.6 million are displaced internally and 3.8 million in neighbouring countries. As of 31 March, the new arrivals into Egypt were 1.5 million, 71,789 in Ethiopia, nearly 1.1 million in South Sudan, 42,295 in the Central Africa Republic (CAR), 772,970 in Chad, 256,000 in Libya and nearly 71,386 in Uganda. The latest figures are available [here](#).

As the conflict in **Sudan** persists, humanitarian operations remain severely constrained by access restrictions, security risks, and funding shortages. The ongoing military offensives in Khartoum, North Kordofan, and Darfur continue to drive mass displacement, straining already overwhelmed humanitarian response efforts. A [cholera outbreak](#) in White Nile, along with growing malnutrition rates, highlights the urgent need for sustained health, WASH, and food assistance. In Blue Nile State, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 290 cholera cases in the State since November 2024. Additional cases were identified among the displaced people from Sennar State and reported at the Al Karama IDP gathering site due to poor Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities.

The situation remains fluid, with ongoing military incursions, escalating security concerns, and continued displacement impacting humanitarian operations. Movement and access restrictions have hindered humanitarian agencies' ability to transport and distribute aid. In North Darfur, community-based protection networks (CBPN) report increasing difficulties in moving in and out of Zamzam IDP camp, with rising protection risks, including killings, abductions, looting, harassment, and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). In East and South Darfur, humanitarian activities except for life-saving health and water services remain suspended by state authorities.

UNHCR and partners have resumed operations in three refugee camps—Dabat Bosin, Alagaya, and Alganna—in White Nile State, following the suspension of activities due to the incursion of armed actors in December 2024. Authorities have equally reinstated security in the camps.

In February, UNHCR participated in an inter-agency cross-border mission accompanying three trucks carrying 1,000 non-food items (NFI) kits to Kass, South Darfur, and Ed Daein, East Darfur. In Kassala State, UNHCR enabled the mobile money service company CASHI to install and configure the CASHI application for refugees. This partnership with the mobile service company is part of an initiative to explore alternative solutions to the recent Central Bank's new directives to use digital transfer for cash assistance. To

begin with, around 1,240 registered urban refugees will be supported to open mobile application, and the funds will be transferred to the refugees' accounts.

In **South Sudan**, the humanitarian situation remains critical as the number of new arrivals from Sudan continues to grow, straining already limited resources. With over 1 million people fleeing the conflict in Sudan, transit centres and refugee-hosting areas continue to face significant overcrowding, exacerbating shelter, WASH, and health challenges. Cholera cases remain of concern particularly in Unity State, where high-risk areas such as Payinjar require urgent interventions.

In Vakaga, Bamingui Bangoran, Haute Kotto and Ouaka prefectures which host most the Sudanese refugees in **CAR**, the security situation on the roads and in the sub-prefectures is characterized by human rights violations by armed men who perpetrate torture, inhuman treatment, assault, battery, and extortion of property. In response to the Sudanese crisis, UNHCR in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) and partners provided multi-sectoral assistance to more than 22,000 Sudanese refugees in Korsi, a district identified by the government in Vakaga, 65 km from the border with Sudan. This assistance covered protection, access to shelter/housing, water, hygiene and sanitation, and health and education services

In **Chad**, efforts to promote refugee self-sufficiency and economic integration continue to expand. Chadian authorities authenticated over 200 Sudanese refugee diplomas and certificates particularly for qualified health workers, enabling them to seek employment in local health facilities. This initiative aims to facilitate the integration of qualified refugee health workers into existing health facilities, promoting both employment and access to healthcare. Additionally, the National Office of Higher Education Examinations and Competitions facilitated the authentication and equivalence of refugee diplomas in Adré, improving access to the job market and fostering socio-economic inclusion.

In response to the growing influx of Sudanese refugees, UNHCR's government partner the Commission Nationale pour l'Accueil et la Réinsertion des Réfugiés et des Rapatriés (CNARR), allocated an additional 23 hectares for shelter construction in the Koursigüé refugee site extension. In Tiné, local and traditional authorities also provided 39.67 hectares to expand the refugee site.

The Sudan emergency continues to drive large-scale displacement, with **Egypt** hosting over 1.5 million Sudanese refugees since the start of the conflict, according to statistics from the Government of Egypt.

A report [released](#) by UNHCR Egypt's cash team in February presented remarkable evidence on the positive impact of cash assistance to some of Egypt's most vulnerable refugees. The 2024 Post-Distribution Monitoring Report also indicated how beneficiaries mainly used the cash for essential items, with food being the top spending category (83 per cent of beneficiaries), followed by rent (75 per cent), health-related items and services (22 per cent), while utilities and bills, and education were each reported by 16 per cent of the beneficiaries. The report is of critical importance as it highlights the risks posed by funding shortfalls, which threaten cash assistance programmes and could severely affect the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers in Egypt.

Prima facie recognition for Sudanese asylum-seekers remains in **Uganda**. Kiryandongo settlement, the only settlement receiving Sudanese refugees is currently facing three simultaneous disease outbreaks: cholera (22 cumulative cases), measles (one confirmed case), and Mpox (two confirmed cases). In response, the District Health Task Force has implemented urgent preventive measures, including intensified risk communication, distribution of tabs for water treatment, and advocacy with partners and the Ministry of Health for additional supplies. A joint risk assessment has been planned to guide further prevention efforts.

Since the Ebola virus outbreak was declared on 30 January, the Government of Uganda in coordination with the Ministry of Health and partners, launched a comprehensive response focusing on early detection, clinical care, infection prevention and control, and community engagement to contain the virus. A total of nine cases were confirmed, with no refugees affected.

In **Libya**, the registration process by authorities in Alkufra remains halted, with no clear timeline for resolution. The Department for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) in Libya has reportedly increased patrols near the border with Sudan, with the newly arrived Sudanese refugees reporting an increase in the cost of transportation by smugglers from the triangle area to Alkufra.

The UNHCR Libya field team in Ajdabiya has been coordinating with the Sudanese community and local partner, LibAid, to assess the needs of Sudanese refugees in Brega, Zweisatien, and Ben Jawad. 17 sites including schools, hospitals, and clinics serving Sudanese refugees in the eastern cities have been identified for possible installation of mobile latrines.

UNHCR continues to provide assistance to Sudanese refugees across Libya, with the distribution of core relief items (CRIs) in March in Benghazi, which included blankets, mattresses, solar lamps, kitchen sets, plastic sheets, jerry cans, hygiene kits, and baby kits. The distribution targeted 5,000 refugees and 200 host community households. UNHCR also completed assessments at Al Abaj and Kreek farms, which are being used as collective shelters for Sudanese refugees. Discussions with the DCIM in Alkufra are ongoing regarding CRI distributions.

Sudanese new arrivals continue to arrive in relatively small numbers from Sudan into **Ethiopia**. Overall, the total number of new arrivals from Sudan is currently at 70,481 individuals since the start of the conflict, including 17,600 Ethiopian returnees. UNHCR continues to advocate with Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) to resume L1 registration at Metema, since the L1 registration suspension due to the violence in Metema in October 2024. UNHCR is also seeking the granting of a no-cost visa extension window for Sudanese in Addis Ababa. To note, Sudanese nationals who either arrived in Addis Ababa via Bole International Airport, resided in Addis Ababa before the conflict, or moved to Addis Ababa irregularly without registering at the border likely did not access asylum procedures in Addis Ababa and could be subject to fines.

SOUTH SUDAN SITUATION: As of 31 March, countries in the EHAGL region hosted 2.29 million South Sudanese refugees with the majority (43.3 per cent) in Uganda, 26.9 per cent are hosted in Sudan, 18.7 per cent in Ethiopia, 8.6 per cent in Kenya and 2.4 per cent in DRC.

The security situation in South Sudan has significantly deteriorated due to escalating political tensions and ongoing violence. The house arrest of First Vice President Riek Machar in Juba in March has heightened fears of a potential return to civil war, potential violations of the 2018 peace agreement and the stability of the power-sharing arrangement. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has on 27 March [called](#) for an immediate cessation of hostilities and urged the country's leaders to engage in dialogue to de-escalate tensions and restore calm.

Humanitarian efforts in South Sudan are increasingly constrained by insecurity and funding shortages. Due to the deteriorating security situation, UNHCR and partners do not have access in some areas of Upper Nile, further exacerbating challenges for displaced populations, particularly in the face of severe food insecurity and a cholera outbreak. Many are struggling to access essential services. However, UNHCR remains committed to providing life-saving support to those in need, but additional resources and support are urgently required to address the growing humanitarian challenges.

In response to the South Sudan situation, neighbouring UNHCR operations in Ethiopia, DRC, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, are revising their existing contingency plans to define the likely high-risk scenarios, population movements and projected displacement figures for the contingency plan.

DRC SITUATION (EHAGL REGIONAL RESPONSE):

Since January 2025, renewed fighting in eastern DRC has led to a dramatic worsening in the humanitarian situation and mass displacement particularly in North and South Kivu provinces. Intense hostilities, which begun in Goma in January, have engulfed the region leading to hundreds of thousands of population movements and a significant deterioration in the protection environment.

To respond to this worsening emergency, UNHCR is seeking [\\$40.4 million](#) to strengthen preparedness and deliver life-saving protection and assistance to 275,000 internally displaced people in South Kivu, North Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika provinces of the DRC, as well as to support a potential influx of 258,000 refugees, asylum-seekers, and returnees in neighbouring countries, including Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Between January and March, this crisis has caused over 123,600 people to seek refuge in neighbouring countries of Uganda and Burundi. Over 70,000 people arrived in Burundi mainly via unofficial crossing points in Cibitoke province, many making the dangerous crossing of the Rusizi river. The Government of Burundi announced that it would grant all new arrivals from DRC since 1 January *prima facie* refugee status. By the end of March, almost 36,000 people had also crossed into Uganda, with over half entering via formal crossing points in Kisoro District.

From January to March 2025, arrivals from DRC to Uganda were 480 per cent higher than during the same period in 2024. Further, the transit centres in Uganda are also operating between 300 to 450 per cent beyond their capacity, increasing the strain on basic services. This has been compounded by the regional funding cuts and the suspension of essential health services and the deprioritization of some protection activities. In Burundi, overcrowded living conditions and a lack of basic infrastructure in the recently dismantled Rugombo stadium site have contributed to a cholera outbreak, with 11 cases reported as of 26 March.

On 14 March, UNHCR received 368 Rwandan returnees (100 households) at the Nyarushishi transit center from Goma, DRC who were screened and relocated by the Rwandan authorities to their places of origin. Since January 2025, a total of 792 Rwandan returnees have been received in Rwanda, and the increase in returnees is attributed to enhanced sensitization efforts by national NGOs, which has raised awareness on voluntary repatriation among Rwandan refugees in Kivu. However, a key challenge raised by returnees is the high cost of transportation from their places of residence, including IDP camps, to the transit centres in Goma and Bukavu. Transport costs approximately 15,000 Congolese Francs (\$5), a burden that many refugees cannot afford. As a result, despite many Rwandan refugees in Kivu may wish to return to Rwanda, they are unable to do so and are forced to remain in insecure conditions.

The Government of Tanzania and UNHCR continue to welcome new arrivals from DRC, where 1,745 individuals sought safety in Tanzania in March. This brings the total to 1,932 individuals received from January to March 2025. In collaboration with the Government, other UN agencies, and NGO partners, UNHCR continues to provide comprehensive protection and lifesaving assistance. This includes food, non-food items, shelter, medical care, water and sanitation, and other critical protection interventions, including gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection prevention and response activities. Support has also been extended to persons with specific needs through identification, provision of services according to their needs, and referral for comprehensive assessment and support in the camp.

BURUNDI SITUATION: By 31 March, countries in the EHAGL region were host to 321,000 Burundi refugees.

In Burundi, amid the ongoing DRC crisis, an increasing number of Burundian refugees have spontaneously returned to Burundi, primarily through Rugombo in Cibitoke Province—a key entry point also used by newly arriving Congolese refugees. Returnees receive a one-time cash grant of \$30 and a mobile card to facilitate communication with their relatives. Full assistance will be organized separately according to the SOPs on self-organized return and the regional Guidelines on eligibility for repatriation packages. Some returnees were previously registered in UNHCR-supported refugee sites in the DRC and are being assisted through existing reintegration mechanisms, in coordination with Burundian authorities and humanitarian partners.

Upon arrival in Burundi, the returnees were transferred to the Gihanga Transit Center for biometric verification conducted jointly by UNHCR and the General Directorate for the Repatriation, Reception and Reintegration of Returnees (DGRRR). At the center, UNHCR provides the returnees with cash assistance to support their transportation to their areas of return.

As of 31 March 2025, a total of 1,666 Burundian refugees had returned spontaneously from the DRC. However, the pace of facilitated returns remains low in 2025, with only 178 individuals from Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya supported as of 31 March.

SOMALIA SITUATION: By the end of March, countries in the EHAGL region were host to 944,000 Somali refugees.

The IDP situation in Somalia is complex with conflict, weather-related hazards, fragile social protection mechanisms and socio-economic instability compounding the situation. In 2025, approximately 3.9 million individuals were displaced due to ongoing internal violence and recurring natural disasters. Somalia also continues to host some 44,000 refugees mainly from Ethiopia and Yemen, while 944,000 Somali refugees remain in the region.

COUNTRY UPDATES

BURUNDI: As of 31 March, Burundi was a host to 92,000 refugees.

As part of inclusion efforts into the Burundian education system, and the implementation of agreements between the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research (MENRS) and UNHCR, a mission was conducted to the refugee camps and returnee areas in Gasorwe and Masanganzira, Muyinga Province to raise awareness on the diploma equivalency process. Refugees raised questions on the prerequisite of obtaining equivalency, the requirement to submit original documents, and the Burundian government's plans to improve education for Congolese refugees in Burundi. Additionally, a meeting between MENRS and UNHCR focused on facilitating the issuance of equivalency certificates for refugees and returnees, and the administration of Burundi's national exams for Burundian refugee students who are following the Burundian school program in Tanzanian refugee camps. MENRS is decentralizing the equivalency process to ease access, with awareness materials under development.

Congolese refugees have continued with income-generating activities at the Musenyi site as part of their livelihood initiatives. The Susuruka cooperative also recently harvested its rice crop, produced 1,022 pieces of bread (sold 583 pieces) and consumed the remainder. Additionally, the group, comprising of 27 refugees and local community members also manufactures soap which is sold locally. Supporting refugee self-reliance is essential for several reasons, including enhancing food security, reducing dependency on humanitarian assistance, and fostering economic inclusion, particularly in the agricultural sector.

As part of efforts to reintegrate Burundian returnees into their areas of return in their country, UNHCR and its partner COPED begun a shelter kit distribution in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province. 48 households have already received the shelter kits, pending another 52. Shelter kits are essential to ensuring a safe and dignified living environment for Burundian returnees who have chosen to return to their home country. They play a crucial role in their reintegration, stability, and protection.

In January, an infrastructure assessment mission was conducted in Makamba province to evaluate the status and quality of key facilities under construction which include: the Gitara Transit Center (assessment of a shelter under construction and a completed health post), the Butegeri Fundamental School and Musenyi health post (monitoring ongoing construction), sanitation and site improvement work at Musenyi in Giharo commune. The mission also conducted a technical inspection of the newly constructed buildings at Gasana Fundamental School in Kayogoro commune comprising of 3 blocks of 9 classrooms, a director's office, two separate latrine blocks for the benefit of refugees, returnees and the host community.

DJIBOUTI: As of 31 March, Djibouti was host to 33,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen and Eritrea.

On March 26, the National Agency for Employment, Training and Professional Integration (ANEFIP), in collaboration with the Djiboutian Ministry of Interior (ONARS) and UNHCR, launched soft skills training sessions for 150 young refugees and asylum seekers (50 trainees per site) residing in the three refugee sites of Ali-Addeh, Holl-Holl and Markazi. The training modules offered included the prevention of sexual harassment, curriculum vitae (CV) and application letter writing, as well as a series of confidence-building activities.

On 23 February, UNHCR participated in a workshop to launch the implementation of the National Refugee Law (LNR). The workshop was presided over by the Minister of the Interior and attended by the Minister of Town Planning and Housing, the Executive Secretary of ONARS, the World Bank Resident Representative in Djibouti, the UNHCR Protection Officer and the Director of Urban Rehabilitation and Social Housing Agency (ARULOS). The workshop aimed to strengthen the understanding of the law and ensure its effective implementation, to better protect and integrate refugees in Djibouti. A panel of refugees who were invited to the session also shared their perspectives on the refugee law issues. A series of training and awareness-raising workshops for both state institutions and refugees will be organized to fill the gaps in knowledge of the law, improve coordination between the actors involved, and raise awareness of legal obligations and good practices.

On 23 February, WFP sub-office in Tadjourah handed out SCOPE cards to newly arrived Eritreans, Yemenis and Syrians living in the Markazi refugee site. A total of 71 newly registered families benefited from the card distribution. To note, WFP in collaboration with UNHCR provide food aid to refugees and asylum seekers living in the Ali-Addeh, Holl-Holl and Markazi reception areas. This food aid is provided exclusively via cash transfers using SCOPE cards.

On 21 January, the National Agency for People living with Disability (ANPH) and UNHCR organized a workshop to present the results of a study and analysis on the needs and barriers affecting refugees living with disability in their daily lives. The workshop that brought together different ministries, partners and refugees identified priorities and made recommendations in terms of health, access to clean water, socioeconomic factors influencing disability conditions with a specific focus on work and employment and access to appropriate equipment. Participants raised the need to accelerate the promotion of effective inclusion with a view to helping people living with disability find employment.

ETHIOPIA: As of 31 March, Ethiopia hosted 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan.

On March 15, the Ethiopian Prime Minister [hosted](#) 200 refugees at the National Palace for a special Ramadan Iftar. The Prime Minister welcomed refugees from various countries, symbolizing solidarity, love, and shared humanity during Ramadan. The attendees also toured the newly restored national palace, highlighting Ethiopia's commitment to supporting displaced communities and offering hope and dignity. The gathering underscored the importance of inclusivity, unity, and collective responsibility in addressing global humanitarian crises, reinforcing Ethiopia's leadership in extending kindness, empathy, and togetherness.

The Socio-Economic Refugees Survey in Ethiopia conducted by [Refugees and Returnees Service of Ethiopia](#), the [Ethiopian Central Statistics Service](#), [UNHCR](#) and the [World Bank](#), with support from the [World Bank – UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement](#) was launched in Addis Ababa on 28 January. Data was collected from 3,452 refugee and host community households, aiming to solve two existing problems: (i) gaps in data on the socioeconomic dimensions of refugees and (ii) gaps in analytical studies presenting the socioeconomic outcomes of refugees and hosts. Moreover, the Socio-Economic Survey of Refugees in Ethiopia (SESRE) serves as a feasibility study to include refugees in the national household survey of Ethiopia data collection efforts, including sampling, data collection, and analysis.



Ethiopia. Nyadak and her siblings walk out of the Jewi Nutrition Center in Gambella, Ethiopia. © UNHCR/Sona Dadi

The data contained in the survey will greatly contribute to the implementation of the MAKATET Roadmap, Ethiopia's initiative aimed at including refugees in its national service system. A series of consultative engagements on the proposed Makatet Roadmap and its implementation plan are ongoing to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach. The engagements have been held with refugee representatives, government representatives from refugee-hosting regions and federal line ministries, non-state actors, including NGOs, civil society organizations, and private sector stakeholders.

A critical nutrition situation is prevailing among the Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia. Data collected on the Metema-Afitit axis indicate a global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate which equals 15.7 per cent. These nutrition indicators are above the WHO thresholds in

emergencies, which is 15 per cent. The situation is mainly attributable to a lack of access to adequate food, health, WASH, and nutrition services, limiting family caring practices due to and/or exacerbated by insecurity caused by the war in Sudan.

There is need for continued actions to address the immediate nutrition, health, WASH, food, energy and protection needs for the new arrivals. Immediate response interventions should go concurrently with deliberate actions aiming at inclusion from the start, investments in food systems, livelihoods and development projects as long-term interventions to address the needs of refugees and host communities.

KENYA: As of 31 March, Kenya was host to 843,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers including over 428,400 in Dadaab, 303,000 in the Kakuma refugee camp and Kalobeyei integrated settlement and nearly 112,000 in urban areas.

On March 28, Kenya unveiled the [Shirika Plan](#), a groundbreaking initiative aimed at transforming refugee camps into integrated settlements that support the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and host communities in Garissa and Turkana counties, and urban areas. Launched by Kenya's President, the Shirika Plan marks a significant shift from a humanitarian-driven response to a development-oriented approach. UNHCR's High Commissioner congratulated the government on this visionary plan, highlighting its potential to foster social cohesion and economic empowerment, health, and essential services for both refugees and local communities. Shirika is actively inspiring other countries to craft their own transformative plans that embrace refugees, with Kenya leading by example.

The Shirika Plan is a flagship initiative under the Human Settlements pledge made at the 2023 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). This pledge emphasizes sustainable human settlements for refugees and host communities, aligning with the Shirika Plan's goals. Under the Shirika Plan, refugee-hosting areas will be developed into municipalities to increase economic opportunities, education, health, and essential services for both refugees and local communities.

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) was formally approved for one year, bringing it into full alignment with the constitutional duration of the current government and Kenya's Medium-Term Plan (MTP IV). In October, the Resident Coordinator made a written submission to the Development Coordination Office (DCO) requesting for the extension of the UNSDCF to 2027. The initial UNSDCF, with a total budget of USD 2.2 billion was signed with the government in 2022 and was set to expire in June 2026.

On 27 January in Dadaab, UNHCR hosted 32 private sector leaders, business figures, and philanthropists. The delegation included representatives from the Eastleigh Business District Association, Dubai International Bank, KCB, Hormud Foundation, Safaricom Foundation, the diaspora, and youth organizations from Mombasa. During their visit to Ifo 2, they were briefed on some of UNHCR interventions and participated in focus group discussions with refugees and host community youth, women, and girls. Several leaders pledged further support, including the donation of a water storage tank for a Women and Girls centre.

In Dadaab there have been increased malnutrition cases linked to the rising acute watery diarrhoea and respiratory infections. These rise in cases emphasizes the need for continued surveillance and targeted interventions. In January, 2,492 cases were admitted to the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) program, including 1,400 in Targeted Supplementary Feeding Program (TSFP), 688 in Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP), and 404 in the Stabilization centre.

In Kakuma, schools reopened on 6 January for the first term, with over 70,803 learners returning to school by the end of January, representing 70 per cent of the total enrollment. The Ministry of Education Turkana County Education Board issued five-year registration certificates to 36 camp-based schools, advancing their inclusion in the national education system, though they remain classified as 'refugee schools'.

RWANDA: By 31 March, Rwanda hosted nearly 136,000 refugees and asylum-seekers mainly from DRC and Burundi.

In February and March, the Gikondo Community Centre in Kigali recorded 311 new arrivals (193 families) with majority being Burundians (64 per cent), followed by Sudanese and smaller numbers from Afghanistan, Cameroon, DRC, Guinea-Bissau, South Sudan, and Togo.

Between February and March, UNHCR received a total of 73 requests for the cessation of their refugee status. Most of these cases (57) were related to confirmation of nationality, suggesting that a significant number of individuals had successfully re-established legal ties to their country of origin. Other case requests were linked to the pursuit of alternative legal status.

As part of the Rwandan government's drive to increase the number of students in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools, 696 refugee students are currently enrolled in TVET schools.

Health centres across all refugee camps conducted 44,201 medical consultations. 1,115 cases were referred to secondary and tertiary hospitals (885 and 230 respectively) for camp-based refugees. However, due to the current funding challenges, UNHCR is only able to support referrals for emergencies and lifesaving interventions. To combat malnutrition in young children, 8,245 children under two were supported through the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme, out of a target of 9,173. By the end of March, 31 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 126 with Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) remained enrolled in treatment programs across all camps. 522 pregnant and 144 lactating women were also newly enrolled into nutrition programs, bringing the total to 1,728 pregnant and 881 lactating women, achieving 95 per cent coverage for pregnant women and 88.3 per cent for lactating women.

SOMALIA: Nearly 4 million people are internally displaced in Somalia due to conflict, insecurity, and the effects of climate change, such as cyclical droughts and floods. Somalia also hosts close to 42,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Ethiopia, Yemen and Syria. In addition to the IDPs, most of the refugees and asylum-seekers (74 per cent) reside in urban or peri-urban settings mainly in the Woqooyi Galbeed, Bari, Nugaal, Mudug and Banadir regions, in the north (predominantly) and southern Somalia.

In March, and amidst the decreasing global humanitarian funding, the humanitarian situation in Somalia continued to deteriorate, with some 3.4 million people experiencing severe levels of food insecurity, due to the worsening drought conditions, conflict, insecurity, disease outbreaks, high food prices, and economic disruption. This number is expected to rise to 4.4 million between April and June when below-average rains are forecast.

On 12 March, a historic milestone took place in Mogadishu where the Federal Government of Somalia issued identification cards for refugees and asylum-seekers, for the first time marking a significant step in operationalizing the Refugee Act. The Minister of Interior handed over the cards to refugees living in Somalia, symbolizing a new era of legal recognition and protection. The refugee cards are expected to provide refugees and asylum-seekers with access to essential services and long-term solutions, fostering their inclusion and paving the way for a more secure future.

In March, Puntland witnessed a significant surge in migration with 3,092 individuals arriving in the region – with men accounting for 94.4 per cent (2,908 individuals) of the arrivals, followed by women at 5.53 per cent (171 individuals), and a small number of children at 0.4 per cent (13 individuals). This demographic distribution aligns with broader regional migration trends, where men often lead movements in pursuit of economic opportunities or to establish stability before relocating their families. The presence of children, hints at a pattern of family migration, potentially driven by the search for safety, improved living conditions, or access to essential services.

On 5 February, the launch and stakeholder “Engagement for Somaliland Parliament’s Legislative Acts” event highlighted several important legislative bills under debate that aim to improve key protection sectors in Somaliland. The bills discussed include National Health Act (New Bill), Higher Education Act (New Bill), Female Genital Mutilation Bill, Rape Bill Review and Delay (House of Elders), and the third Amendment of Labour Law No. 31/2020 among others.

In January, the Dhobley District municipality in collaboration with UNHCR, handed over 120 title deeds to beneficiaries of transitional shelter at the Midnimo site. Additionally, the Ministers of Public Works and Humanitarian Affairs handed over market infrastructures to communities in Luglow (Kismayo) and Kaharey site (Dollow). The facilities will stimulate small-business start-ups for IDPs and the host population.

SOUTH SUDAN: As of March 2025, the total refugee and asylum-seeker population in South Sudan increased to 552,333 (548,438 refugees and 3,903 asylum-seekers). Sudan remains the main country of origin for the refugees, constituting 95 per cent (520,731) of the total refugee population.

The largest concentration of refugees is in Upper Nile State, hosting 61 per cent (332,832) refugees, followed by Ruweng Administrative Area (Jamjang) with 24 per cent (133,319) refugees. Doro camp remains the top hosting camp with 102,742 refugees, followed by Batil with 56,689 refugees in Upper Nile State, while 62,042 are at other locations in South Sudan.

UNHCR is struggling to accommodate the growing number of arrivals in Abyei Transit Centre, which is now hosting nearly 2,000 individuals and far exceeding its 300-person capacity. The growing number of arrivals stems from intensified fighting in Darfur and delays in relocations caused by security concerns. Relocation to Wedweil Refugee Settlement continues, but there is a need to accelerate relocation efforts before the rainy season, which will hinder transportation due to poor road conditions.



South Sudan. As the conflict in Sudan reaches its second year, Sudanese refugees in South Sudan reflect on the hardships they endured.
 © UNHCR/Philip James Lukudu.

SUDAN: Sudan has historically hosted one of the largest refugee populations in Africa with close to 842,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, many of whom have faced multiple displacements due to the conflict. Most of these refugees are from South Sudan (73.4 per cent), followed by Eritrea (15.8 per cent), Ethiopia (8.1 per cent). Among refugees, 267,014 self-relocated to safer areas within Sudan. Sudan still remains a welcoming country of asylum, with 2,604 new arrivals in 2025, mainly from Eritrea, Ethiopia and South Sudan. 69 per cent of the refugees are accommodated in camps, while the remaining 31 per cent live outside of these facilities.

The Global Protection Cluster Coordinator and National Cluster Coordinators visited Gedaref and Kassala States to enhance coordination efforts and assess how to better address key protection issues and humanitarian needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In Gedaref State, the Global Coordinator evaluated a UNHCR project promoting resilience and peaceful co-existence. In Kassala State, the delegation engaged with displaced communities, observed activities, and discussed protection challenges with local authorities and partners.

The Sudan Inter-Cluster Coordination Group endorsed the guidance note on engagement with the government on principled returns to area of origin or habitual residence and guidance note on humanitarian interventions in return areas. The Protection Cluster in consultation with the Global Protection Cluster extensively consulted the Protection Cluster's Strategic Advisory Group and the members of Inter-Cluster Coordination Group at the national level to draft the guidance notes. Similarly, the Durable Solutions Working Group, co-led by UNHCR, UNDP and Danish Refugee Council, are currently drafting a returns position paper for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The position paper, which will be aligned to the national durable solutions strategy (2023), is due to be presented to the HCT for endorsement in early April.

During the reporting period, UNHCR observed in Wadi Halfa that people who have vehicles or the capacity to arrange their own transport are self-organizing returns from Northern State to their places of origin in Khartoum, Al Jazirah and Sennar States. It is also reported that Northern State is receiving newly displaced people from North Darfur and Khartoum States where active conflicts persist.



Sudan. Global Protection Cluster Coordinator visits Gedaref State on mission to advance the protection response. © UNHCR/Althea Gonzales

In White Nile State, the authorities with the support of private individuals, facilitated the returns to Al Jazirah and Khartoum States and as of 22 March, over 1,100 households have benefited from the return facilitated by the authorities.

A group of 29 Eritreans living in an Ethiopian Club in Port Sudan peacefully protested outside the UNHCR office after being evicted by the club management. UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) had relocated the group, originally victims of human trafficking and in detention for nine months, from Khartoum to Port Sudan in October 2024. UNHCR is advocating with COR to register the group as refugees to ensure appropriate assistance can be provided to them.

In East Darfur State, inter-communal tensions between the Birgit and Misiria tribes resulted in the displacement of several farmers and the burning of eight villages by the Misiria tribe. UNHCR's partner conducted protection monitoring in the Sabrine gathering site, El Neem IDP camp, Kario, Al Firdous, and El Nimir refugee camps, where the individuals reached reported significant protection risks and inadequate humanitarian services. Additionally, UNHCR's partner facilitated psychosocial support sessions for children at El Nimir Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC) and Kario South Sudanese refugee camp.

TANZANIA: By the end of March, Tanzania was hosting over 230,000 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Burundi and the DRC. Most of the refugees in Tanzania live in two camps located in the country's Northwestern region of Kigoma, Nduta and Nyarugusu camps.

On 30 January, the first inter-agency emergency coordination meeting on the DRC situation took place in Kigoma, bringing together the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), UNHCR, other UN agencies, local and international NGOs. During the meeting, an emergency response task force was established to update the contingency plan and oversee key preparedness activities such as the repair of shelters and WASH facilities in the transit centres. Stakeholders agreed to strengthen coordination with relevant line ministers and to finalize plans for joint border visits at the entry points.

Between January and March, the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi, UNHCR and partners facilitated the voluntary return of 109 individuals to Burundi to the provinces of Bujumbura Rural, Cankuzo, Makamba, Muyinga, Rumonge, Rutana, and Ruyigi. This brings the total number of Burundian refugees repatriated to Burundi since 2017 to over 178,000.

As of 31 March, Save the Children International (SCI) officially closed its education programme operations in Nduta Refugee Camp, resulting in the discontinuation of monthly incentive payments to SCI-supported teachers and education staff. Despite the abrupt transition, the teachers demonstrated commitment by agreeing to continue providing educational services voluntarily, without conditions until a sustainable solution is found. To address this operational gap, UNHCR and education partners Jesuit Refugee

Service (JRS) and Plan International are currently in discussions with donors to explore options for absorbing or financially supporting the former SCI-supported workforce.

Following the outbreak of Marburg in Kagera Region as announced by WHO and the Government of Tanzania, UNHCR participated in several government and inter-agency meetings in Kibondo District, including with Council Health Management Team on 23 January, to ensure inclusion of refugees into the national health emergency response. UNHCR and partners disseminated information materials on Marburg virus disease across Nduta Camp through posters translated into Kirundi.



Uganda – Sudanese refugees arriving to the Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement. © UNHCR/Ssozi Mukasa Daniel

UGANDA: By the end of March, Uganda was hosting over 1.9 million refugees and asylum seekers, with new arrivals mainly from DRC, Sudan and South Sudan.

Since January, Uganda has seen 31,313 new arrivals following increased violence in eastern DRC. Most of these arrivals fled from Rutshuru, Masisi, and three Goma communities, entering Uganda through Bunagana in Kisoro district, Butogota in Kanungu, and Sebagoro in Kikuube. The main drivers of flight include armed conflict, looting, conflict-related sexual violence, killings, hunger, and the collapse of social services. Those arriving through Kikuube came primarily from Joo, Tchomia, and Nyamamba, fleeing ethnic clashes and human rights abuses, such as maiming, killings, and forced conscription, particularly targeting young men.

Children have been disproportionately affected, with many arriving in a weakened state amid high rates of malaria and malnutrition. Since January, up to 10 children under 5 years old have reportedly died from malnutrition-related anaemia in Nyakabande and Matanda transit centres. The mass nutrition screening on 29 March in Nyakabande indicated a Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate 16.7 per cent for children under 5 and 11.9 per cent for Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW), which is above the emergency threshold of $\geq 15\%$ (or $\geq 10\%$ with aggravating factors such as high morbidities). These centres in the Southwest have been receiving new arrivals from areas deeply impacted by the conflict. Relocations are ongoing, with approximately 3,000 people transferred every week from Nyakabande and Matanda to existing refugee settlements.

Relocation of Sudanese individuals from Kiryandongo, Nyumanzi, Ocea, and Imvepi reception centres to their respective plots in the settlement continued during the reporting period. Nevertheless, overcrowding in reception centres remains severe, particularly in Kiryandongo, which continues to operate at 176 per cent capacity. This is due to an ongoing influx of new arrivals that outpaces relocation efforts. Despite operational constraints (limited transport, land preparation delays, and staffing gaps), UNHCR is actively engaging partners to address these bottlenecks and mitigate protection risks arising from prolonged overstay at reception centres.

REGIONAL UPDATES

Development Partnerships and Fundraising

The **joint project** between the African Development Bank, the Ministry of Finance and Planning and UNHCR - **Response to the Sudan Refugee Crisis in South Sudan Project (SRCSSP)** was officially launched on 12 March in Juba. The project supports peaceful integration of refugees in communities affected by the conflict in Sudan, with a component of livelihoods and resilience, access to basic services, restoration of the environment and capacity building of local and national government entities. It covers Maban, Jam-Jang, Wedweil and Juba. The \$22.23 million project, **approved** in September 2024, is supported through African Development Fund (ADF) funds with a grant of \$19.8 million under the Bank's Transition Support Facility (TSF) and a further \$2.43 million contribution from UNHCR.

On 12 March, UNHCR launched a community-based assessment (CBA) with support from the European Union Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). The assessment evaluates the absorption capacity for the integration of communities hosting displaced populations in Eastern Equatoria State (Magwi, Torit), Central Equatoria State (Morobo, Yei), Northern Bahr el Ghazal State (Aweil Central, East, North, and West counties), and Western Bahr el Ghazal State (Raja County). Developed in collaboration with Samuel Hall, the CBA methodology integrates site visits and mixed-methods data collection to build an indicator framework that examines service availability, quality, and absorption capacity. The findings reveal significant gaps in essential services, including overstretched healthcare facilities and medicine shortages, overcrowded schools and insufficient teachers (one for every 140 students), limited access to safe water, and housing challenges such as land disputes and makeshift shelters. The findings aim to inform evidence-based programming and encourage coordinated development efforts among national and local governments, international agencies, and humanitarian actors, enhancing strategic planning and resource allocation and ensuring more effective, inclusive, and coordinated responses to the challenges faced by returnees and host communities.

The **Mastercard Foundation** has launched a transformative partnership with UNHCR through a four-year, USD 9 million program that marks a significant step toward achieving its GRF pledge of supporting 15 per cent refugee participation in higher education by 2030. This comprehensive initiative addresses systemic barriers to education and employment through a multi-faceted approach: strengthening policy frameworks for refugee inclusion in national education systems, developing targeted interventions for women and girls' advancement, and creating sustainable pathways from secondary to tertiary education and ultimately to meaningful employment. The program provides strategic technical assistance and capacity-building support to selected countries, helping governments identify and dismantle policy implementation barriers while fostering innovative solutions through peer learning networks and regional collaboration. By prioritizing evidence generation and evaluation, the initiative aims to build a robust knowledge base that will inform scalable policy solutions across the region. The program also strategically aligns with and reinforces complementary education pathways activities, creating a comprehensive ecosystem that supports refugees' educational and professional advancement from secondary school through to career opportunities.

Measuring Self-Reliance Using the Self-Reliance Index | Adapting the Self-Reliance Index for Graduation Programs: Insights from AVSI in Uganda

On February 11th, the Poverty Alleviation Coalition hosted a focus session on measuring self-reliance using the Self-Reliance Index (SRI). The session featured three insightful presentations from the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI), GOAL, and AVSI, showcasing the tool and its adaptation in different contexts. The Self-Reliance Index (SRI) is a global tool designed to measure the progress of refugee households toward self-reliance by assessing their basic needs, resources, and sustainability. It provides a quick, high-level indication of key socio-economic status changes within households across twelve domains, including food security, income, and social inclusion. The SRI supports practitioners in designing effective services, targeting populations for assistance, highlighting service gaps, and informing funding priorities.

AVSI has implemented the SRI as part of the Sustainable Market Inclusive Livelihood Pathways to Self-Reliance (SMILES) project in Uganda. This project targets extremely poor refugee and host community households, aiming to build sustainable livelihoods and resilience. AVSI uses the SRI to set tailored graduation criteria, ensuring households meet specific benchmarks for food security, income, and social inclusion over three consecutive quarters. The SRI's data-driven approach helps AVSI monitor progress and adapt interventions to support households in achieving self-reliance.

The National Partnership Forum (NPF), a key platform which brings together Government and Development partners for enhanced cooperation, was held on 5 February in Kampala. Convened by the Prime Minister and attended by Ministers, Ambassadors and Heads of UN Agencies, the Forum is a crucial mechanism to align the collective efforts of development partners to accelerate implementation of sustainable development goals within framework of new 4th National Development Plan (NDP IV) for all who live in Uganda, including the 1.8 million refugees. This year's focus was on refugees. Since 2016, donors have contributed \$5B to support refugees, and stronger coordination among 60+ actors is key to sustaining refugee response in Uganda.

Inter-Agency Coordination

On 06 March 2025, the UNHCR Regional Bureau for East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes (UNHCR RB EHAGL) and UN Women Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESAR) launched the 'Regional Coordination Platform for Women-Led Organizations (WLOs) for the Sudan Refugee Response', under the patronage of the Regional Refugee Coordinator for the Sudan Situation & Regional Director, UNHCR EHAGL, Mamadou Dian Balde and UN Women Regional Director, represented by the Policy Advisor for Women Peace and Security for ESAR Ms. Idil Absiye. There were 77 participants at the launch event, where representatives from Women-Led Organizations (WLOs) highlighted their impactful work both within and outside of Sudan. The Regional Coordination Platform is a strategic initiative which seeks to enhance the inclusivity, relevance, and effectiveness of humanitarian response efforts, and ensure

that the voice, agency and needs of forcibly displaced women and girls remain central in the Sudan Regional Refugee Response, ultimately leading to better outcomes for all affected populations.

The [2025 Sudan Situation Regional Refugee Response Plan \(RRP\)](#) and [2025 Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan \(HNRP\)](#) were jointly launched on 17 February at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The plans were presented by Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. WFP and member states also made their interventions. The appeals seek a total of \$6 billion to assist nearly 26 million people inside country and in the region, including \$4.2 billion for the UN-coordinated plan inside Sudan and \$1.8 billion for the Regional Refugee Response Plan in the Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan and Uganda. The UNHCR High Commissioner appealed to the international community to ensure emergency aid and lifesaving protection continues without disruptions and called for an end to violence and restoration of peace in Sudan.

Additionally, the [2024 Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan end of year report](#) was published.

The revised [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the DRC Situation](#) was released with 107 partners operating across seven neighboring countries appealing for a combined \$781.3 M to support close to 1.2 M refugees and asylum seekers from the DRC.

UNHCR Regional Director, Mamadou Dian Balde had a meeting with African Population & Health Research Centre (APHRC) Head of Policy Engagement and Communications, Mamadou Diallo on 04 March. The meeting explored areas of possible research on child protection (CP), gender-based violence (GBV), unplanned pregnancies and family planning. It was noted that APHRC is already doing research on refugee settings in Ethiopia and Uganda and were keen to expand their reach beyond the two countries. UNHCR emphasized the need for robust research to garner support and tailor responses to humanitarian crises. APHRC's future focus includes expanding access to technology and incorporating urban refugees into research.

Protection

In response to the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the RB EHAGL drafted a note to support advocacy for country operations with regards to access to territory underscoring a prima facie approach – and on 19 February, Burundi adopted a prima facie declaration for individuals fleeing the DRC.

In Kenya, UNHCR's support with regards to enhanced efficiency and streamlining procedures resulted in the Department of Refugee Services finalizing 16,030 Refugee Status Determination (RSD) decisions in the first quarter. Capacity development efforts included RSD trainings for authorities in Kenya in coordination with IGAD and plans are underway for additional trainings across the region.

Rights Analysis and Mapping Platform (RiMAP) work in Kenya and Somalia was completed, with ongoing efforts in Tanzania.

Technical support on integrity was provided to finalize Anti-Fraud workplans in Sudan, South Sudan, and Tanzania, and respective capacity building has been supported in Uganda.

Despite funding constraints, priority activities for stateless communities were identified, and a mission to Tanzania by the Deputy Regional Director was successful in attempts to re-engage key ministries on statelessness prevention-related activities.

The Bureau engaged with key Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to harmonize laws and policies for displaced populations, achieving milestones like planning a protection discourse with East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and supporting IGAD's Regional Refugee Engagement Forum.

Despite the suspension of the US Refugee Admissions Program, 13 countries continued resettlement programs, with Australia and Canada offering additional pathways. In the first quarter, UNHCR submitted 1,331 refugees for resettlement and facilitated 3,204 departures.

Over 128,000 returns occurred, with 1,139 assisted by UNHCR. Most returns are self-organized to Sudan, South Sudan, and assisted ones are to Rwanda and Burundi.

The regional education landscape faced challenges due to US policy shifts, but essential interventions continued. The route-based approach remains crucial, with action plans developed for key routes to ensure protection and respect for migrants' and refugees' rights.

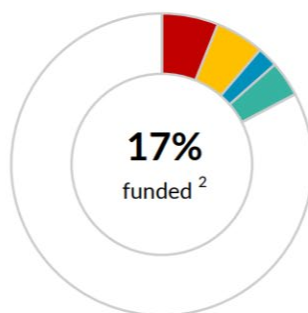
Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to the **East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region**, as well as to those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.



\$ 2.185 billion

UNHCR's financial requirements 2025 ¹



FUNDING UPDATE | 2025

**EAST HORN AND
GREAT LAKES**

as of 31 March 2025



NOTES

1. The financial requirements for East Horn and Great Lakes are for the operations in Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania.
2. The percentage funded (17 per cent) and total funding amount (\$377,986,010) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$1,806,735,097 representing 83 per cent of the financial requirements.

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