

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Since 2014, UNHCR has assisted over 90,000 Somali refugees to voluntarily return home after years in exile.¹



Somali returnees from Yemen welcomed at the port in Berbera. © UNHCR

HIGHLIGHTS



RETURNS

90,024

Somalis repatriated



EDUCATION

66,477

children enrolled in education



LIVELIHOOD

13,262

persons enrolled in livelihood activities



SHELTER

3,134

shelters constructed



INFRASTRUCTURE

290

public facilities improved

SUMMARY

On 8 December 2014, the first group of Somali refugees from Kenya repatriated through the pilot phase of the Voluntary Repatriation Programme (VRP). Since then, UNHCR has assisted over 90,000 Somali refugees to return home from nine different countries of asylum, representing 11 per cent of Somali refugees displaced in the region.

Voluntary repatriation with safety and dignity is viewed as the desirable long-term solution for most of refugees. The pursuit of lasting solutions to refugee problems is oriented, first and foremost, in favour of enabling a refugee to exercise the right to return home in safety and with dignity.

¹ Data is provisional and subject to verification.

RIGHT TO RETURN HOME

The right of Somali refugees to return to home is fully recognized in international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes in Article 13 (2) that:

"Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."²

UNHCR continues to urge States to refrain from forcibly returning any persons to Somalia. However, recognizing the right to return, UNHCR supports voluntary repatriation to Somalia from countries of asylum, subject to ensuring that the decision of refugees is fully informed and voluntary. Any assistance provided by UNHCR for return to Somalia aims at supporting individuals who, being fully informed of the situation in their places of origin or an alternative area of their choice, choose voluntarily to return.³



The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, at a past event in 2018. The High Commissioner was in Kismayo to open an integrated settlement with 100 permanent shelters, a school, hospital, police station and a community market. He also planted a tree in at a newly opened school courtyard. © UNHCR

RETURN PROCESS

UNHCR ensures that voluntary repatriation occurs in safety and dignity. Somali returnees go through a series of steps in order to receive a return package and ensure that repatriation is made in safety and dignity.

BEFORE ARRIVAL

To help Somali refugees make informed and voluntary decisions to return, UNHCR Somalia shares Country of Origin Information with refugees in countries of asylum, facilitates Go and See visits and organizes cross-border meetings on a regular basis.

² See UN "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", Article 13 (2), 16.7.2019.

³ See UNHCR "UNHCR Position on returns to southern and central Somalia", Update 1, May 2016, 16.7.2019.

UPON ARRIVAL

All Somali refugee returnees are received at the Home Way Stations by UNHCR, government officials and partners. On arrival, returnees undergo counselling and receive a return package. The return package assists in addressing the immediate needs of returnees as well as helping them establish a source of livelihood.



1 Returnees being briefed on the return package. 2 A returnee receiving a SIM card for cash transfer. 3 UNHCR and partners receiving Somali returnees. 4 Returnees proceeding to the UNHCR run return centre.

The return assistance consists of unconditional core relief item kits (one to three, depending on the family size), an unconditional one-time reinstatement grant in the amount of US\$ 200 per person, a six month unconditional monthly subsistence allowance in the amount of US\$ 200 per household, an unconditional monthly grant for food rations for six months (provided by WFP), a conditional education grant of up to US\$ 25 per month per each school-going child for one year. In addition, UNHCR may provide a conditional grant of up to US\$ 1,000 for shelter per household and conditional enrolment in self-reliance and livelihood projects, based on a set of selection criteria and availability of resources.

AFTER ARRIVAL

UNHCR has established protection mechanisms to ensure that voluntary repatriation is made in safety and dignity during the return movement and also after arrival. Through Post-Return Monitoring (PRM), UNHCR monitors that the voluntary returns take place in safety and dignity as well as the sustainability of returns and reintegration.

RETURN AND REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

Since the beginning of the VRP, UNHCR has assisted 90,024 Somali refugees to repatriate. Returnees benefit from core relief items and cash assistance. They have also benefited from other assistance including: educational grants and school materials to 66,477⁴ students, livelihood activities to 13,262⁵ people and shelter or shelter grants to 3,134 persons.



1 Distribution of donkey carts. 2 Constructed shelters. 3 Rehabilitation of the hospital. 4 A graduate receives her certificate.

In addition to the return package, UNHCR supports the host community by rehabilitating or constructing public infrastructure as part of its efforts to strengthen local institutions and improve access to basic social services. The improvement of public infrastructure is done through the cash-for-work approach which provides short term employment opportunities.

As of 31 May, UNHCR had constructed or rehabilitated over 290 public facilities including hospitals, schools, water tanks, shallow wells, latrines, markets, slaughter houses, boat centres, community centres, police stations, boreholes, football stadiums and roads.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR advocates for the rights of returnees through working partnership with different stakeholders including the UN Country Team, the Humanitarian Country Team, national and international NGOs and government institutions.

⁴ Number includes returnees, internally displaced person and the members of host community. Some students have been provided educational grants more than one study year.

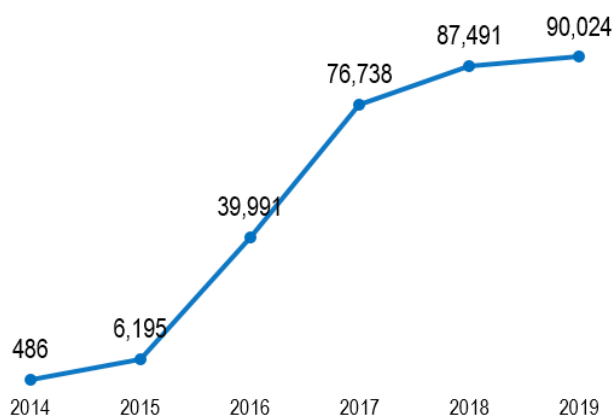
⁵ Number includes returnees, internally displaced persons and the members of host community.

RETURN TRENDS

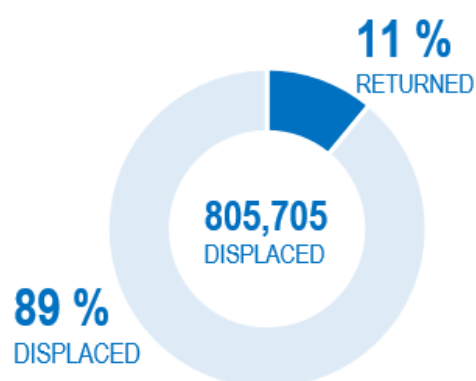
A total of 90,024 Somali refugees have repatriated from 12 countries of asylum since the return process started in December 2014. Most of the returnees are from Kenya (84,227) followed by Yemen (with, 4,414), Djibouti (801), Libya (394), Sudan (143), Eritrea (34), Tunisia (three), Angola (three), the Gambia (two), Cambodia (one), Pakistan (one) and Ukraine (one).

Some 805,705 Somali refugees are still displaced in neighbouring countries as follows: Kenya (259,100), Ethiopia (257,283), Yemen (249,305), Uganda (25,042), Djibouti (12,827) and Eritrea (2,148).

RETURN TRENDS PER YEAR

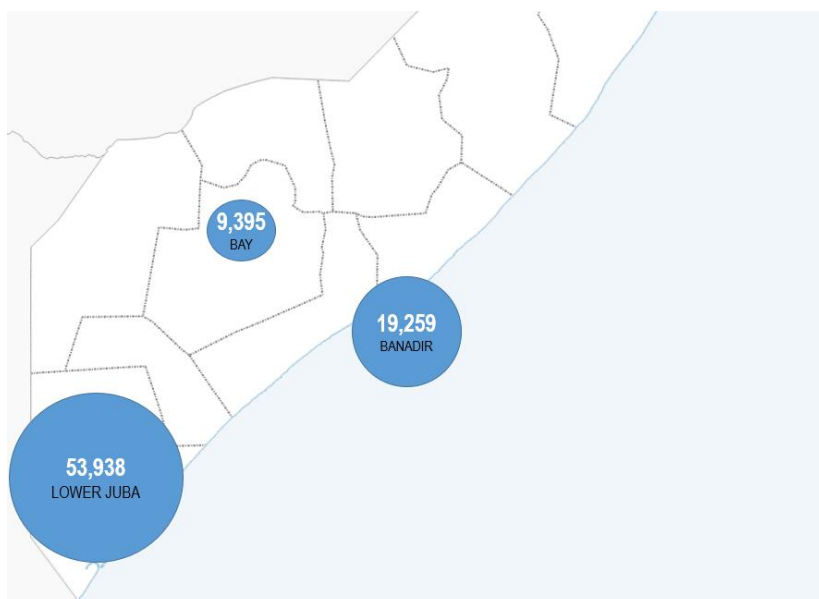


DISPLACED AND RETURNED



Most of Somalis have returned to the southern Somalia, particularly to Lower Juba (53,938), Banadir (19,259) and Bay regions (9,395).

MAIN AREAS OF RETURN



RETURNEES PER REGION

REGION	PERSONS
Banadir	19,259
Bari	233
Bay	9,395
Gedo	2,954
Lower Juba	53,938
Lower Shabelle	162
Middle Juba	1,542
Middle Shabelle	850
Other	1,691
TOTAL	90,024

A RETURNEE WHO HAS SUCCESSFULLY INTERGRATED

As students arrive for their computer science class, their teacher Abdinoor (25) welcomes them with smile on his face.



When war broke out in Somalia in the early 90s, Abdinoor's family fled to Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya where he spent his childhood. Years later when he graduated from high school, his family decided to return home. Soon after they repatriated to Kismayo in early 2018 Abdinoor decided to better himself by signing up for a vocational training on information technology networking at the Returnee Support Centre supported by UNHCR. After he graduated from the vocational training, he decided to pass his knowledge to fellow returnees.

"Many of the people who decided to return want an opportunity to better themselves. Through community-based projects one can become self-reliant and put themselves in a position to support their families", shared Abdinoor of his experience. Abdinoor teaches basic computer skills and is pursuing a diploma in Public Administration at Jubba University.



Filippo Grandi 
 @RefugeesChief

In Kismayo with returning refugees: going home after a long exile is a difficult, brave choice for some Somali refugees. Somalia is still fragile & insecure. But those who decide to return must be supported, so they can help rebuild their country. Photo @ggkenya

UN REFUGEE CHIEF FINDS SOMALIA SUFFERING FROM INSTABILITY AND DROUGHT, BUT SEES HOPE

Taking into consideration the challenging circumstances in Somalia, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, during his visit to Somalia in December 2017, reaffirmed that UNHCR will continue to invest in housing, education and livelihoods for returning refugees, IDPs and the local population.



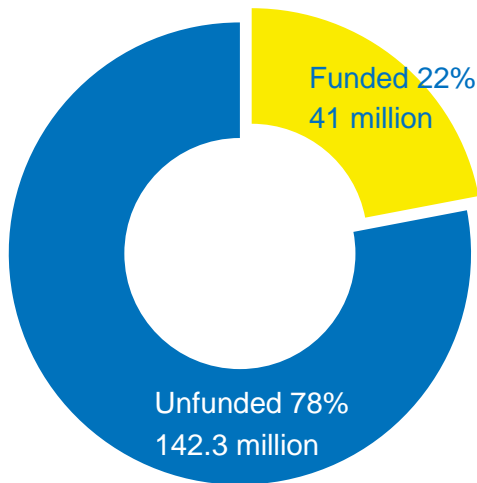
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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors.

FUNDING (AS OF 30 JULY)

USD 183.3 million
requested for the Somalia situation



EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

United States of America 22.3 million | Germany 5.6 million | Japan 4.0 million | UN-Habitat 2.2 million | Silatech 1.0 million | European Union 0.5 million | Sweden 0.5 million | France 0.1 million | Indicative allocation of funds and adjustments 4.9 million

BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions that can potentially be used for this operation due to their earmarking to a related situation or theme, or to the region or sub-region.

United States of America 18.4 million | Germany 7.1 million | Private donors Australia 6.1 million | Canada 4.6 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

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