

Ethiopia

June 2020

Ethiopia is one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in Africa, sheltering **766,563** registered refugees and asylum seekers as of 30 June 2020.

UNHCR has scaled up efforts to prevent and limit the spread of **COVID-19** among the refugees and the communities hosting them. It is strengthening awareness raising campaigns, supplying water and soap, installing handwashing stations, improving health services and providing PPEs for health care workers and first responders.

UNHCR continues to actively engage in the humanitarian and **COVID-19** response to **IDP returnees** and other **conflict-affected communities**, mainly in Gedeo, West Guji, East and West Wollega and Kamashi areas. It is supporting the Government's efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 in these communities through communication campaigns and distribution of supplies.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

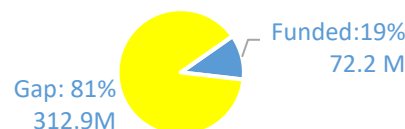
338 national staff, **123** international staff (including JPOs)
143 individual contractors; **33** deployees and IUNVs

Offices:

1 Branch Office in (Addis Ababa), **5** Sub-Offices - Melkadida, Gambella, Shire, Assosa and Jijiga, **4** Field Offices – Embamadre, Tongo, Pugnido and Mekelle.

Funding (As of 30 June 2020)

USD 385.1 M requested for Ethiopia



Working with partners

- UNHCR's main government counterpart in the refugee response in Ethiopia is the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA). UNHCR also works closely with 57 humanitarian and development partners and is part of the Humanitarian Country Team where refugee programmes are discussed strategically to ensure the needs of refugees are adequately presented and addressed across the UN System. UNHCR builds on a well-established coordination forum, including the inter-sector Refugee Coordination Group, together with national and regional sector working groups. As part of the GCR/CRRF, UNHCR is furthering partnerships with government line ministries, regional and local authorities, as well as development partners and the private sector.

Main Activities

Protection

- UNHCR and its partners carried out a Protection Needs Assessment (PNA) for newly arriving South Sudanese asylum seekers at the Pagak Reception Centre in Gambella. Designed to identify individuals with specific needs, the PNA was conducted in connection with the planned relocation of the new arrivals to refugee camps. Findings of the assessment show that 71% of the families were female headed; 62% of the new arrivals need medical attention and that 85% of the assessed children fell under the category of "children at risk". The findings will inform UNHCR and partners on protection intervention plans both at the reception centre and in the camps after relocation.

Education

- Over 200,000 refugee students in Ethiopia remain out of school following the nation-wide school closures. UNHCR and partners are working to ensure that the students remain engaged in academic exercises by distributing worksheets and helping them tune into regional broadcast lessons where feasible. Limited Radio/TV wave penetration in some camps, insufficient number of radio and TV sets and the need to translate the broadcast lessons in multiple mother tongues spoken by refugees are some of the challenges being addressed.

Health

- Critical and essential primary healthcare activities are maintained in all refugee camps. UNHCR has continued to intensify collaboration with ARRA, the regional health bureaus, partners and sister UN agencies in efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Preventive and control activities continued to focus on infection prevention and control, community and facility-based surveillance, case investigation, risk communication and community engagement as well as improvement of WASH services. Shortage of personal protective equipment (PPEs) remains a challenge, mainly occasioned by delays in the delivery of international procurement orders.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Refugees in Ethiopia continue to receive only about 84% of the minimum standard food ration of 2,100 kcal. This has kept the global acute malnutrition rate in most camps higher than the acceptable standards. UNHCR, ARRA and WFP have revised the cash transfer values for refugees currently receiving combined cash and food assistance to reflect commodity price increases in the local markets. The revised cash transfer rate for cereals in camps in the Somali (Jijiga), Benishangul-Gumuz, Tigray and Afar Regions will take effect in July 2020.

Water and Sanitation

- Refugees receive an average of 18.7 litres of water per person per day (l/p/p/d), with those in Barahle and Kebribeyah Camps having lower per capita access to potable water. Efforts are being made to address the gap in the two camps. The supply of soap has been doubled and distributed in all camps to promote personal hygiene, which is backed by dissemination of regular COVID-19 awareness and hygiene promotion messages. 25% of all refugee households have installed handwashing facilities while 1,226 such facilities are installed in communal centres within the refugee camps.

Shelter

- This year, 429 shelters (312 emergency and 117 transitional) have been constructed in addition to the maintenance of 22 existing shelters. The shelter gap remains huge with over half of the refugees still in need of transitional shelter solutions. UNHCR and partners are working to narrow down the gap with approximately 2,000 additional transitional shelters planned for construction during the second half of the year. UNHCR has completed construction of 850 shelters in the Gedeo (SNNPS) and West Guji (Oromia) Regions for the benefit of vulnerable IDP returnees.

Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)

- Following successful piloting and subsequent positive assessment results of the Cash Based-Interventions (CBI) in camps around Jijiga, UNHCR is working to scale up the use of cash in other locations. Cash will be used in lieu of a range of in-kind aid supplies including non-food aid items. Multipurpose cash assistance continues to be implemented for refugees in Addis Ababa. UNHCR is exploring ways to provide support to additional out of camp refugees in Addis Ababa due to the economic impact of COVID-19. Cash will also be used to respond to the IDP situation as well as reintegration support for Ethiopian refugees who voluntarily return to their country. Risk mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure contextual changes to minimize humanitarian cash assistance disruptions due to the impact of COVID-19.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- UNHCR and ARRA work in close coordination with partners to ensure efficient and coordinated delivery of protection and assistance to refugees. Zonal and camp level coordination meetings and technical working groups continue to take place.

Access to Energy

- Despite the effort to improve refugees' access to energy for cooking, lighting and other uses, the cooking energy gap remains huge with less than 8% of the refugee households having access to alternative cooking energy. However, UNHCR and partners continue to expedite their support to enhance access to energy for cooking, lighting and productive use. As part of the response to the disaster risk reduction and environmental rehabilitation programmes, all refugee camps are undertaking tree planting during the rainy season.

Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR continues to work with the Government to promote economic opportunities for refugees and support their eventual inclusion within the host communities. This will include supporting the implementation of Ethiopia's pledges made at the GRF in December 2019 related to creating economic opportunities and skills development for refugees and Ethiopians. UNHCR supports ARRA to roll out the procedural directives on work and residence permits as well as business licenses under joint programmes that will be designed to benefit both refugees and their hosts. UNHCR coordinates with strategic partners as they implement activities in refugee hosting areas, as well as supporting opportunities for private sector participation in creating opportunities for refugees and Ethiopian nationals.

Durable Solutions

- Providing resettlement opportunities remains a top priority as conditions for voluntary repatriation are unfavourable for most refugees, and local integration programmes are yet to be put in place. In 2020, the target for resettlement submissions is 1,800 individuals, of which 865 individuals have already been submitted. 254 individuals have departed for different resettlement countries so far this year. UNHCR also facilitated the transfer of 77 refugees to Italy as part of the Second Protocol of the Italian Humanitarian Corridor. While departures are currently on hold owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR is advocating with ARRA and the Department of Immigration for the resumption of departures to certain resettlement countries as soon as possible.
- UNHCR provides reintegration assistance to refugees spontaneously returning to their country. This month, a family of three (03) who returned from Somalia was supported with the package and issued ETB 300 each to purchase sanitary materials for the prevention of COVID-19.

External / Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the direct contributions to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation from:

USA| Denmark | UK (DFID) | IKEA Foundation| Netherlands | European Union (ECHO) | Ireland| Sweden| "la Caixa" Banking Foundation| Canada| Japan| Finland| Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints | Luxembourg| Country-Based Pooled Fund| Spain| UPS Corporate| France| UN Programme on HIV/AIDS| Other private donors.

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