

Resumption of food distributions for refugees in Ethiopia

General context

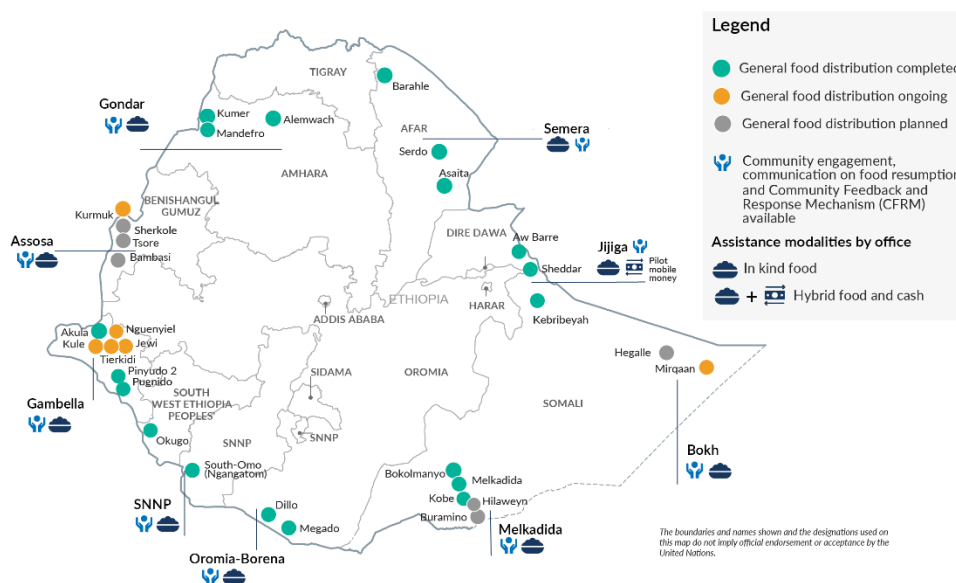
Following the lift of the food pause by USAID on 29 September, UNHCR, WFP and its Cooperating Partner: and Ethiopia's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) jointly prepared for the food distributions in all refugee camps and sites in Ethiopia. This was conducted as per the segregated roles in the new Memorandum of Understanding signed by RRS, UNHCR and WFP.

Across Ethiopia there are 329 refugee camps, settlements and sites, which include two additional sites for new arrivals, hosting 946,682 refugees, with some 878,320 being dependent on food assistance. As of 30 October, out of the planned 11,300 Metric Tons (MT) of food, about 10,580 MT has been dispatched across all regions with 69 percent delivered at camp sites. There are seven camps in Benishangul Gumuz and Somali (Dollo) which are yet to receive their deliveries as delays were caused from insecurity and/or unfavorable road conditions.

In all 26 camps and sites that have received the food deliveries, distribution occurred following the new enhanced processes and systems. As of 1 November, distribution is completed in 19 camps/sites namely; Serdo site, Aysaita and Berhale refugee camp (Afar Region), Alemwach and Kumer site and Mandefro transit center (Amhara region); Akula settlement, Okugo and Pinyudo I and II camps (Gambella region); Borena-Dillo and Megado settlements (Oromia region); South OmoKangaten (SNNP region)¹; Aw-barre, Kebribeyah, Shedder, Boklomo, Kobe and Melkadida (Somali region), while it is ongoing in six camps and sites. The table below summarizes total refugee reached against the targeted and percentage of the delivered food.

Refugees targeted for the food distribution 878,320 individuals 203,339 households	Refugees reached by food distribution 521,872 individuals 59% of the target	Total refugee locations targeted² 31
		Refugee locations where GDT³ + Mobile collect + stock management available 26

Implementation overview, protection-related activities, and assistance modalities



¹ SNNP (Southern Nations, Nationalities and People)

² 21 camps; 1 site (Alemwach), 7 settlements (Kumer, Akula, Dillo, Megado, South-Omo, Mirqaan and Hegale) and 2 transit center (Mandefro, Kurmuk)

³ 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 22 refugee locations in Ethiopia.

Food Prepositioned and dispatched by location

Food prepositioned status: Since 6 October, WFP dispatched 10,607 MT of food out of the planned 11,300 MT to 23 camps, representing 94 percent and of which 61 percent has been received at final delivery points. The delivered food items were received through LESS/LAST Mile solution that facilitates digitized receipt of commodities at final delivery points.

Food Distribution Status: As of 1 November, WFP and NGO partners reached 521,872 refugees in 31 locations in seven regions, distributing 5,854.4 MT of food in kind (90 percent 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, in partnership with WFP and their cooperating partners (CPs), RRS, and the Refugee Central Committee (RCC), continues to disseminate key messages in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Somali, Jijiga, Dollo Ado and Bokh areas, Oromia and Southern Ethiopia regions. UNHCR continues to re-assess the Protection Systems and Communication with Communities (CwC) that are in place pre and post food distribution to ensure quality of services and to draw lessons learnt from the processes for the next round of GFD. According to the reports as of 01 November, all UNHCR field locations confirm that the key reasons for food pause was communicated through community structures jointly by UNHCR, WFP and RRS using the “Community Sensitization Messages on the Food Aid Pause in Ethiopia.” These key messages were jointly developed by UNHCR, WFP, RRS and partners at country level. This has also been the case following the announcement of the resumption food aid, where pre and post food distribution communication with communities, and sensitization efforts were undertaken through the refugee structures. UNHCR and partners at the field level ensured refugee communities were and continue to be informed on time to mitigate rumors and misinformation, by sharing timely information with the Refugee Central Committees (RCCs). So far, refugees have shared appreciation for the communication and sensitization systems put in place. In refugee locations such as Hilaweyn and Buramino camps (Somali region) where food is yet to be distributed, refugees have been informed that food distribution is subject to food delivery and there are logistical challenges which have led to some delays. Distribution timelines will be set and communicated to these refugees once delivery is ascertained. Visibility materials has been put up with key messages regarding steps to follow and the food entitlements to guide refugees through the process.



CwC and Sensitization in Melkadida
©UNHCR

Strengthened feedback and response mechanisms: Specific mechanisms are deployed by the Protection Help Desk at Food Distribution Points (FDPs). To date, 495 complaints have been recorded, mainly relating to refugees not receiving cash, under-scooping, lack of items to carry the food, inadequate/poor quality collection materials available to them. They decry the additional cost of purchasing these collection materials to enable them to collect their food, especially for the vulnerable and urged partners and the donor to reconsider the decision of withholding the original food packaging from them. The issue of bag/containers to carry rations has been addressed by WFP by providing guidance to all Area and

Field Offices on using old empty bags for reuse. 215 complaints have been closed, 280 are still in the process of being resolved. The Community Feedback and Response Mechanism (CFRM) is being used and KoBo tool is being updated, 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, 43 percent of the calls have been closed and the remaining 57 percent are ongoing. The nature of these feedback was categorized as 7 percent observation, 18 percent request for assistance, 24 percent request for information and 51 percent were complaints. Majority of the complaint (60 percent) revolved around delay in receiving beneficiary entitlements due to the pause, 30 percent 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 percent involved issues related to misplaced phones and registry of new numbers for distribution. Further, from the cash transfer in the three camps in Jigjiga, about 210 beneficiaries (0.2 percent 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.

Social Cohesion: As of 01 November, food distribution has continued smoothly and no tension between host communities and refugees was recorded, except one case in Assosa where a member of the host community in Tsore, Benishangul Gumuz region, complained about refugees vandalizing her crops. RRS and the police are investigating and trying to trace the perpetrators. The established peace committees from both communities were engaged, and, thanks to their initiative and discussions, the situation has now been resolved. The RCC were reminded to report such incidents.

General Distribution Monitoring: WFP assigned 27 Food Monitoring Assistants who conducted the monitoring activity involved interviewing of 700 refugee households, 15 focal persons of cooperating partners at distribution sites and 16 warehouse monitoring. The key findings relate to a five percent weight loss on 50 kg wheat bags in Afar attributed to moisture content on 14 percent of the total bags. Across all camps poor internet connection has affected the verification and distribution process and in Gambella and Afar, beneficiaries reported long waiting hours while in Melkadida and Bokolmanyu (Somali) some beneficiaries reported that they were compelled to give away their rations to repay long and outstanding debts and others informed that they sell their ration to buy other food items not included in the food basket.

Coordination and collaboration:

- *Country coordination:* Weekly operational food coordination and collaboration ongoing with a focus on resumption of general food distribution with parties at a country level to discuss data management /Global Distribution Tool, protection systems and monitoring, simplification of frameworks and visualization of content for refugees. A new technical session to discuss the specific situation in Oromia and SNNP was temporarily activated. UNHCR and WFP is planning to conduct an in-depth review to inform the remainder of the distributions.
- *Sub/Office Field coordination:* At field levels, WFP, RRS, UNHCR and CPs also meet regularly to discuss on the advancements of preparations and distributions, challenges, and lessons learned in each camp. Pre-distribution meetings in Hilaweyn and Buramino camps in (Somali

region) are to set when food has arrived the warehouse in the camps and distribution dates have been decided. In Afar, refugee camps, distributions have been completed smoothly and ahead of the schedule. For future distributions, all partners agreed to shorten the distribution schedule and conduct distributions in all camps simultaneously. In Tsore, Benishangul Gumuz, preparation work for the distribution has been completed and WFP has also started maintenance work of the waiting area inside the distribution center which was demolished due to heavy rain and wind in the previous rainy season.

Next steps

WFP post-distribution monitoring is planned to start in refugee camps/sites after each food distribution cycle, with the initial report expected by mid- December 2023.

WFP is finalizing the Field Level Agreement (FLA) amendment with their CPs to expand 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.



Refugee Incentive Workers scooping food for refugees in Alemwach camp ©WFP

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						
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	09 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	On-going
	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	04 Nov	113,680	On-going
	Jewi	16 Oct	20 Oct	03 Nov	68,914	On-going
	Kule	23 Oct	24 Oct	04 Nov	53,753	On-going
	Tierkidi	23 Oct	24 Oct	06 Nov	73,525	On-going
Benishangul Gumuz						
Benishangul-Gumuz	Kurmuk	14 Oct	30 Oct	03 Nov	16,461	On-going
	Tsore	tbc	tbc	tbc	43,380	Delivery pending
	Sherkole	tbc	tbc	tbc	15,296	Delivery pending
	Bambasi	tbc	tbc	tbc	20,555	Delivery pending
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-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