UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | ETHIOPIA

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

May 2024

KEY FIGURES:

1,051,918
Refugees & Asylum seekers in Ethiopia
(as of May 2024)

54,999
Refugees and asylum seekers fleeing conflict in Sudan to Ethiopia
(as of May 2024)

4.4M*
Internally displaced people in Ethiopia
(IOM/DTM February 2024)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

During the month of May, UNHCR, together with its partners, has been deeply concerned about the plight of Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers staying the Amhara region.

The challenging security situation in and around the refugee sites, has taken a great toll on refugees who have already been through so much having fled the conflict in Sudan.

Thanks to continued coordination with the Government of Ethiopia and partners, we have identified a safer site, where over the next few months, refugees will be able to relocate. The new site requires funding for site development including service provision, and UNHCR and partners will require resources to for the settlement development.

As Ethiopia remains one of the one of the most underfunded operations globally, and the interagency humanitarian response to the influx of refugees from Sudan is currently funded at only 11 percent of its overall needs, we are witnessing significant gaps in the areas of protection, health, water and sanitation, and education.

Despite these challenges, throughout the rest of the country, efforts are underway to facilitate the inclusion of refugees in national systems. In Gambella five secondary schools have been handed over to the Gambella Regional Education, and five more in the Benishangul-Gumuz and Somali regions are set to be transferred next year.

SECTORAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Protection

7,200 Urban refugees accessed protection services, both in-person and virtually.

Education

167,265 Refugee children are in school-less than half of all school-aged children.

Health

182,644 Refugees have received medical consultations across refugee sites since January.

Food security + Nutrition

6,270 Refugee children treated for malnutrition since January, with 85% cure rate.

Livelihoods

200 hectares UNHCR & WA-PYDO facilitated land ploughing to cultivate 200 hectares of land in Melkadida.

Resettlement

717 refugees have departed on resettlement and through complementary pathways.

UNHCR works with 45 implementing partners as well as the Ethiopian Government Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), UN Agencies, international and national NGOs, universities, and other legal entities.

*The Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 estimated that the figure of 4.4M IDPs would be reached at the end of the year.

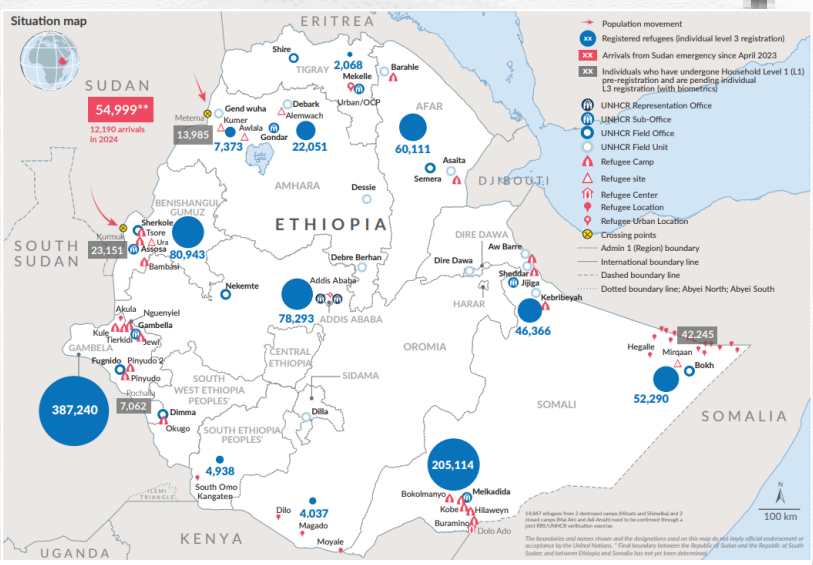
RESPONSE AT A GLANCE

1,051,918*
Total Refugees and Asylum-seekers
(1,043,667 refugees | 8,251 asylum-seekers)

281,388
Households
(average family size: 4)

80% Women & Children
54% Children (0 -17 years)
44% Adults (18 - 59 years)
2% Elderly (60+)

Country of origin	Total Individuals	Percentage
South Sudan	423,077	40%
Somalia	347,103	33%
Eritrea	179,177	17%
Sudan	93,329	9%



Protection

Since the beginning of the year, more than 63,000 new refugees and asylum seekers have arrived in Ethiopia. This includes over 11,800 refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan, bringing the number of people in need of protection arriving from Sudan to 54,999 since May 2023. Along with partners, UNHCR is providing protection counselling, healthcare, and lifesaving humanitarian assistance to new arrivals in need of international protection. UNHCR continues to support and advocate with the Government of Ethiopia for full resumption of registration across the country.

Gender Based Violence

In May, 166 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) received psycho-social support, counseling, and medical referrals. Dignity kits were distributed to 3,360 women and girls.

To prevent GBV and enhance Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), awareness sessions reached 19,187 individuals, including 3,175 through Women and Girls Safe Spaces (WGSS) and 16,012 in home visits. Training on GBV prevention and PSEA engaged 1,424 participants, mainly frontline workers from government and humanitarian organizations. Additionally, 1,121 refugee community leaders across the locations participated in GBV community dialogues.

Over 4,100 girls and women participated in Start, Awareness, Support, Action (SASA), Girl Shine, and life skills training activities, aimed at boosting confidence and fostering participation in community decision-making.

⚠ **UNDERFUNDING** in **any** sector (food, shelter, WASH, education, health, energy) exposes **women** refugees to **GBV** leading to negative coping mechanisms including transactional sex, child labor, child marriage and begging. Read more here.

Child Protection

In May, 154 children underwent Best Interests Assessment (BIA) to ensure that any decisions and actions that UNHCR and partners take are in the best interest of individual children at risk. The interventions for which BIA was conducted include alternative care arrangements, referrals to other sectors and material support. Additionally, 475 children received services through home visits, while 10 children benefited from family tracing and reunification services. 4,558 children accessed child-friendly spaces for learning, socialization and play.

Furthermore, 436 children obtained birth certificates, and 100 children received National Digital IDs as part of the exercise that is ongoing in Addis Ababa.

To enhance their knowledge and understanding of the issues, 150 social workers, foster parents, and community representatives underwent training on effective communication with children, referrals and the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) on children.

Registration / Documentation

UNHCR has continued to support RRS in the ongoing documentation of urban refugees. In May, over 3,600 refugees were issued with various types of documentation, including Proof of Registration, ID cards, birth and marriage certificates.

Along with its partners, UNHCR has been providing protection services to over 78,000 refugees living in Addis Ababa. In May, 7,200 individuals accessed protection services through our call center, online platform and direct interaction. The services provided included individual case management and counseling; cash assistance; referrals for medical, child protection, and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services; legal aid and resettlement issues.

Education

As of the end of May, Ethiopia has enrolled a total of 167,265 refugee students across various education levels in different refugee camps, sites, and other locations throughout the country. However, this accounts for less than half of all school-age refugee children. Approximately 45 percent of these students are female. The majority (around 105,000) attend primary schools, while 45,728 are in pre-primary education, and only 16,588 (less than 10%) are in secondary schools. Efforts are underway to integrate refugee secondary schools into the national education system, with five schools in Gambella already handed over to the Gambella Regional Education Bureau, and five more in the Benishangul-Gumuz and Somali regions are set to be transferred next year.

⚠ **UNDERFUNDING in Education** will interrupt the schooling of over 167,000 refugee students hosted in Ethiopia as teachers' salaries, textbooks and learning materials are not being covered. Refugee children then fall behind, reducing their chances of coming out of poverty and supporting their families. Read more here.

Health

UNHCR and partners are providing a range of health services for refugees fleeing the conflict in Sudan. In Kumer, Amhara region, 1,371 refugees received medical consultations, mental health services, and assistance with childbirth from skilled birth attendants in May. Similarly, in Kurmuk, in the Benishangul Gumuz region, 3,283 refugees accessed both medical and mental health services.

POST OF THE MONTH

Mirqaan
Somali region, Ethiopia

The first mobile court hearing for refugees and host communities, conducting hearings and adjudicating criminal cases was jointly facilitated in Mirqaan, #Somali region by UNHCR, @RRSEthiopia, Bokh District Court and the Somali Regional Justice Bureau.

Health (cont'd)

Across the country, 34,286 refugees consulted doctors in May. The leading causes of illness and death were upper and lower respiratory tract infections, watery diarrhea, and malaria. Additionally, 528 births were recorded, with 85% supported by skilled birth attendants, and 2,666 refugees accessed contraceptive services.

Since January 2024, a total of 182,644 refugees have consulted doctors. Of 3,622 deliveries, 3,187 (88%) were assisted by skilled birth attendants. Moreover, 3,948 refugees received mental health consultations.

In Gambella, the UNHCR, in collaboration with the WHO, the Regional Health Bureau (RHB), and public health partners, continues to respond to the measles outbreak and the Vaccine-Derived Polio Virus identified in Kule camp.

⚠ With only 43% of our $23 million funding requirements met, we can only offer minimal healthcare, leaving refugees vulnerable to preventable diseases. This gap will hinder disease management, emergency responses, essential supplies, referral services, and staff salaries. Without an extra $10 million, the well-being of nearly 1 million refugees is at serious risk. Read more here.

Shelter & CRIs

UNHCR and partners have completed 841 emergency shelters at the Ura settlement in Benishangul-Gumuz region to relocate 4,200 Sudanese refugees from Kurmuk transit center. At Awlala in Amhara region, 453 family tents were erected since January for over 2,000 new arrivals from Sudan. Additionally, 63 transitional shelters were upgraded at Tsore refugee camp in the same region.

⚠ **UNDERFUNDING in Shelter** causes thousands of refugees to be housed in inadequate shelters, living in congested conditions unprotected from rain and flooding. This poses safety concerns to both refugees and host communities living around the settlements or refugee sites. Read more here.

Food security + Nutrition

In May, 329,005 refugees, which accounts for 36% of the total, managed to collect their monthly food entitlements. The significantly low distribution rate stems from challenges in timely food delivery to various sites. These obstacles include insecurity, roadblocks, and natural disasters like flooding. To maintain food distributions until June, WFP has been providing only 60% of a family's calorie needs in the food rations. However, these gaps have exposed refugees to negative coping strategies.

In terms of nutrition, UNHCR and partners have continued to provide curative and preventive nutrition programmes in all the 41 nutrition centers established in the different refugee camps and sites. In May, 1,038 children aged 6-59 months were enrolled in outpatient therapeutic feeding programmes for severe acute malnutrition (SAM), both with and without complications.

Food security + Nutrition (cont'd)

This brings the total enrolled since January to 6,270 children, including 102 children who received treatment in stabilization centers in May. The programme has maintained an average cure rate of 85%. Additionally, the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP) admitted of 14,757 children under five, with 2,555 admissions in May alone, achieving a 95% cure rate.

Similarly, the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme (BSFP) supported 39,809 children under five, including 14,775 admissions in May. This programme also assisted 13,612 pregnant and lactating women, as well as 939 other individuals with social and medical needs, including 888 in May.

The community-based management of acute malnutrition is in line with the SPHERE standards.

⚠ **Without additional funding in Food and Nutrition,** over 90,000 refugee children will suffer from undernutrition, stunting their physical and mental development, exposing them to disease and eventually death. Programs to prevent undernutrition for close to 200,000 children under five and over 40,000 pregnant and lactating women will cease. Read more here.

Water, Sanitation & Hygiene

For new arrivals from Sudan and Somalia, UNHCR and partners have supplied 10.42 liters of water per person per day (l/p/d) on average - lower than the emergency threshold of at least 15 l/p/d.

In the newly established Ura settlement in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, UNHCR and its partners are making progress in installing a water system to ensure adequate water access for newly relocated Sudanese refugees from Kurmuk transit centre.

In terms of sanitation - In Kumer, Amhara region, the construction of 12 blocks of semi-permanent latrines with 60 seats, and 12 blocks of shower rooms with 60 cubicles, was completed during the month, slightly improving the sanitation situation. The situation is expected to further improve upon the completion of an additional 10 blocks of semi-permanent latrines currently being constructed by CRS.

In other refugee hosting areas, refugees had access to an average of 14.27 l/p/d in May - lower than the standard of 20 l/p/d. The sanitation coverage in May in the refugee camps and sites stood at 21.71% - below the standard threshold of 85%. Hygiene promotion, essential for disease prevention, has been deprioritized, further increasing the risk of illness among refugees.

⚠ **UNDERFUNDING in Water and Sanitation** causes health hazards, disease outbreaks (cholera) and exposes women and girls to sexual violence as they walk long distances to fetch water and do not have adequate sanitation facilities. Read more here.

Durable solutions

Livelihoods & Economic Integration

In the Afar region, UNHCR, in partnership with RRS and Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EEMY) signed a pivotal MOU with the World Bank-funded Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP-II). The agreement paves the way for expanding livelihoods support for beneficiaries in Aysaita and Berahle camps. In Melkadida, UNHCR, Women and Pastoralist Youth Development Organization (Wa-PYDO) and the Bokolmayo Woreda Cooperatives Promotion Office, organized a three-day training on governance and leadership. The training aimed to enhance the organizational capacities of 13 members from the youth center business group at Melkadida settlement and improve their internal governance and management structure as they strive to enhance their livelihoods. Concurrently, UNHCR and WA-PYDO facilitated a land ploughing contract between farm mechanization cooperatives and the Dollo Ado Agricultural office to provide tillage service for 200 hectares of land jointly cultivated by refugees and members of the host community in the Somali region.

Resettlement

As of May, the cases of 2,261 refugees have been submitted for resettlement consideration. In May, 1,018 refugees have departed from Ethiopia. The majority (717) through a resettlement opportunity, 279 on private sponsorship, 18 through Family reunification and four education pathways.

We also facilitated the issuance of Convention Travel Documents (CTDs) for eight individuals and Emergency Travel Documents (ETD) for three others.
In coordination with World University Science of Canada (WUSC) and MasterCard Foundation, UNHCR disseminated information on scholarships, reaching 474 students who could potentially apply for the opportunities.

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INCLUSION

Inclusion in Ethiopia's ID system opens new doors for refugees

CLIMATE CHANGE

How are IKEA Foundation and UNHCR tackling climate change in Ethiopia?

FUNDING UPDATE | 2024

$426 million
Funding requirements for 2024

⚠ **Only 14% of our funding requirements have been met this year** causing critical gaps in our response. UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors that have contributed to its work in Ethiopia, as well as to those that have contributed to UNHCR programs globally with unearmarked or softly earmarked funds.

In 2023 and 2024, UNHCR Ethiopia is grateful for contributions by:

And Private Donors in Australia, China, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, UK, and USA

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Together with the Government Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency aims to protect, assist and provide durable solutions for refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia. UNHCR works to strengthen refugee protection through the expansion of improved community-based and multi-sectoral child protection and programs addressing gender-based violence (GBV).

Visit UNHCR Ethiopia's Operational Data Portal for more information products here.

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