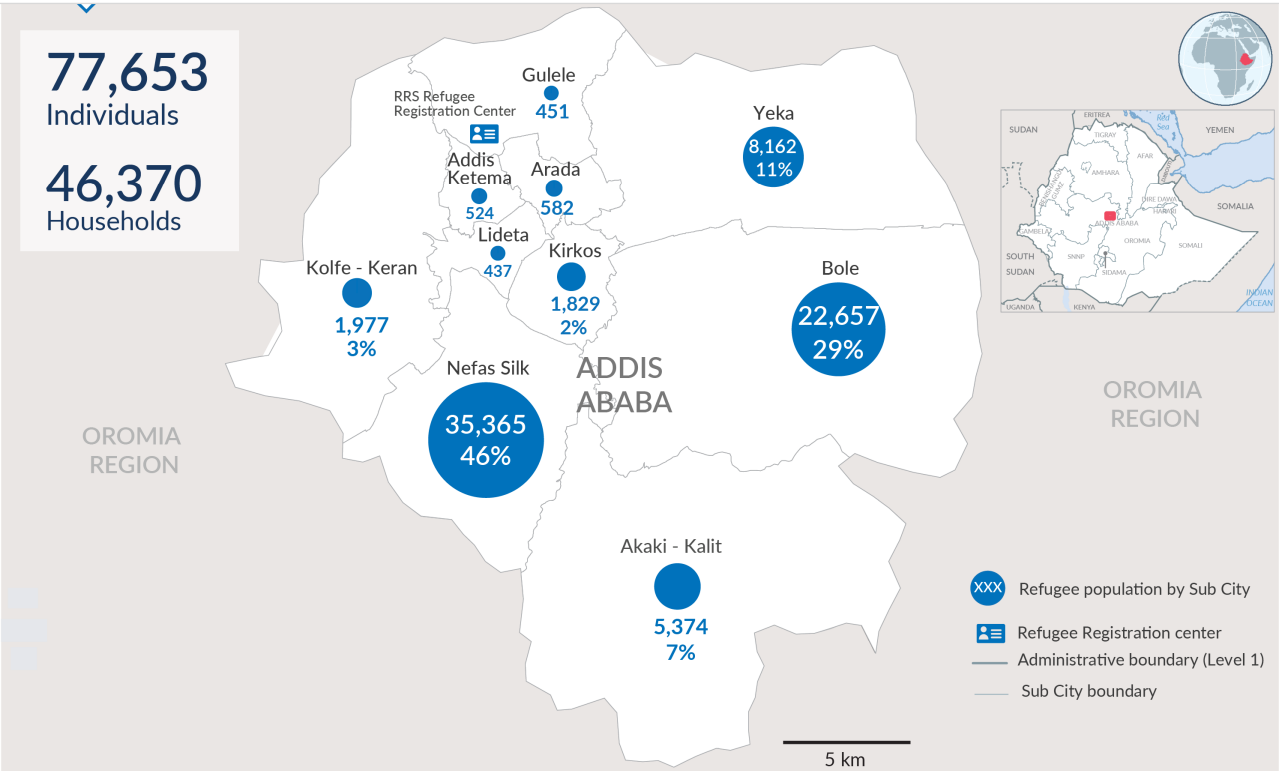
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

ETHIOPIA

ADDIS ABABA URBAN REFUGEE FACTSHEET

JANUARY TO MARCH 2024

Front cover: at the opening ceremony at Gulele reception center in Addis Ababa on 6 March 2024, UNHCR representative, Director General from RRS and Executive Director from NIDP handed the first digital ID cards to refugees and asylum-seekers ©UNHCR/Lucrezia Vittori



Country of origin

Refugees residing in Addis Ababa are originated from 28 different countries

Eritrea	71,588 (92%)
Yemen	2,466 (3%)
Somalia	1,140 (1%)
South Sudan	720
Syrian Arab Rep.	664
Congo DRC	477
Sudan	161
Burundi	72
Djibouti	57
Others	304

Age-gender breakdown

Female 55% | Male 45%

Age group	Female	Male
0 - 04 years old	4%	4%
5 - 11 years old	5%	6%
12 - 17 years old	6%	6%
18 - 24 years old	12%	9%
25 - 49 years old	27%	18%
50 - 59 years old	1%	1%
60 + years old	1%	1%

Children (0 -17 years) 30%

Adults (18 - 59 years) 68%

Elderly (60+) 2%

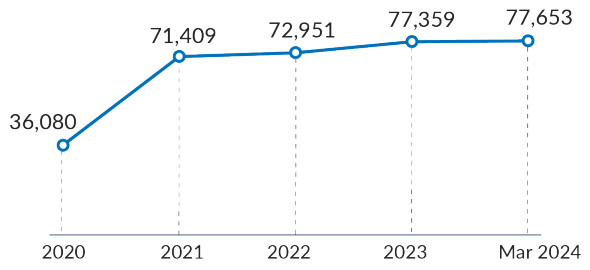
Women & Children 71%

Household Representative

Female 58%

Male 42%

Urban population trends | Dec 2020 - Mar 2024



The refugee population in Addis Ababa doubled in December 2021, mainly due to self-relocation movements of Eritrean refugees from Tigray region.

Persons with specific needs

Specific Need	F	M	Total
Women at risk	11,938	-	11,938
Single parent	3,143	81	3,224
Child at risk	1,360	1,478	2,838
Unaccompanied or separated child	1,389	1,414	2,803
Serious medical condition	1,336	1,209	2,545
Persons with disability	607	1,831	2,438

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Over the last decade, Ethiopia has witnessed significant influxes of refugees from neighboring countries, primarily Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea, and Sudan. As of the end of March 2024, the country hosts 1,059,232 refugees. The refugee population in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, stands at 77,653. Eritrean refugees make up approximately 92 % of the population in Addis Ababa, followed by Yemenis, Somalis, Congolese, and other nationalities. Women constitute over half (55 percent) of the urban population, while children make up 30.5 percent. Many are at heightened risk and have specific protection risks such as survivors of Gender-Based Violence, women heads of family, or Unaccompanied and Separated Children.

The government, UNHCR and partners support refugees living in Addis Ababa under the Government of Ethiopia's Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP)[1], the assisted refugee programme[2] and exceptionally self-relocated refugees from now defunct refugee camps in Tigray.[3]

The 2024 Participatory Assessment report revealed that urban refugees and asylum-seekers living in Addis Ababa and surrounding areas face a range of protection challenges that affect their well-being and dignity. Some of the most pressing issues are delays in accessing asylum procedures and obtaining valid documentation, the lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities and economic inclusion programs, child protection challenges such as difficulties in family tracing, implementing temporary care arrangements and durable solutions for Unaccompanied and Separated Children, low rates of school enrollment and retention, the prevalence of gender-based violence, especially among women and girls, physical safety and security issues pertaining to arbitrary arrest, detention and refoulement as well as irregular onward movement.

Further, the June 2022 Cash-Based Intervention Post distribution monitoring showed the top 3 expenditures for urban refugees include food, rent, clothes/shoes. The top 5 basic needs not met by the households being clothes/shoes, rent, food, education and transport. Based on the PDM assessment, the current assistance only covers 34% of the basic needs of these households due to inflation, which resulted in continuous increases in prices of goods and services including rent.

To mitigate and address these risks, UNHCR together with the Government's Refugee and Returnees Services (RRS) and partners, has been working closely with the refugee community to strengthen existing community-based protection mechanisms. RRS conducts registration and documentation with support from UNHCR. UNHCR advocates for access to asylum procedures, provides cash-based interventions, protection case management, and response, child protection interventions, advances protection from sexual and gender-based violence including Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), supports health and education services, individual counseling and legal aid, and facilitates livelihood opportunities and durable solutions.

In 2024, funding for UNHCR Ethiopia operation has been significantly reduced. Consequently, the extent and availability of cash assistance, medical services, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), free legal aid services and community-based protection has been significantly impacted.

[1] The Government of Ethiopia shifted its refugee policy in 2010 – specifically towards Eritrean refugees – by establishing the 'out-of-camp' policy through which Eritreans are allowed to live and study outside the camps if they are able to sustain themselves independently (usually through relatives or remittances).

[2] Comprises approximately 6,000 refugees referred from the camps on medical grounds, compelling protection concerns and/or refugees who have no designated camps in Ethiopia. This group relies on Cash Based Interventions to cover their basic needs including food, health, housing and education.

[3] *Actual population unknown asverification and documentation by government following their self- relocation from Tigray in 2021 is still pending. The figure covers refugees with specific needs i.e. children-at-risk, women-at-risk and those with severe medical conditions.*

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Protection Protection services and issuance of documentation to ***77,653*** refugees and asylum seekers	**Child Protection** Adequate family-based care for ***2,005*** unaccompanied children	**Livelihood** ***54,271*** Work/Residence permit &business license issuance, development of skill sets for refugees
Gender-Based Violence Intervention for **77, 653** refugees and asylum seekers	**Health & MHPSS** Health services for **1,700** refugees with critical health condition and **mental health support** for **41,774** refugees	**Cash Based Intervention (CBI)** Regular and targeted assistance for ***5,333*** most vulnerable refugees

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE URBAN REFUGEE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME FOR 2023-2026

- To enhance access to asylum and protection services including registration, RSD, and documentation towards strengthening access to protection, assistance and durable solutions considering the growing population and diversity.
- To improve access to essential social services, including education, health, and justice, and to boost the self-reliance of refugees, aligning this support with existing national programs.
- To enhance community-based mechanisms/approaches to support robust women and girls' participation and empowerment from exploitation and abuse through CP, GBV and PSEA interventions.

UNHCR'S RESPONSE

Legal Protection

- Registration and documentation: UNHCR continues to support the Ethiopian government's Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) in the documentation exercise for refugees and asylum-seekers in Addis Ababa. In the first quarter of 2024, **RRS with the support of UNHCR issued 4,407 ID and 4,559 Proof of Registration for Urban refugees**.
- RRS in Collaboration with the National ID Program (NIDP) and UNHCR launched the issuance of digital identity documents on 6 March 2024 to foster inclusion of refugees in the national system. Consequently, **348 ID cards with Fayda number were issued before the end of March 2024**. Moreover, 904 Birth Certificates and 165 marriage certificates were issued in addition to the registration of 357 new-born babies. UNHCR supports RRS in the overall supervision of the exercise, managing litigation cases, and providing technical and logistical support required for the exercise.

Cash Assistance

- Between 1 January and 31 March 2024, a total of ETB 35,884,300 (about US$664,000) was transferred to the 5,175 most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers to cover part of their basic needs. Moreover, one-off cash assistance was provided through UNHCR's partner Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC) to cover the refugees' immediate needs for an additional 20 newly identified families.
- Despite growing needs, budget constraints have led UNHCR to suspend cash assistance to refugees for the month of December 2023 which refugees dispose of including for their needs in the next month of January 2024. . This caused heightened protection and security risks because refugees could not afford housing, food, and education, which led to evictions, exploitation and abuse, child protection risks such

as school dropouts which is a growing concern due to the looming unpredictability regarding the continuation of cash-based interventions. However, Multi purpose Cash Assistance has been resumed since January 2024 alleviating the challenges witnessed.

- In 2024, UNHCR needs a total amount of ETB 109,792,464 (US$ 1,960,580) to continue providing reliable cash assistance to the most vulnerable urban refugees.

Health and MHPSS

- Between January and March 2024, about 416 urban refugees and asylum-seekers benefited from the UNHCR health assistance program implemented through its partner organization DICAC. Refugees who had self-relocated from Tigray camps have not been included in the health assistance program due to budget constraints, with targeted assistance being provided only to the most vulnerable.
- Over 1,300 refugees benefitted from Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services during the first quarter of the year. Of these, 178 participated in individual and group counseling sessions, while 1,011 refugees were reached through community-based psychosocial support and recreational activities. 144 Refugee and host community committee members benefited from different capacity enhancement community conversations. At the same time, 33 were assisted through the MHPSS assessment and inter-agency referrals.
- A training on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) was organized by the MHPSS implementing partner Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). 30 health professionals from government health facilities and 4 MHPSS partner staff participated in the training.
- Following health facilities' readiness and capacity assessment on MHPSS result and recommendations received from Addis Ababa Health Bureau, five psychotropic medication items were purchased and donated to 17 public health centers by the MHPSS partner JRS. Each health center received 4 types of psychotropic medication support in February 2024.

Education

- UNHCR has worked to ensure the inclusion of refugee children in the national education system by promoting and strengthening school enrollment.
- In the 2023/24 academic year, 877 refugee students (406 girls), who were enrolled in different schools, received educational assistance. The program provided funds for transportation and stationary materials for the students, who were distributed across various levels of education: 135 (55 girls) in pre-primary, 584 (281 girls) in primary, and 158 (70 girls) in secondary education.

Child Protection and Youth Program

- In the first quarter of the year, over **820 refugee children** were reached through child protection interventions. Of this total, 543 Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) and other children-at-risk received targeted support, including family-based alternative care, cash assistance, and MHPSS.
- During the reporting period, 164 children at risk benefitted from the Best Interests Procedure (BIP) and specialized child protection case management services.
- Some **4,014 refugee children** and youth benefited from services at *Cherkos* and *Ayat* Urban Child Protection and MHPSS Centers and at Refugee Community Center in *Sidist Killo*, all managed by the implementing partner JJRS. Refugee children and youth benefited from art therapy, language, and computer classes, life skills training, and individual/group counseling services.
- To strengthen community-based child protection mechanisms, **434 members of different community structures**, Refugee Outreach Volunteers (ROVS), Refugee Central Committees (RCC), Child Parliament, Youth Association and others, received child protection and other capacity building trainings related to child protection.
- A total of **536 refugee youths were provided with protection services** such as language, computer, music courses, and sports skills training. 38 adolescents and youth enrolled in vocational skill training while 40 advanced computer skills trainees passed the competency exam. 20 refugee youth participated

in youth empowerment activities, such as reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict management dialogues in different peace clubs at refugee hosting schools.

- **15 unaccompanied refugee youth** who graduated from foster care arrangements received empowerment through marketable vocational and soft skills training, and access to financial services such as loans and employment opportunities.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV), including PSEA

- UNHCR, in collaboration with its partner DICAC, is actively working to protect vulnerable refugees and to prevent and respond to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases. GBV response services, including psychosocial support, safety and security measures, health care, and other essential services, are being provided through the urban refugee program. While most GBV response services are delivered by the national GBV response system, DICAC works closely with the Addis Ababa City Administration Bureau of Women and Social Affairs to ensure the inclusion of refugees in the national GBV program.

- In commemoration of International Women's Day, UNHCR, in collaboration with government and non-governmental organizations, held a celebratory event at the Refugee Community Center. Key messages were delivered by representatives from UNHCR, the government, and NGOs, highlighting the importance of empowering women and promoting gender equality.

- Great Run Ethiopia organized the Safaricom Women's Only run to mark International Women's Day. This event saw the participation of more than 100 refugee women and UNHCR staff, promoting women empowerment, and solidarity among women from diverse backgrounds.

- Over 330 refugees and community structures received basic awareness on PSEA and inter-agency reporting mechanisms through training sessions and mass awareness and sensitization platforms.

Access to Justice, detention and irregular onward movement

- UNHCR in collaboration with the Addis Ababa University Law School provided free legal aid services for urban refugees. The Legal Aid Center continues to support urban refugees despite not having a partnership agreement with UNHCR in 2024.
- The program supports urban refugees by providing services such as legal counseling, support in drafting statements of claim and defense to courts of law, as well as preparing petitions and applications to government agencies.

- In collaboration with the Ethiopian Center for Development (ECD), 36 urban refugees were targeted through a legal information session on practical legal challenges they face as urban refugees. Arbitrary arrests, refoulement, disputes emanating from tenancy, family matters and jurisdiction of courts of law were among the topics covered.

- Detention monitoring efforts in collaboration with RRS included referral of individual cases to RRS for intervention with relevant authorities. 302 detention incidents were reported in the first quarter of 2024. Many of the refugees in detention were released following RRS intervention. However, undocumented asylums-seekers remain in detention due to their status as prospective asylum-seekers without documentation. UNHCR's advocacy efforts with RRS helped UNHCR to have access to detention centers since January 2024.

- Irregular onward movement trends have continued to be observed with a combination of traditional and emerging drivers triggering the movement of refugees. The lack of access to asylum procedures, arbitrary arrest and detention, safety and security concerns, limited livelihoods and durable solutions opportunities were cited as drivers of onward movement. The southern route via the Ethio-Kenya border with the refugees preferred destination being Uganda, has recently seen a greater number of mainly Eritrean urban refugees moving in search of better opportunities. The Urban program continues to actively engage in national coordination mechanisms and UNHCR country operations in the region to better address situations of mixed movement.

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)

- Between 1 January and 31 March 1603 calls were received by the call centre. Among these callers, 766 were assisted to submit their complaints through the UNHCR's online digital platform (Digital Request Compliant System) and 837 received immediate counselling. Most of the complaints were related to protection and RST.
- Between 1 January and 31 March 505 individuals received in-person counselling for their different requests at the protection reception desk. Most of the requests were RST appeals due to a lack of assistance and livelihoods opportunities in the country.

Community-Based Protection

- UNHCR facilitated a participatory assessment involving refugees and asylum-seekers in Addis Ababa from 21 February to 1 March 1. Over 600 participants engaged in discussions about key issues, identified priorities, and provided specific recommendations. The findings from this assessment will guide UNHCR's protection and humanitarian response programming for the refugee community in the city.
- Refugee representatives convened a meeting with multi-donor representatives and a group of Directors from UNHCRs headquarters where they had the opportunity to share insights on the challenges they face and provide recommendations regarding the refugee response in Ethiopia.

Self-reliance

- UNHCR continues to work with RRS to mitigate legal and procedural hurdles for skilled refugees to gain access to employment. Consequently, urban refugees were issued with work and residence permits. Also, UNHCR and its partner JRS in collaboration with various operational partners continue supporting refugees to be self-reliant through providing technical and vocational training programs.

With thanks to our donors:

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Further documents and information are available on the UNHCR Ethiopia data portal page, please click on the following link: https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/eth