

# Ethiopia- Refugee Emergency Update 07 September 2011



Newly arrived children playing on the Ethiopian side of Kurmuk. Initial estimates indicate children and women could be an overwhelming majority among new arrivals. Photo: T.Gudeta/UNHCR

## Highlights

- About 20,000 Sudanese refugees crossed into Ethiopia; UNHCR declares the situation an emergency
- Assistance begins as UNHCR and ARRA relocate refugees to Sherkole camp
- The Government of Ethiopia has identified three new sites to be developed to camps
- A significant drop in mortality rate in Kobe refugee camp-Dollo Ado
- UNHCR concerned about number of separated or unaccompanied children

## **New refugee Influx from Sudan**

### **Current context**

At a time when UNHCR, the Government refugee agency-ARRA- and other humanitarian actors are still struggling to cope with the challenges of a huge refugee influx from Somalia, recent hostilities in the Blue Nile State of Sudan have generated further displacements into Ethiopia. A joint UNHCR and ARRA assessment team to the Benishangul-Gumuz Region in western Ethiopia found that the number of new Sudanese arrivals since 02 September has reached about 20,000. More refugees were arriving when the team was on the ground. They have been crossing mainly through Kurmuk and Gizen, near Sherkole, some 770 kms west of Addis Ababa. Others are entering through Bamaza, further north. UNHCR has declared the new development 'another refugee emergency in Ethiopia'.

On Saturday 03 September, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, appealed for an immediate halt to hostilities. "We need, at all costs, to stop yet one more refugee crisis in a region of the world that has been witnessing in recent months so much suffering," said Guterres, who returned to Geneva the day before from visiting nearby Somalia, where hundreds of thousands of people are currently displaced by conflict, drought and famine.

Before the new refugee influx, Ethiopia has been accommodating more than 26,000 Sudanese refugees in two camps- Fugnido in the Gambella Region and Sherkole in the Benishangul-Gumuz region.

### **Emergency Response**

Generally, the physical state of the refugees appears good but they need food, water, and shelter. The local authorities and the communities have been sharing their resources with the new arrivals but this is not sustainable. Some of the refugees who have entered through the Gizen area, are sheltered in schools while others are scattered in nearby villages with local families who they share ethnicity. Those willing to be relocated are being moved to an existing refugee camp at Sherkole. However, some are reluctant to go and prefer to stay near the border, hoping that fighting will die down soon and allow them to return home.

**Assistance:** UNHCR has rushed emergency relief items to Sherkole refugee camp, including tents, sleeping mats, blankets, mosquito nets and jerry cans for immediate distribution among those already moved in. More aid items are en route to Addis Ababa for urgent dispatch to Asosa. ARRA is providing hot meal while UNICEF is assisting in the water and health sectors. WFP has been dispatching food for distribution to those already in the camp and those in reception centres.

UNHCR has reinforced the staffing level by sending additional staff from within the country pending the arrival an Emergency Response Team which should arrive within the next week.

**Registration:** ARRA has been conducting preliminary registration at the reception centers. This will be followed by a systematic profiling of the new arrivals by UNHCR, starting with those that have already moved into the camp. A UNHCR registration team is already on its way to Sherkole and profiling of the refugees and entering their biodata to the UNHCR database is expected to commence on Friday.

**Relocation:** UNHCR and ARRA have relocated some 3,500 of the new arrivals since 03 September. An IOM team is due to arrive in Assosa by Thursday and will take over the transportation of refugees from the border to camps as soon as they are set up.

**Camp development:** Sherkole, which already accommodates some 4,000 Sudanese refugees, can take in a further 6,000 refugees. The Ethiopian government has allocated three new sites at Tongo, Bambasi and Gure, not very far from Sherkole, to accommodate the new arrivals, each with a capacity to accommodate about 10,000 refugees. UNHCR and ARRA have started preparing Tongo to receive new arrivals.

### **Update on Dollo Ado refugee emergency**

As at 05 September 2011, the four Dollo Ado camps (Bokolmany, Malkadida, Kobe and Hilaweyn) as well as the Transit Centre accommodate a total of 121,279 refugees. This includes 2,653 at the Transit Centre waiting to be relocated to Hilaweyn.

The newest camp-Hilaweyn- is now home to 15,715 refugees that were transferred from the Transit Centre over the last month. Together with UNHCR and ARRA, IOM has been transferring an average of 1,000 refugees a day. However, delays in plot demarcation in the camp and related issues have slowed down the pace of the movement. The remaining over 2,600 refugees in the Transit Centre are expected to be transported in the coming days.

### **Health update**

Kobe camp has witnessed a significant drop in crude mortality rate from 3.9 per 10,000 per day to 2.0 per 10,000 per day. This is still above the emergency threshold of 1 per 10,000 per day, but the improvement registered over the last few weeks indicates that the rate could still be brought down to the emergency level and even less. It is believed that a combination of interventions including active case finding and timely referral, improved food and nutrition services, provision of core relief items, shelter and improved water supply have contributed to the reduction in the crude mortality rate. The decentralization of services and introduction of a mobile health team should also help to reduce the mortality rate. UNICEF's mobile health team is operating well in Kobe, concentrating on active case finding of malnourished and sick individuals and referring them to the respective health facility. In Hilaweyn, MSF Holland's mobile health team should also help further reduce the mortality rate.

### **Cholera response preparations**

In preparation to prevent a possible importation of the disease from Somalia, an Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) preparedness plan has been drafted and shared with all partners. There are adequate drugs and medical supplies pre-positioned in Dollo Ado, and a detailed inventory is being finalized to establish whether there are any gaps. An operational plan was also discussed and agreed upon. AWD centres will be opened at the transit centre and Hilaweyn. MSF Spain and MSF Holland have been conducting training of staff and community health workers, whilst WHO will train ARRA staff.

### **UNHCR concerned about separated or unaccompanied children**

UNHCR remains concerned about the number of separated or unaccompanied children. Initial estimates indicate this number could be as high as 2,500 children in the four camps. UNHCR and partners are carrying out a screening exercise in the Dollo Ado camps to better understand the scope of the problem and determine what may be in the best interest of these children.

## Support from UN agencies

In addition to WFP and IOM who have been working with UNHCR on a regular basis, a number of UN agencies, most notably UN Women, WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF have been and continue to extend support in different aspects of UNHCR's work in responding to the Somali refugee emergency.

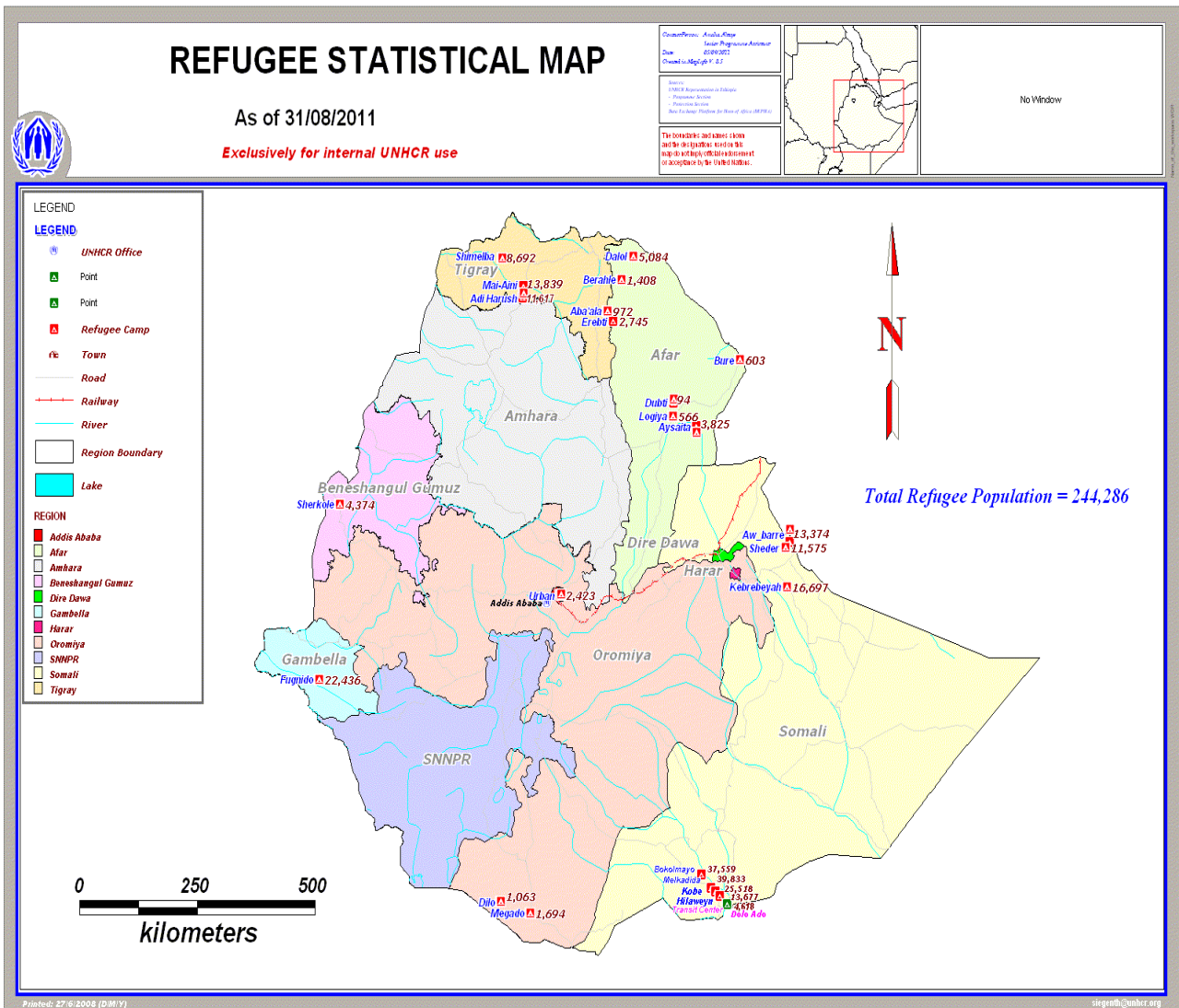
## Statistics

Not including Somali new arrivals through the Gode area and the estimated 20,000 Sudanese refugees who have just arrived over the last week, Ethiopia is host to some 245,000 refugees. Out of the total; over 160,000 are Somalis, more than 80,000 of them arriving so far this year. The other refugee groups in the country include over 50,000 Eritreans and some 26,000 Sudanese refugees who are accommodates in the Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella Regions

**The table below shows total number of refugees in the Dollo Ado camps as at 05 September 2011 and those that arrived since the beginning of the year**

Current total			As of Dec 2010		Arrivals in 2011	
Site/Camp	Households	Individuals	Households	Individuals	Households	Individuals
<b>Bokolmany</b>	9,416	37,559	3,988	14,988	5,428	22,571
<b>Melkadida</b>	9,843	39,833	6,452	25,491	3,391	14,342
<b>Kobe</b>	5,749	25,519	n/a	n/a	5,749	25,519
<b>Hilaweyn</b>	3,624	15,715	n/a	n/a	3,624	15,715
<b>Camp Sub-Total</b>	28,632	118,626	10,440	40,479	118,192	78,147
<b>D. Ado Transit C.</b>	821	2,653	n/a	n/a	821	2,653
<b>Reception C.</b>		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Temporary locations Sub-Total</b>	821	2,653	n/a	n/a	821	2,653
<b>Grand Total all locations</b>	29,453	<b>121,279</b>	10,440	40,479	19,013	<b>80,800</b>

## Location Map of Refugee camps



### Coordination arrangements:

In addition to the Government refugee agency-ARRA-, a number of NGOs and other partners, are part of the implementation arrangement in providing protection and assistance to the refugees in the three Dollo Ado camps as well as in the Reception and Transit centres. Most have signed sub-agreements with UNHCR as implementing partners while some are operational partners. An agreement has been reached on the coordination arrangements, in particular, who is doing what and where to ensure effective delivery of services as well as accountability and monitoring. The agreement has been discussed and agreed with the government and all NGO partners.



**The table below shows who does what**

Sector	Implementing agency(ies)
Registration	ARRA/UNHCR
Camp management	ARRA
Water	IRC/LWF/Oxfam GB
Sanitation & hygiene promotion	ARRA/Oxfam GB/LWF/IMC
Nutrition (TFP & SFP)	MSF-S/IMC/ACF
Blanket feeding	ARRA/IMC/SC-US
School feeding	ARRA/SC-US
Hot meals	ARRA
Primary health care & health promotion	ARRA/MSF-S/MSF-H
Mental health	IMC
Child friendly spaces	SC-US
Emergency education	SC-US
Primary education (1-8)	ARRA
SGBV	PAPDA/IMC/IRC
Environment	PAPDA/PWO
Food supply	WFP
Food distribution	ARRA
NFI distribution	ARRA/UNHCR
Shelter	AHA/NRC/DRC/UNHCR
Shelter production	AHADA
Transporting refugees	IOM
Coordination on Refugees	UNHCR/ARRA

For feedback and further information on these topics, please contact:  
 Kisut G.Egziabher, [gegziabk@unhcr.org](mailto:gegziabk@unhcr.org). Mob. +251911208901, or  
 Laura Padoan, [Padoan@unhcr.org](mailto:Padoan@unhcr.org), mob. + 252 618389306