

Bi-weekly Operational Update: 16-30 April 2019

UNHCR suspends field missions to camps in Gambella: Due to recent security incidents in Gambella which resulted in some civilian fatalities, including refugees and a humanitarian worker, UNHCR has suspended missions to all the refugee camps since Monday 29 April as per the recommendation of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). Due to the movement restrictions, only limited humanitarian assistance is being provided in the camps by a skeletal humanitarian staff and via existing community structures.

UNHCR emphasizes ‘centrality of protection’ within the NCRRS: UNHCR has provided detailed recommendations to the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) for inclusion in the draft National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (NCRRS) which envisages to change Ethiopia’s refugee management approach to an Out-of-Camp model of assistance over the next decade.’. UNHCR considers the six pillars of the Strategy to be already remarkably comprehensive, and encourage further alignment to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), in line with the changing global perspectives.

No significant movement of people on Ethio-Sudan border: Following recent political developments in the Sudan which resulted in a change of leadership, UNHCR and ARRA have continued to closely monitor the border with no significant changes observed in the patten of arrivals. Meanwhile Sudanese refugees in camps in the Benishangul-Gumuz region welcomed the new political development at home with cautious optimism. A number of refugee representatives said that the refugees would continue to closely monitor the evolution of the situation before considering any returns.

Government announces IDP return plan: The government of Ethiopia has announced a plan to return 5,000 families of 23,113 individuals from Gedeo Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ State (SNNPS) to pre-identified 10 kebele’s within Kercha woreda, West-Guji Zone of the Oromia region. Government sources indicated that this first round return plan would serve as a pilot before a large scale return operation could be initiated in the Gedeo-West Guji area. It was also noted during consultations in Gedeb that IDPs have expressed their willingness to return to West-Guji, with a logistics committee having been established to coordinate transportation, the distribution of non-food aid items as well as construction of temporary shelters.

Comprehensive biometric data registration continues throughout the country. During the period 16-30 April 2019, an additional 49,469 individuals completed comprehensive biometric data registration, bringing the overall total to 477,373 persons. Progress by Camp can be tracked on a daily basis via the UNHCR Operational Data Portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org>, and directly at <https://im.unhcr.org/eth/>.