



139,281 as of 31 December 2019

PERSONS OF CONCERN in the Afar and Tigray region

70,129

NEW ARRIVALS in 2019

15.4% as of December 2019

OF THE NEW ARRIVALS ARE UASCs

Operational context

New Arrivals – In 2019, 70,129 new asylum seekers from Eritrea have sought refuge in Ethiopia, placing a significant strain on registration and reception conditions in Endabaguna, Barahle and Aysaita, and increasing the already dire shelter shortages within the existing camps. With an average of 6,000 new refugees arriving every month, available resources are prioritized to cover immediate basic needs. Feeding programmes are a priority, while gaps remain across all sectors. By the end of 2019, the registered population under Sub-Office Shire’s area of operation stands at 139,281 persons. This includes 86,511 refugees in the four camps in Tigray, and 51,700 refugees in the two camps and settlements within the host communities in Afar, and 1,070 out of camp refugees.

Sectorial priorities and unmet needs



Protection

General – In relation to SGBV prevention and response, the operation works to enhance access to justice and physical protection of survivors, while strengthening mental health and psychosocial services. Community-based complaints mechanisms for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse has been established within camps in the Tigray and Afar regions. The operation faces challenges due to the high rate of new arrivals, while budget and resources remain limited. At present registration and protection capacity remains limited, which contributes to backlogs and delays in issuing individual ID documents and follow up on protection situations that take place in camps. New arrivals are waiting up to 3 to 4 days before being registered at Endabaguna. Children, especially those who are unaccompanied or separated, often have to stay between 3-5 weeks at the reception center in order to be allocated adequate care arrangements for them within the camps. UNHCR and ARRA are working to mainstream and simplify registration and refugee status determination procedures in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of procedures at Endabaguna reception and registration center.

Child protection – The promotion of family-based care for UASCs is a priority - kinship/foster families are currently supported with cash. Humanitarian partners seek to increase the number of children living in family-based care arrangements to 75 percent by the end 2020. In 2019, 15% of the new arrivals in the Tigray region were unaccompanied or separated children (UASC) – the number of UASC has exceeded the capacity to respond to their basic needs. Recreational centres and/or child-friendly spaces are a significant gap within all camps, negatively impacting their well-being. Moreover, there is no specialized service for children with special needs. Additionally, it remains challenging to accommodate UASC with other families, with most refugees not intending to remain in the camps for an extended period. This in turn makes children vulnerable to exploitation. The operation will maintain focus on child protection, including family-based care within the refugee communities. Presently, efforts are being made to trace relatives, identify resettlement cases, and increase family-based care within refugee communities for UASC.

Resettlements – In Ethiopia, an estimated 15,000 - 20,000 refugees were in need of resettlement in 2019. With quotas for resettlement reduced, only 1900 refugees were assisted to depart to resettlement countries, 800 of them Eritreans. There is a need for increased advocacy for resettlement countries to raise this quota.



Health

A total of seven health centers, one in each of the six refugee camps in Tigray and Afar Regions as well as at the Endabaguna Reception Centre – supported on average 20,258 patients with primary health care as per November 2019 data. To ensure the provision of sustainable healthcare to the refugees, further integration of refugee health services with the Regional Health Bureaus and Ministry of Health will be actively pursued. In total 342 patients were referred to secondary and tertiary health facilities outside of the camps. However, lack of budget to support medical referrals to secondary and tertiary health facilities outside camps is resulting in refugee patients not being able to avail necessary treatment. Medical care is often limited in terms of sufficient drug supplies, culturally sensitive health care workers, appropriate prescription of medication, availability of ambulance services and equipped health care facilities. Additionally, refugees have often been through severe trauma, but there exist critical gaps in mental health services and psychosocial support for survivors of SGBV or trafficking.



Food and Nutrition

On a monthly basis general food distribution is provided for all refugees. Blanket supplementary feeding program is provided for pregnant and lactating women, children (0-2 yrs), medical cases and the elderly. In Mai Aini, Adi Harush, Shimelba and Hitsats Refugee Camps in Tigray, the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) is 6.8%, 10.1%, 17.8% and 10% respectively, with the situation remaining above the emergency threshold. In situation in the two camps in the Afar Region is more serious, with Barahle and Aysaita having a GAM rate of 16.6% and 16.8%, respectively.

NFI Non-Food Items

Upon arrival refugees are provided with the following eight Core Relief Items (CRI): 1) kitchen set, 2) plastic tarpaulins, 3) fleece blankets, 4) plastic jerry cans of 20 liter, 5) mosquito net, 6) sleeping mat, 7) bucket, and 8) soap. However, due to budget constraints, plastic tarpaulins cannot always be provided to every household upon arrival. Soap is provided on a monthly basis, but it is insufficient to last the monthly cycle. Besides, there is a general lack of sanitary materials including underwear, sanitary napkins and soap for women in reproductive age (12-49 years). There are serious shortfalls with regards to the replenishment of CRIs across all the camps since 2015. The main gap is in the provision of blankets and kitchen sets, especially for those who have resided in the camps for a long time. As of June 2019, the CRI coverage stood at only 23% against overall needs.



Education

In 2019, the average pe-primary school enrolment rate was 21%, while those for primary and secondary levels stood at 48% and 11%, respectively. The pre-preliminary and primary enrolment rate concerns only camp based schools. The main enrollment challenge relates to the onward movement of a significant number of refugees out of the Tigray camps in particular. Although refugees in the region express their interest in education, the priority is placed on finding a job, earn money and send remittances back home. Quality of education and teaching practices need serious attention. The qualification of teachers needs to be improved and the number of qualified female teachers needs to be increased, together with a need to attract and retain teachers in hardship areas. A significant number of children in schools already access education through the national system, therefore it is important to strengthen the national system in order to accommodate refugees. Adi Harush, Aysaita, Barahale camps do not provide secondary education and children residing in those camps seek education through the national education system in the vicinity of these camps. The opposite has been observed in Mai Aini, Hitsats and Shimelba camps, where children from the host communities attend secondary education within the refugee camps' secondary schools. An electronic enrollment system has



been recently introduced by UNHCR and ARRA in both Tigray and Afar regions which will support the agencies' monitoring efforts throughout the school year.



Shelter

At the beginning of 2019, the total number of transitional shelters across all the six camps in Tigray and Afar regions were 6,684. In 2019, additional 579 transitional shelters were constructed, bringing the total to 7,263. There is a 55% shelter gap in the camps in Tigray Region and 83% gap in those within the Afar Region. There is an urgent need to construct more transitional shelters, particularly in camps in the Afar Region where only 17% of the refugees are living in transitional shelters, with the rest accommodated in emergency shelters. With the continued average daily arrivals of 300 persons, adequate coverage of shelters is a challenge that the operation is faced with. In the absence of sufficient shelters in camps, refugees are forced to live in settlements within the host community or in substandard temporary shelters. The host communities are generally accommodative of the refugees, but out of camp movements result in increase in rent in the host community, potentially negatively affecting relations between refugees and the host community.



WASH

The operation continues to promote sustainable access to safe and adequate water for refugees and host communities and ensure access to adequate sanitation services. The community management of WASH infrastructures and services remains a priority. For example, the Sarenta dam project becomes operational to meet the needs of both the host and the refugee populations. The expected completion date of the dam is around mid-2020. Shimelba Camp is the only camp that meets the UNHCR standard of 20l/p/d. The onset of dry season resulted in water shortages in Mai Aini and Adi Harush camp with low water supply of 12-13 l/p/d. Starting from September 2018, the massive influx of new arrivals had rendered the existing water system in the camps not commensurate to the need. The number of water tap-stands in camps are limited and people line up at water points for several hours. Many would return without fetching water. UNHCR as a temporary solution resumed water trucking to Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps, ensuring supply of 200 metric cube water to these camps and thus increasing water supply to 15-16 l/p/d. Although some of the water systems are becoming solarized, general concerns exist regarding the depreciation of the generators and the obsolete water pipeline system in Shimelba, Adi Harush, and Berahale camps. The water system in Shimelba Camp has already been solarized. As for sanitation, 1,100 new household latrines were added to infrastructure in all camps. This brought the household coverage in Tigray region to 55% of the needs, whereas Afar covers 30% of the needs, against a standard coverage of 85%.



Energy & Environment

Household energy is a vital basic component of the lifesaving assistance package as part of food preparation and lighting. Prioritized intervention for energy for the Eritrean refugee population and surrounding host community are geared towards finalizing the supply of electricity through the national grid and enhance the use of communal kitchens in the camps. Presently, Adi Harush and Mai Aini camps are connected to the national power grid, whereas Shimelba Camp is in the process to be connected to the national grid. It is aimed to connect all the camps to the national grid by the end of 2020. There is no frequent provision of domestic energy supply – the banning of trees cutting, and wood-fuel collection has intensified, leaving refugees to sell the raw ration to purchase fuel for cooking. Over 80 % of the communal kitchens installed in Mai-aini are not functioning due to lack of repair and maintenance. The camp electrification programs are also equally affected due to shortage of ABC cables. The absence of streetlights and other forms of communal lighting in the camps gives room for crimes and other SGVB related atrocities.