

# Ethiopia

April 2020

Ethiopia is one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in Africa, sheltering **761,819** registered refugees and asylum seekers as of 30 April 2020.

UNHCR is scaling up efforts to prevent and limit the potential spread of **COVID-19** among the over **761,000** refugees and the communities hosting them. Prioritized areas of preparedness include enhancing community awareness and provision of soap and adequate water supply, social distancing, procurement of medical supplies and PPEs, and furnishing isolation and treatment centers.

UNHCR has reviewed its Corporate Risk Register and maintained 22 risks, including five that recognize the risks posed by COVID-19. These are **Emergency Preparedness, Disease Outbreak, Nutrition, Water Supply** and **Business Continuity**. Proactive measures to mitigate against the risks have been taken and are ongoing with necessary urgency.

## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

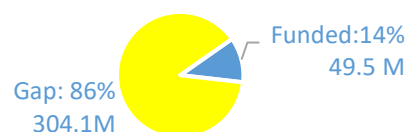
**376** national staff, **121** international staff (including JPOs)  
**143** individual contractors; **33** deployees and IUNVs

### Offices:

**1** Branch Office in (Addis Ababa), **5** Sub-Offices - Melkadida, Gambella, Shire, Assosa and Jijiga, **4** Field Offices – Embamadre, Tongo, Pugnido and Mekelle.

## Funding (As of 29 April 2020)

**USD 353.6 M** requested for Ethiopia



## Working with partners

- UNHCR's main government counterpart to ensure the protection of refugees in Ethiopia is the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), within the Ministry of Peace. UNHCR also works in close coordination with 57 humanitarian and development partners, and is part of the Humanitarian Country Team in Ethiopia where refugee programmes are discussed strategically to ensure the needs of refugees are adequately presented and addressed across the UN System. UNHCR builds on a well-established coordination forum, including the inter-sector Refugee Coordination Group, together with national and regional sector working groups. As part of the GCR/CRRF, UNHCR is furthering partnerships with line ministries, regional and local authorities, as well as development partners and the private sector.

## Main Activities

### Protection

- UNHCR and ARRA relocated approximately 800 Somali refugees and asylum seekers from the Dollo Ado Reception Centre to the different refugee camps in Sub-Office Melkadida. Prior to the relocation, UNHCR expedited shelter construction in the receiving camps to accommodate the new arrivals. All of them arrived before 24 March 2020 when the Government of Ethiopia announced the closure of its land borders as part of the measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

### Education

- Following the nation-wide closure of schools as part of the fight against COVID-19, over 200,000 refugee students in Ethiopia are currently out of school. UNHCR and partners are advocating with the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus for the inclusion of refugee students in the Government's distance education programmes. However, there are several practical challenges to implement the programme, including limited radio wave coverage of the camps, an insufficient number of radio sets in the refugee camps and the need to translate the radio lessons in multiple mother tongues spoken by refugees. Over 60,000 solar powered radio sets are needed to receive the daily broadcasted education programmes.

### Health

- Critical and essential primary healthcare activities are maintained in all refugee camps. UNHCR has continued to intensify collaboration with ARRA, the regional health bureaus, partners and sister UN agencies in efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a coordinated manner. Refugee camps have been targeted in the active case search organized by the health bureaus, including the introduction of acute respiratory infection surveillance in some camps as a proxy indicator of COVID-19 surveillance. On-the-job orientation to health staff and awareness raising activities are ongoing in all refugee camps. UNHCR has procured 140,000 masks which are currently undergoing customs clearance.

### Food Security and Nutrition

- 50 per cent of the refugee camps have benefited from the bi-monthly food distribution for the months of April and May, with the remaining half to be issued with food for May and June in one distribution. This is done in order to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Refugees in Ethiopia continue to receive only about 84% of the minimum of standard ration of 2,100 kcal. This has kept the global acute malnutrition rate in most camps at higher than the acceptable standards.

### Water and Sanitation

- Out of the 26 refugee camps in Ethiopia, only 20 receive the acceptable standard of 15 litres and above of water per person per day.. Soap has been distributed to 24 refugee camps with the distribution currently taking place in the remaining two. 51% of all persons of concern to UNHCR attended hygiene promotion sessions on how to prevent coronavirus infection. 20% of all refugee households have installed handwashing facilities while 792 such facilities are installed in communal facilities within the refugee camps. Disinfection capacity remains low and is an area requiring urgent attention.

### Shelter

- The National Shelter Strategy (2017-2020) informs a collective and coherent response, based on available resources, to enable refugees to access shelter solutions. 54 per cent of the refugees in Ethiopia need transitional shelter solutions and UNHCR and partners are working to narrow down the gap. UNHCR has completed 99% of the 850 shelters it has been constructing in the Gedeo (SNNPS) and West Guji (Oromia) Regions for the benefit of vulnerable returnees who were previously displaced due to communal violence.

### Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)

- Following the successful piloting and subsequent positive assessment results of the Cash Based-Interventions (CBI) in camps around Jijiga, UNHCR is working to scale up the use of cash to the other locations. Cash will be used in lieu of a range of in-kind aid supplies including non-food aid items. Multipurpose cash assistance continues to be implemented for refugees in Addis Ababa. Cash will also be used to respond to the ongoing IDP situation as well as reintegration support for Ethiopian refugees who voluntarily return to their country. Risk mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure contextual changes to minimize humanitarian cash assistance disruptions due to the impact of COVID-19.

### Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- UNHCR and ARRA work in close coordination with partners to ensure efficient and coordinated delivery of protection and assistance to refugees. Camp coordination meetings and technical working groups have been taking place both at the zonal and camp levels.

### Access to Energy

- Despite the effort to improve refugees' access to energy for cooking, lighting and other uses, the cooking energy gap remains huge with less than 8% of the refugee households having access to alternative cooking energy. However, UNHCR and partners continue to expedite their support to enhance access to energy for cooking, lighting and productive use. In April, 67,000 pieces of briquettes and 240m<sup>3</sup> of firewood were distributed among 3,900 refugee households in the Afar and Benishngul-Gumuz regions. 16 grid-connected communal kitchens remain functional in camps in the Tigray Region. As part of the response to the disaster risk reduction and environmental rehabilitation programmes, seedling raising and planting site preparation is underway in all refugee camps in preparation for a massive tree planting in the upcoming rainy season.

### Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

- In 2020, UNHCR will continue to work with the Government to promote economic opportunities for refugees and support their eventual inclusion within the host communities. This will include supporting the implementation of Ethiopia's pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 related to creating economic opportunities and skills development for refugees and Ethiopians. UNHCR supports the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs, ARRA, to roll out the procedural directives on work permits, residence permits and business licenses under joint programmes that will be designed to benefit both refugees and their hosts. UNHCR continues with the coordination of strategic partners as they implement activities in refugee hosting areas, as well as support opportunities for private sector participation and for financial inclusion.

### Durable Solutions

- As part of its effort to enhance reintegration support during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR distributed ETB 26,100 to 87 persons who returned to Ethiopia at the end of 2019 after years of exile in neighboring countries. This is in addition to the regular reintegration package that is given to the returnees in the form of cash.

## External / Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the direct contributions to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation from:

USA| Denmark | UK (DFID) | IKEA Foundation| Netherlands | European Union (ECHO) | Ireland| Sweden| Canada| Japan| Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints | Country-Based Pooled Fund| Spain| UN Programme on HIV/AIDS| Miscellaneous private donors.

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Germany 48.4 million | United Kingdom 25 million | United States of America 21.8 million | Denmark 14.6 million | Canada 10.2 million | Sweden 5.9 million  
| Private donors Japan 3.5 million | Ireland 3.3 million | Private donors Australia 2.1 million  
Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Morocco | Portugal | Slovakia | Private donors

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