

Ethiopia

July 2020

Ethiopia is one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in Africa, sheltering **769,310** registered refugees and asylum seekers as of 31 July 2020.

UNHCR has scaled up efforts to prevent and limit the spread of **COVID-19** among the refugees and the communities hosting them. It is strengthening awareness raising campaigns, supplying water and soap, installing handwashing stations, improving health services and providing PPEs for health care workers and first responders.

UNHCR continues to actively engage in the humanitarian and **COVID-19** response to **IDP returnees** and other **conflict-affected communities**, mainly in Gedeo, West Guji, East and West Wollega and Kamashi areas. It is supporting the Government's efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 in these communities through communication campaigns and distribution of supplies.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

338 national staff, **125** 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, **5** Field Offices – Embamadre, Tongo, Pugnido, Sherkole and Mekelle.

Funding (As of 31 July 2020)

USD 385.1 M requested for Ethiopia



Working with partners

- UNHCR's main government counterpart in the refugee response in Ethiopia is the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA). UNHCR also works closely with 57 humanitarian and development partners and is part of the Humanitarian Country Team 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 government line ministries, regional and local authorities, as well as development partners and the private sector.

Main Activities

Protection

- An inter-agency protection monitoring in East Wollega, Oromia Region, identified 1,640 IDP returnee families and 812 displaced families (3,403 individuals), who are in urgent need of food, shelter, education and health care. The lack of livelihood options negatively impacts the reintegration of the returnees. In collaboration with the Women and Children's Affairs Office, UNHCR conducted awareness raising on the prevention of early/forced marriage and COVID-19 for 25 women and adolescent girls in Mede Jalela kebele, Sasiga woreda of the East Wollega zone. Similarly, in collaboration with the Bilateral Peace and Development office, UNHCR conducted a peace building and reconciliation workshop which was attended by 150 participants representing a cross section of the society in the East and West Wollega zones of Oromia and Kamashi zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz regions.

Education

- Over 200,000 refugee students in Ethiopia remain out of school following the nation-wide school closure. Pending a decision by the Ministry of Education on school re-opening date, UNHCR and partners are working to ensure that the students remain engaged in academic exercises by distributing worksheets and helping them tune into regional broadcast lessons where feasible.

Health

- Essential primary healthcare activities are maintained in all refugee camps. UNHCR has continued to intensify COVID-19 prevention and control activities in collaboration with ARRA, the regional health bureaus, partners and sister UN agencies focusing on infection prevention and control, community and facility-based surveillance, case investigation, risk communication and community engagement as well as improvement of WASH services. Additional 200,000 medical masks have been received and will be distributed to first responders. A measles vaccination campaign targeting all children aged 9 months to 5 years has been carried out in all camps. A total of 97,054 children have been vaccinated with an overall coverage rate of 95%.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Refugees continue to receive only about 84% of the minimum standard food ration of 2,100 kcal. This has kept the global acute malnutrition rate in most camps higher than the acceptable standards. UNHCR, ARRA and WFP have revised the cash transfer values for refugees in the Somali (Jijiga), Benishangul-Gumuz, Tigray and Afar Regions, who are currently receiving combined cash and food assistance, to reflect commodity price increases in the local markets.

Water and Sanitation

- Refugees in camps received an average of 18.9 litres of water per person per day (l/p/p/d). Three camps (Barahle, Hitsats and Kebribeyah) received less than 15 l/p/p/d, and UNHCR and partners are working improve the situation. 77% of the refugee population in camps have been reached with COVID-19 related hygiene promotion activities

and messages. Nearly 40,000 handwashing facilities (38,316 household and 1,327 communal) have been installed in the camps, bringing the percentage of households with handwashing facilities to 28.6.

Shelter

- Fifty-two percent of the camp-based refugee population in Ethiopia are in need of transitional shelters. UNHCR continues to work to improve the shelter gap through construction of transitional and emergency shelters. A total of 30 emergency shelters and 191 transitional shelters were completed in July. 150 transitional shelters for vulnerable IDP returnees in the Gedeo area are in the final phase of completion. Sudden increases in the prices of construction materials and shortage of labours in some of the regions (related to movement restrictions due to COVID-19) have hampered the progress of shelter construction.

Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)

- Following 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 in other locations. Cash will be used in lieu of a range of in-kind aid supplies including non-food items. Multipurpose cash assistance continues to be implemented for refugees in Addis Ababa and will be extended to other locations. UNHCR is exploring ways to provide support to elderly refugees and those with underlying health conditions as a result of the economic impact of COVID-19. Cash will also be used to respond to the 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. Zonal and camp level coordination meetings and technical working groups continue to take place.

Access to Energy

- Despite the effort to improve refugees' access to energy for cooking, lighting and other uses, the gap in cooking energy remains huge with less than 8% of the refugee households having access to alternative cooking energy. During the first half of 2020, more than 199,465 pcs of briquettes and 331m³ of firewood had been distributed to targeted refugee households in camps in the Afar and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. 17 grid-connected communal kitchens are functional in camps in the Tigray and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. In addition, 18 solar street lights have been maintained and 26 new ones installed at isolation and quarantine centers in the Melkadida refugee camps, Somali Region. As part of its environmental rehabilitation and re-afforestation programme, UNHCR has so far during the ongoing rainy season planted 755,733 multipurpose trees, with more to be planted in August.

Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR continues to collaborate with the Government of Ethiopia and development partners on advancing economic inclusion of refugees and host communities. UNHCR supports ARRA to roll out the procedural directives on work and residence permits as well as business licenses under joint programmes that will be designed to benefit both refugees and Ethiopians. UNHCR is coordinating with strategic partners to monitor the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in refugee hosting areas and to develop mitigation measures that will minimize the impact on local economies and markets, as well as to plan for post-COVID-19 livelihoods recovery interventions for affected populations.

Durable Solutions

- Providing resettlement opportunities remains a top priority as conditions for voluntary repatriation are unfavourable for most refugees, and local integration programmes are yet to be put in place. In 2020, the target for resettlement submissions is 1,800 individuals, of which 965 individuals have already been submitted. 254 individuals have departed for different resettlement countries so far this year. UNHCR also facilitated the transfer of 77 refugees to Italy as part of the Second Protocol of the Italian Humanitarian Corridor. While departures are currently on hold owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR is advocating with ARRA and the Department of Immigration for the resumption of departures to certain resettlement countries as soon as possible.

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| "la Caixa" Banking Foundation| Canada| Japan| Finland| Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints | Spain| Muslim World League| Luxembourg| Country-Based Pooled Fund| UPS Corporate| France| UN Programme on HIV/AIDS| Other private donors.

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Sweden 76.4 million | Norway 41.4 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Spain 33.1 million | Kingdom 31.7 million | Germany 25.9 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 17.3 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | France 14 Private donors Japan 11.7 million

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