

Ethiopia Received over 5,000 New Refugees



Newly arrived Eritrean refugees being relocated to Hitsats camp, home to some 8,000 refugees. UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

Five thousand one hundred and ninety-three new refugees were registered in Ethiopia in the last two months and this brings to 427,077 the total number of refugees Ethiopia hosted by 30 November 2013. Nearly half (2,496) of the new arrivals came from Eritrea while the rest represent newcomers from Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan combined.

With over 240,000 Somalis, 81,000 Eritreans and 70,000 South Sudanese, among others, Ethiopia is today the second biggest refugee hosting country in Africa, next only to Kenya. The refugees are currently sheltered in a total of 18 refugee camps, including eight for Somali refugees, six for Eritrean refugees, three for Sudanese refugees and one accommodating

refugees from South Sudan. In Addition, there are two community support centers in the south where Kenyan refugees access some services, as well as three sites in the west which should be developed into refugee camps to shelter Sudanese and South Sudanese refugees.

Notable among them are Ashura in the Benishangul-Gumuz region, already hosting close to 3,000 Sudanese refugees and Okugo in the Gambella region which should soon shelter some 6,000 South Sudanese refugees who fled tribal conflicts in Jonglie State since last May.

UNHCR and ARRA are working to speed up the development of the two sites in order to accommodate those that are already in the country as well as potential new arrivals.

More Refugees Benefit from Technical and Vocational Training

Some 600 Somali refugees in Dollo Ado's Kobe and Hilaweyn camps as well as members the surrounding host communities received certificates of graduation in different vocational and technical skills. The enthusiastic students, aged 15- 24 years, became the first graduates of the Norwegian Refugee Council's Youth Education Package (YEP) in Dollo Ado. The graduation is a major milestone for Dollo Ado, where in 2011 it was a major epicenter in the Horn of Africa crisis with thousands of refugees in poor health crossing the border each day.



UNHCR Representative Moses Okello awards certificate to one of the graduates. UNHCR/D.Corcoran

Jointly funded by the IKEA Foundation and the Government of Norway, the year-long YEP programme encompassed daily practical and theoretical classes in areas such as electronics, cooking, masonry, carpentry and plumbing which are accompanied by life skills, literacy and numeracy training. In their final weeks students undertook entrepreneurship training and start-up kits will be provided to groups of 12 graduates who will integrate into a cooperatives system as part of the UNHCR-led livelihoods strategy.

Day care facilities were set up in both camps during the course of the training in order to

accommodate mothers, particularly lactating mothers, who were liable to drop out of the training without support. Thanks to the effort exerted by NRC, the Ethiopian Somali Regional TVET Bureau (ESTVETB) has recognized the two training centers as TVET centers which are able to certify to Level II in accordance with the Ethiopian TVET system.

The students, who have spent the past year acquiring various vocational skills, had a full day of events from the early morning and included a walk through exhibition of their work, drama, speeches, and music by well-known refugee musicians- the Berlula Band from Melkadida camp.

Heart-warming, hopeful and inspiring speeches were made by dignitaries including the Deputy Director of ARRA, the UNHCR Representative, the Country Director of NRC, the Dollo Ado District Commissioner and, of course, a representative of the graduates. In a passionate speech delivered on behalf of the graduates, a young refugee, Nuur Abdi, reminded his fellow students that "... the main purpose of education is to make a difference and contribute to a nation..."

In October, another group of 580 refugees in Addis Ababa received certificates of graduation following completion of a year-long vocational and skills training implemented by UNHCR's partner Opportunities Industrialization Centre – Ethiopia (OIC-E).The graduates, mainly urban refugees in Addis Ababa, received training in diverse fields including automotive, carpentry, basic computer applications, dress making, electricity, hair dressing, masonry and metal work. The training is part of UNHCR's policy which puts emphasis on creating hope to refugees through skills training and livelihoods opportunities. It's also part of the work to prepare refugees for eventual solutions, including voluntary repatriation.

(Donna Corcoran contributed the Dollo Ado part of the above article)

US Assistant Secretary of State for BPRM visited camps hosting Eritrean refugees.

The US Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM), Ms. Anne C. Richard, visited three refugee camps (Mai-Aini, Adi-Harush & Hitsats) in the Tigray region hosting thousands of Eritrean refugees. Accompanied by US Ambassador to Ethiopia, H.E. Patricia M. Haslach, the Deputy Director of ARRA, Ato Ayalew Aweke and the UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia Mr. Moses Okello, Ms. Richard also toured the Endabaguna screening center and had discussions with new arrivals.

The Assistant Secretary had focused discussions with a cross section of the refugees, but mainly with children who arrived on their own (unaccompanied children) and refugees that were deported from countries such as Egypt and Libya while trying to cross over to Europe, Israel and other countries.

In a remark she gave at the end of her two days in the camps, Ms. Richard said: “The biggest impression I’m taking away is concern for all the unaccompanied minors who are coming out of Eritrean in a dangerous journey traveling all by themselves and potentially not staying at the camp but using it as a rest stop before traveling on by themselves into more dangerous territory. So this is going to be topic number one in my discussions with all concerned in order to try to do more to prevent these children from falling into danger”.

Ms. Richard was visibly struck by the demographics of the camps and said this was completely different from the case in many other camps she had visited. “In a lot of refugee camps I had been to three-quarters of the inhabitants are women and children. Here it’s a very different

make up of people—a lot of young people, adolescents and without parents, without supervision.”



Ms. Richard (L) greets a child at the Mai-Aini group care centre where the IRC cares for over 1,000 unaccompanied minors. UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

Ms. Richard was also impressed by the good partnership between UNHCR, ARRA, local authorities and international and national NGOs working in the camp. She said: “It’s particularly heartening to see that the Ethiopian government is fully involved in keeping their borders open and in giving space for camps; and is part of the conversation about what the needs are.”

At the end of November 2013, Ethiopia hosted 80,974 Eritrean refugees in six camps in the Tigray and Afar regions. Unlike the pattern in the last several years when the average rate of arrivals stood at between 800 and 1,000 people a month, the past nine months has seen a significant rise in the number of new arrivals, averaging between 1,500 and 2,000 a month. Among them are children as young as six years who come all the way from Eritrea on their own.

France contributes 550,000 Euros for UNHCR’s work in Ethiopia

- **Ambassador Collet inaugurates communal kitchens in Adi-Harush camp**

The Government of France donated 550,000 Euros in support of the UN Refugee Agency’s work in Ethiopia. The money will specifically go to enhancing UNHCR’s delivery of international protection and critical services to some 60,000 Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region.

After signing the agreement with H.E. Mrs. Brigitte Collet, the Ambassador of France to Ethiopia, Mr. J.O. Moses Okello, the UNHCR Representative in Ethiopia, thanked the Government and people of France for the donation, and said that the money will help protect and restore the dignity of the refugees.



Ambassador Collet and Mr. Okello signed the donation agreement at the UNHCR Office in Addis Ababa. UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

Limited opportunities for self-reliance and for post-secondary education continue to frustrate many of them.

Some of the refugees actually venture out of the camps and cross the Ethiopian border in an attempt to reach to either European or Middle-Eastern countries. Many end up meeting the kind of tragedy witnessed last October when a boat carrying over 500 migrants sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa, killing 360 people, including many Eritreans.

The terms of the agreement specify three main areas of intervention, including the improvement of living conditions for Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region; support to the most vulnerable groups, especially young girls and unaccompanied minors (children who arrive on their own) and awareness raising on the dangers of illegal immigration from the camps.

Ambassador Collet explained that “the tragic accident of Lampedusa, last October, during which several hundred Eritrean migrants died, brings to light the precariousness of the situation of these refugees despite the help supplied by Ethiopia and UNHCR”. She added that “with the signature of this agreement, France wishes to bring an urgent response to prevent similar

disasters and confirms its commitment, expressed last October on the occasion of the visit in Paris of the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, Mr Antonio Guterres, to handle the increasing problem of refugees and displaced persons”

Meanwhile, Ambassador Collet visited Adi-Harush camp in Tigray region where she inaugurated four communal kitchen facilities whose construction was funded by her Embassy.

Addressing the refugees together with UNHCR Representative Moses Okello and ARRA Deputy Director Ayalew Aweke, Ms. Collet said she was happy to see the 60,000 Euros project come to completion.



A woman in Adi-harush camp baking ‘injera’, the staple diet of the refugees, using the newly installed electric stoves. UNHCR/Kisut. G.E.

A representative of the refugees said the newly set up environmentally-friendly energy source would enhance peaceful co-existence with the host community. He added this would also lessen the risk of exposure of refugees to gender-based violence as they no longer have to travel long distances to collect firewood.

UNHCR Ethiopia exceeds 2013 resettlement target for refugees

UNHCR Ethiopia marked a milestone by submitting over 3,800 refugees for resettlement, more than any other year, exceeding its target by over 20%.

The year 2013 denotes an important enhancement of the refugee resettlement programme as submissions were made from three refugee camps, Tongo, Barahle and Bokolmany, where resettlement had never been conducted in the past.

“Notable this year was the first emergency resettlement to Sweden of a child-at-risk from Dollo Ado, as well as submissions of several highly vulnerable women and girls out of Barahle and Sherkole camps, including victims of female genital mutilation and other forms of sexual and gender based violence”, said Julia Zajkowski, Resettlement Officer with the UNHCR Office in Ethiopia.

Resettlement, in which refugees are selected and transferred from the country of refuge to a third State which has agreed to admit them as refugees with permanent residence status, is one of three durable solutions UNHCR employs to resolve long-standing refugee situations.

Apart from serving as a durable solution, resettlement provides the most vulnerable refugees a safer place to recover and re-build a normal and dignified life.

UNHCR Ethiopia will continue in the future to prioritize and process greater numbers of the most vulnerable refugees, including single women and mothers, victims of torture, children at risk and others who are disproportionately at risk of being neglected, abused or excluded, concluded Ms. Zajkowski.

(Contributed by Laura De Somer)

UNHCR supports Government's response to Ethiopians deported from Saudi Arabia.

The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, contributed US\$ 100,000 worth of non-food aid items to support the ongoing effort to repatriate from Saudi Arabia and reintegrate thousands of Ethiopians.

The items include 10,000 blankets, 15,000 packs of sanitary pads, 30,000 bars of soap as well as an ambulance for use by IOM in the response effort.



Mitiku Kassa(L) receiving the donation from Moses Okello(R).
UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

UNHCR Representative Moses Okello handed over the items on December 1st to Ato Mitiku

Kassa, State Minister of Agriculture responsible for Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS).

Mr. Josiah Ogina, Chief of Mission of IOM, witnessed the handover at his warehouse in the Gerji area.

Ato Mitiku acknowledged the support and thanked UNHCR for the important humanitarian gesture.

On his part, Mr. Okello said although UNHCR's responsibility mainly focuses on refugees-people who have been forced by circumstances to leave their countries and seek asylum in another country- his office cannot stand by and look on when Ethiopia is experiencing an emergency.

UNHCR is already closely working with the Ethiopian Government and the IOM in educating Ethiopians as well as refugees on the dangers of illegal migration out of the country. As part of this collaboration, UNHCR released to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs some 500,000 birr to help finance an ongoing media campaign against illegal migration.

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