

SOMALIA NEWSLETTER

UNHCR IN SOMALIA

More than 2 million people of concern reached by 155 staff members in 11 offices



In an IDP settlement in Galkacyo, a UNHCR staff member briefing internally displaced persons on how to use solar lanterns in order to reduce their protection risks. © UNHCR/December 2017

In 2017, UNHCR worked in Somalia through 11 offices located throughout the country including a support office in Nairobi. Over 150 staff members deployed for Somalia worked for the overarching goal of protection of persons of concern. This edition of the newsletter presents examples of the work from three of our offices.

1) Protection of refugees and asylum-seekers is presented through examples from the Sub-office in Hargeysa; 2) assistance to Somali returnees is shown by the Field unit in Kismayo; and 3) response to internally displaced persons and persons affected by the drought is introduced through the lens of the Sub-office in Galkacyo.

IN THIS ISSUE

[Page 2](#) Sub-office in Hargeysa

[Page 3](#) Refugees painted a new chapter of their lives

[Page 4](#) Sub-office South Central: Field Unit in Kismayo

[Page 5](#) Return Support Centre

[Page 6](#) Sub-office in Galkacyo

[Page 7](#) From an IDP to an owner of a beauty salon

Sub-office in Hargeysa

The Sub-office in Hargeysa, which is located in the northwest part of Somalia, provides protection to persons of concern including refugees and asylum-seekers, Somali returnees, internally displaced persons and communities affected by the drought across five regions: Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag and Sool. This article introduces the protection activities to refugees and asylum-seekers.

Assistance provided to refugees and asylum-seekers per sector in 2017



The sub-office provided immediate and long-term response for refugees and asylum-seekers. As of 31 December 2017, a total of 17,835 refugees and asylum-seekers were registered in “Somaliland” (1,746 in 2017). In 2017, the Sub-office undertook: registration and documentation; refugee status determination (RSD); child protection; education; health; self-reliance (livelihood support, subsistence allowances and multi-purpose cash-based interventions); legal support and assistance; prevention and response for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); peaceful coexistence and community-based protection including provision of core relief items and comprehensive solutions (reintegration and resettlement).



Sub-office in Hargeysa. © UNHCR/November 2017

Ensuring protection of refugees and asylum-seekers was sometimes limited due to the security situation. In situations where conflicts among clans or non-state actors emerged, assistance was limited to life-saving activities only. In spite of limited access in some case, the sub-office reached refugees and asylum-seekers with various activities. Among them were brothers who fled from Yemen and restarted their lives in Hargeysa. Their story is shared in the next section.

Refugees painted a new chapter of their lives

Teenager Ibrahim (*not his real name*) concentrates, paintbrush in hand, as he works on a pattern on a section of wall during his painting class at the Skills Production Centre (the Centre) in Hargeysa. In a separate side of the room, Mohamed (*not his real name*) chats with his classmates as they prepare to paint a different section of the wall.



Ibrahim (right) getting guidance from the painting course instructor (centre). © UNHCR/ 2017

Ibrahim (17) and Mohamed (18) are brothers from Yemen. They came to Hargeysa in 2015 with their three sisters and parents, fleeing the conflict in Yemen.

“Life before the conflict as we knew it has drastically changed. My brother and I were students (...). Our grandmother was killed in the war and we saw many people die or get injured. We were really scared,” said Ibrahim.

Living as refugees is not how they had imagined their lives would turn out. Ibrahim and Mohamed are two of 25 students aged between 14 and 25 who concluded a six-month course in painting at the Centre in December 2017. The Centre is managed in partnership with Action Africa Help International (AAH-I).

“Refugee committees and local community representatives helped us to mobilize students for this inaugural painting class that kicked off in July 2017. Our curriculum covers topics on types of paints, lighting effects, how to mix colours, cement mixing, how to fix holes on walls using putty and how to use brushes or squeegees,” recalled painting course instructor.

Ibrahim and Mohamed are two out of 2,345 persons who have rebuilt their lives through UNHCR’s livelihood programmes implemented by the Sub-office in Hargeysa. Despite the limited funding in 2017, UNHCR in partnership with AAH-I, assisted 345 refugees and asylum-seekers to form small businesses and provided technical and educational vocational training to over 2,000 persons who also received guidance on how to start a business and attended awareness-raising workshops.

Sub-office South Central: Field Unit in Kismayo

Field Unit in Kismayo is part of the Sub-office in South Central covering the central and southern Somalia. Field Unit in Kismayo is one of five field units in UNHCR Somalia; and is established in the southern part of Somalia in the port city of Kismayo, the capital of the State of Jubaland. The main caseload of UNHCR comprised of Somali refugee returnees from Kenya and elsewhere. Assistance and achievements in relation to returnees is showcased in this article. In addition, UNHCR also assisted internally displaced persons and people who were newly displaced by the drought during 2017.

Assistance provided to returnees in 2017



26,086
 persons benefited from kits
 of core relief items



25,257
 returnees provided with
 reinstatement grant



6,186
 persons enrolled in
 education



707
 shelters constructed



280
 latrines constructed



4,086
 persons provided with
 livelihood opportunities

Since the beginning of the voluntary repatriation programme in 2014, the Field Unit in Kismayo has assisted almost 60 per cent (around 43,000 persons) of the 75,000 Somali refugee returnees who were supported to repatriate from Kenya. The Field Unit received returnees at the Home Way Station (HWS) where UNHCR staff conducted a verification on arrival, provided hot meals and offered lodging for one night. Returnees were briefed about the area of return, access to basic services, such as health care and education, and briefed on employment opportunities and the security situation. Within 24 hours of their arrival, UNHCR staff conducted a post-return assessment. Returnees were surveyed with regard to their journey and the experiences faced in the process of return.



UNHCR and partners briefing returnees at the Home Way Station in Kismayo on return process and assistance. © UNHCR/July 2017

UNHCR seeks to empower returnees to re-establish their lives outside formal return assistance. Throughout the year, UNHCR in partnership with American Refugee Committee (ARC) runs the Return Support Centre (Centre) where returnees, internally displaced persons and host population gain information on employment opportunities and vocational skills, which assist them to become self-reliant. A detailed description of the Centre and its achievements in 2017 are shared in the next article.

Return Support Centre

The rights of young people in relation to education and employment have been limited in Somalia by protracted conflict and lack of state infrastructure. Lack of job opportunities, coupled with few chances to engage young people in creative activities, has been a challenge for Somali youths. The situation for youths among the returnee population is the same - for some it is their first visit to Somalia after more than a decade or their first visit ever. Some of them report feelings of being isolated and put in vulnerable positions. With the goal of ensuring that returnee youths have a positive direction and are not led to join non-state armed groups or undertaking long journeys to cross deserts and seas in peril, UNHCR in partnership with American Refugee Committee (ARC) established a well-resourced Returnee Support Centre (the Centre) in 2016.



Return Support Centre in Kismayo. © ARC/2017

The Centre is a one-stop resource institution that is furnished and equipped with computers, free internet services, a career guidance and counselling unit, job information and placement opportunities, call centre, library, culture room and TVs, which broadcast both local and international news, as well sports news and cultural programs. Access to internet gives returnee youths the opportunity to connect with their families around the world and share their experience with other youths at refugee camps and elsewhere. At the centre, young people can pursue formal education curricula, ranging from early teens with standard eight certificate to high school and college graduates as well as those still pursuing their university degrees.

Assistance provided in 2017 through the Centre



1,317

members of the Centre



1,091

persons visited the Centre



78

persons found employment



37

Persons attended tailoring classes



51

persons attended computer classes



30

persons attended literacy and numeracy classes

The Centre promotes participation of youth in dialogues among themselves, official venues to showcase their talents, and organizes forums that promote values that enable youths to promote social reintegration. All of these activities help them to contribute to their communities, lead non-violent activities and make better decisions through rejecting lifestyles of crime and violence and build good relationships among youths from different communities and groups.

Sub-office in Galkacyo

One of the three Sub-offices is located in the city of Galkacyo. The Sub-office covers an area of four regions, from Bari and Nugaal, to Mudug and Galgaduud. This article highlights the support that was provided in 2017 to some 180,000 internally displaced persons; 97,000 in protracted displacement and 84,000 persons that were displaced by the drought over the last year.

The Sub-office succeeded in the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons with activities focused on livelihood and self-reliance, core relief items, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) interventions (awareness raising, prevention and response). Reduction of SGBV was focused on strengthening of community structures to prevent and respond to SGBV within the targeted areas, enhancing access to quality and comprehensive services for survivors and addressing the causal factors to SGBV.

Assistance provided to internally displaced persons in 2017


65,646

 persons benefited from **kits**
 of **core relief items**

30,989

 persons enrolled in
education

598

 IDPs provided with
livelihood opportunities

In 2017, UNHCR also provided support to 97,000 internally displaced persons in protracted displacement; from these, 66,000 persons benefited from core relief items, 31,000 were reached with SGBV interventions (18,300 persons benefited from solar lamps, 11,500 persons benefited from sanitary kits, 950 from dignity kits, 148 SGBV survivors received material and medical assistance, and legal and psychosocial counselling) and 598 were provided with livelihood opportunities.

Assistance provided to people displaced by the drought in 2017


57,350

 persons benefited from **kits**
 of **core relief items**

15,646

 IDPs benefited from **cash**
assistance

10,852

 IDPs provided with **SGBV**
support

The Sub-office has also prioritized humanitarian response to people affected by the drought and reached 83,848 IDPs in need; 57,350 benefited from core relief items, 15,646 from cash assistance and 10,852 benefited from SGBV interventions (awareness raising, prevention and response).



A group of persons of concern received solar lights to reduce their protection risks at night. © UNHCR/December 2017

From 'internally displaced' to owner of a beauty salon

At 19 years old, Fatima (*not her real name*) is single but also the immediate caregiver for her seven siblings, two nephews and her mother and her grandmother. Previously, she was a housemaid for a family in Mogadishu earning a subsistence wage to pay for meals for herself and a little extra to support her family. She started her job when she was 10 years old and dropped out from school to do so. Because of the increasing insecurity and hostile environment in Mogadishu in 2010, she had to leave the job and fled to Galkacyo. She continued to work as a house help for families of host communities. Later, due to protection risks, she quit the job and stayed at home until she was selected for a three month training on beauty care organized by UNHCR partner Women Initiative for Society Empowerment (WISE).



Fatima's graduation ceremony for beauticians. © UNHCR/December 2017

In her second month of training, she started mobile beauty care services to weddings and earned US\$50 per occasion. Now she has started supporting her family again even before she graduated. In December, after her graduation, she has rented a place in Galkacyo and opened a beauty salon. She equipped the salon with the tools which were part of the start-up kit provided by UNHCR.

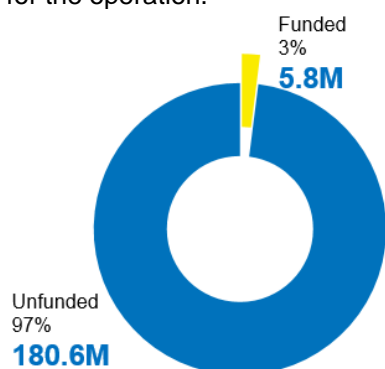
Fatima expressed how she finds such an opportunity in her own statement: *"I thank Allah/Almighty God first and secondly UNHCR who funded the life-skill I was trained by my teachers, I am now standing on my own feet economically and earn minimum US\$ 15 per day of profit (...). With the business I started, in addition to supporting myself and my family, I am able to create a job for two family members. I view salon and beauty care business as sustainable livelihood source for myself and I will be able to spare some money tuition for private English school to extend my learning."*

The Sub-office in Galkacyo strived to empower the people of concern to become self-reliant. In 2017, the Sub-office supported almost 600 internally displaced persons in livelihood projects and will continue to provide livelihood opportunities to displaced persons in 2018.

External / Donor relations

Funding

UNHCR requested US\$ 186.4 million for the operation in 2018 and has received contributions from donors in the amount of US\$ 5.8 million so far, representing only two per cent of the total requested for the operation.



Donors

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have directly contributed to the operation during 2018.



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Contact

Caroline Van Buren, Representative, Somalia

vanburen@unhcr.org, Cell: +252 616 141 315, Cell: +254 731 688 141

Links

[Somalia: Global Focus](#) - [Somalia: Information sharing portal](#) - [UNHCR Somalia](#) - [@UNHCRSom](#) - [Facebook: UNHCR Somalia](#)