

Monthly Refugee Update February 2012

DHC, IKEA CEO visited Kobe & Bur Amino camps

As part of a two-day mission to Ethiopia (9-10 Feb.), UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Alexander T. Aleinikoff and the Chief Executive Officer of IKEA Foundation, Mr. Per Heggenes, visited Kobe and Bur Amino camps on 10 February 2012. The two officials appreciated the progress being made to address Kobe's alarming mortality rate in such a short time.



DHC T. Aleinikoff (L) and CEO Heggenes (R) meeting refugee representative in Kobe camp. UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

Kobe, one of five refugee camps in the Dollo Ado area, experienced its worst mortality rate in July and August of last year due to a number of factors including high levels of malnutrition and a measles outbreak. A series of health and nutritional interventions by UNHCR and its health partners resulted in bringing crude mortality rate in the camp to well below the emergency threshold of 1 death per 10,000 per day.

Bur Amino, the newest refugee camp in Ethiopia, is home to about 13,000 refugees. Some of the facilities are still under development.

Mr. Aleinikoff and Mr. Heggenes were here, among other things, to explore possibilities for IKEA Foundation's partnership in the Ethiopian refugee programme, particularly in Dollo Ado. The Foundation, which was set up by the world's largest furniture retailer-IKEA, has

been looking for "innovative ways of caring for refugees". Mr. Heggenes described the experience as "very interesting and very different from the camps I have seen before" and said that his office will soon despatch a team of experts to the area to closely look into the details of their planned intervention. Last year, IKEA Foundation donated \$62 million to UNHCR to finance its emergency relief programmes in the Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya.

The UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner met and discussed refugee issues with senior government officials, including Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Haile-Mariam Dessalegn. In his discussions with the officials, Mr. Aleinikoff appreciated Ethiopia's open-door policy towards refugees. He said that UNHCR highly regards this long-standing tradition of hospitality.

The delegation was accompanied in the field by UNHCR Representative Moses Okello and ARRA Deputy Director Ayalew Aweke.

As of 31 January 2012, the five refugee camps in Dollo Ado as well as the Transit Centre accommodated a total of 144,104 Somali refugees.

More than 8,000 new refugees registered in January



Refugees arriving from Sudan's Blue Nile State. UNHCR/Bety Zewdu

UNHCR registered 8,050 new arrivals in January, bringing the cumulative total number of refugees in Ethiopia to 298,244. Of the newly registered, 5,194 are Sudanese, 2,151 Somalis and 705 Eritrean refugees. At the end of January 2012, the country hosted 187,344 Somalis, 55,880 Eritreans, 51,298 Sudanese as well as 3,722 refugees from different nationalities, including more than 2,700 Kenyans. They have been sheltered in 14 refugee camps, two transit centers, four community support sites as well as urban centers.

Fifty-seven percent of all refugees in Ethiopia are under 17 years old and 48.9% are females.

In anticipation of possible large scale refugee influxes from Sudan and Somalia, UNHCR, together with ARRA and all other partners in the refugee operation, has been updating its contingency plans for the two refugee groups. The idea is to be better prepared to be able to respond quickly in the unlikely event of receiving a large number of refugees.

Analysis of 2011 indicators to guide UNHCR's 2012 response

UNHCR has analyzed the 2011 operational indicators against the standards, and the findings will guide its operational response for 2012. There have been achievements in many areas, including an effective inter-agency response to the Somali refugee emergency and reducing under 5 mortality rate within two months. On the other hand, improvements are needed in a number of areas including nutrition, immunization, sanitation and water supply in the new and old camps alike. Low level of immunization in Fugnido camp (56%) and serious water shortage in Adi-Harush (3 l/p/d) are among the glaring examples.

Sudanese refugees

Sharp rise in numbers: Following the January harvest in the Blue Nile State, there has been a sharp rise in the number of Sudanese refugees opting to relocate to the refugee camps. A total of 5,194 refugees have been relocated from the border areas to Tongo and Adimazine in January, with thousands more expected to be signing up to the same option in the coming weeks.

Driven out by war, an estimated 10,000-15,000 refugees resisted any relocation effort by UNHCR and ARRA and instead stayed closer

to the border for months in order to attend to their crops and also to closely monitor the situation across the border. Some said they have collected their harvest while others claim to have witnessed theirs being destroyed by animals. Most exhibited a growing frustration by the lack of progress in the security conditions in the Blue Nile State, hence the decision to relocate.

At the end of January 2012, the three sites in the Benishangul-Gumuz State accommodated about 29,000 Sudanese refugees. In addition, Fugnido camp in the Gambella State sheltered 22,700 others that came earlier.



Opened in October 2011, Tongo camp is now full with over 12,300 refugees. UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

Camp development: The Government of Ethiopia has made available another site at a place called Bambasi to be developed into the third camp for Sudanese refugees in the Benishangul-Gumuz state. With Sherkole and Tongo already full and Adimazine being a temporary facility, UNHCR, ARRA and other partners have been working hard to prepare the new camp to start accommodating refugees by mid March. Bambasi has the capacity to accommodate up to 40,000 refugees.

Services: Basic services in Sherkole and Tongo camps range from the distribution of food and relief supplies, water and sanitation facilities, health care, education and protection activities. The start of an emergency primary education in Tongo camp in January has given refugees an indication that life in the camp was somehow returning to normal.

Return to South Sudan and Sudan: Together with ARRA, UNHCR has been facilitating the voluntary return of 686 third country nationals from South Sudan as well as

the voluntary repatriation of 35 Sudanese who arrived in Ethiopia since last September. The South Sudanese were living in Sudan when conflict erupted in the Blue Nile State, forcing them to flee along with the Sudanese refugees. On the other hand, the 35 Sudanese requested UNHCR to assist them to repatriate to parts of Sudan other than Blue Nile which is not considered safe for a return. The Embassies of Sudan and South Sudan in Ethiopia have been important partners in this process.

Somali refugees

Drop in number of new arrivals: Some 2,150 Somali refugees arrived in Dollo Ado in January, representing one of the lowest arrival figures in months. The trend is welcome but there are fears that the numbers may surge again due to the security conditions in Somalia. UNHCR, ARRA and other partners are updating the contingency plan in such a way as to be able to respond quickly should the country experience another major refugee influx in 2012.

At the end of January 2012, Ethiopia hosted 187,344 Somali refugees in eight refugee camps in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country. More than 144,000 have been accommodated in five refugee camps in the Dollo Ado area while the balance has been sheltered in three camps near Jijiga.

Relocation to Bur Amino: The transit centre in Dollo Ado has been successfully cleared with the relocation of some 13,000 refugees to Bur Amino, the newest camp in Dollo Ado and indeed in the country. Opened at the end of

Polio specimen tests negative: To the relief of UNHCR and its health partners, a suspected polio specimen collected from patients in and around Bur Amino camp, tested negative at the central laboratory in Addis Ababa. Earlier on, UNHCR warned of several suspected polio cases in and around the camp.

The Federal Government had scheduled a routine immunization campaign for peripheral areas in the Somali State of Ethiopia and UNHCR, WHO, MSF and local health officials have been liaising with pertinent federal authorities to ensure coverage of both refugee and local communities.

last year, Bur Amino is still a work in progress with a number of facilities still being developed.

Security: There has been no security incident in Dollo Ado following the January 11 mishap when a Save the Children US vehicle carrying four staff members was shot at by armed men on the road to Bur Amino camp. No one was injured, but stronger mitigation measures were put in place.

In spite of this, there have been several high-level donor missions to the area in January. Most notable among those were the observation missions undertaken by a high-level delegation from the British Government (DFID) and a two-person parliamentary delegation from Germany to different camps in Dollo Ado.



UNHCR Representative Moses Okello playing with refugee children at Kobe camp. UNHCR/Kisut G.E.

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