

Ethiopia

May 2020

Ethiopia is one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in Africa, sheltering **763,827** registered refugees and asylum seekers as of 31 May 2020.

UNHCR is scaling up efforts to prevent and limit the potential spread of **COVID-19** among the over **763,000** refugees and the communities hosting them. Prioritized areas of preparedness include enhancing community awareness and provision of soap and adequate water supply, physical distancing, procurement of medical supplies and PPEs, and furnishing isolation and treatment centers.

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:

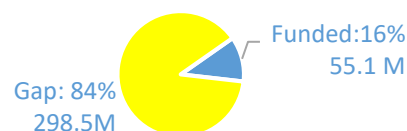
382 national staff, **123** international staff (including JPOs)
143 individual contractors; **33** deployees and IUNVs

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 28 May 2020)

USD 353.6 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 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 continues to provide protection and material support to IDP returnees and other vulnerable conflict-affected communities, inter alia, in the Gedeo Zone of SNNP, West Guji, East and West Wollega Zones of Oromia and the Kamashi Zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz Region. It is enhancing support to the Government-led efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19 in the community, including through the donation of two ambulances, provision of soap, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, blankets, plastic tarpaulin, jerry-cans, mosquito nets and mattresses. In Gedeo, UNHCR handed over to the authorities the Korke Health Center which was constructed to address the health infrastructure gaps in the area.

Education

- Over 200,000 refugee students in Ethiopia remain out of school following the nation-wide school closures. UNHCR and partners are working to ensure that the students remain engaged in some sort of academic exercises by distributing worksheets and helping them sign-in to regional broadcast lessons where feasible. Limited Radio/TV wave penetration in some camps, insufficient number of radio & TV sets and the need to translate the broadcast lessons in multiple mother tongues spoken by refugees are some of the challenges being addressed.

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. The Regional Health Bureaus have included refugees in the active case search and surveillance. 140,000 face masks were distributed to refugee camps targeting frontline responders, patients, and caretakers. Shortage of personal protective equipment for refugees remains a challenge, mainly occasioned by delays in the delivery of international procurement orders.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Refugees in Ethiopia continue to receive only about 84% of the minimum standard 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 currently receiving combined cash and food assistance to reflect commodity price increases in the local markets. Accordingly, the revised cash transfer rate for cereals in camps in the Somali (Jijiga), Benishangul-Gumuz, Tigray and Afar Regions will take effect in July 2020.

Water and Sanitation

- 23 of the 26 refugee camps in Ethiopia receive the acceptable standard of 15 litres and above of water per person per day. Efforts are being made to address the gap in the three camps through water trucking to enhance proper handwashing

practices. The supply of soap has been doubled and distributed in all camps to promote personal hygiene, which is backed by dissemination of regular hygiene promotion messages. 23% of all refugee households have installed handwashing facilities while 991 such facilities are installed in communal facilities within the refugee camps.

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% of the refugees in Ethiopia need transitional shelter solutions, and UNHCR and partners are working to narrow down the gap. UNHCR has completed 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. UNHCR is exploring ways to provide support to additional out of camp refugees in Addis Ababa due to the economic impact of COVID-19. 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 May, 34,465 pieces of briquettes and 91m³ of firewood were distributed among 3,900 refugee households in the Afar and Benishangul-Gumuz regions. 17 grid-connected communal kitchens remain functional in camps in the Tigray and Benishangul-Gumuz Regions. As part of the response to the disaster risk reduction and environmental rehabilitation programmes, seedling raising and planting site preparation is almost completed in all refugee camps in preparation for a massive tree planting in to start in June.

Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR continues 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 will also support 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 coordinates with 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

- 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 804 individuals have already been submitted. 254 individuals have departed for different resettlement countries so far this year, in addition to 45 others who were reunified with their families abroad. UNHCR also facilitated the transfer of 77 refugees to Italy as part of the Second Protocol of the Italian Humanitarian Corridor. Departures are currently on hold owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 | Luxembourg| Country-Based Pooled Fund| Spain| UN Programme on HIV/AIDS| Miscellaneous private donors.

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Sweden 76.4 million | Norway 41.4 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million
| Private donors Spain 26.6 million | Germany 25.9 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Republic of Korea
13.9 million

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