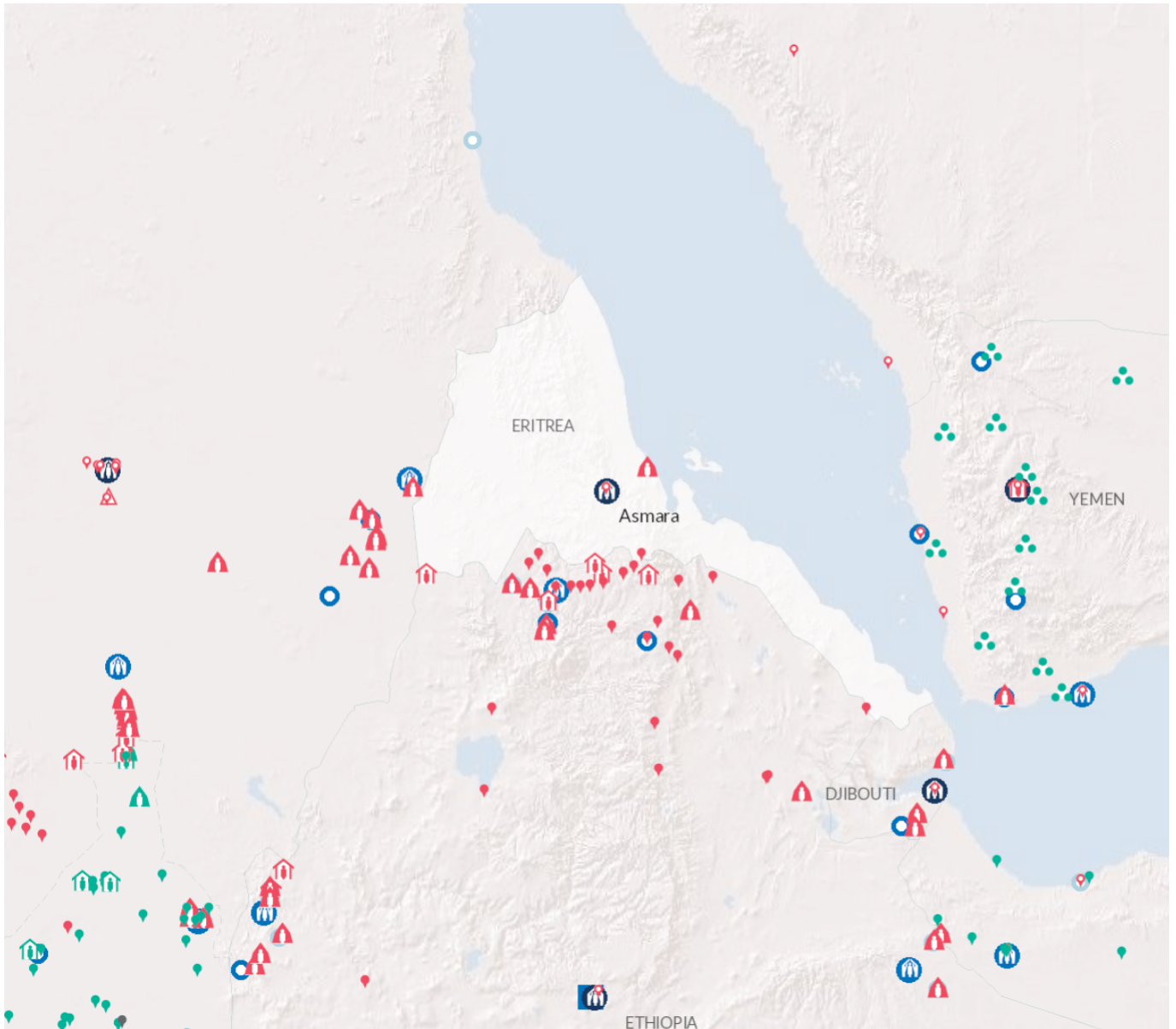


Operation: Eritrea

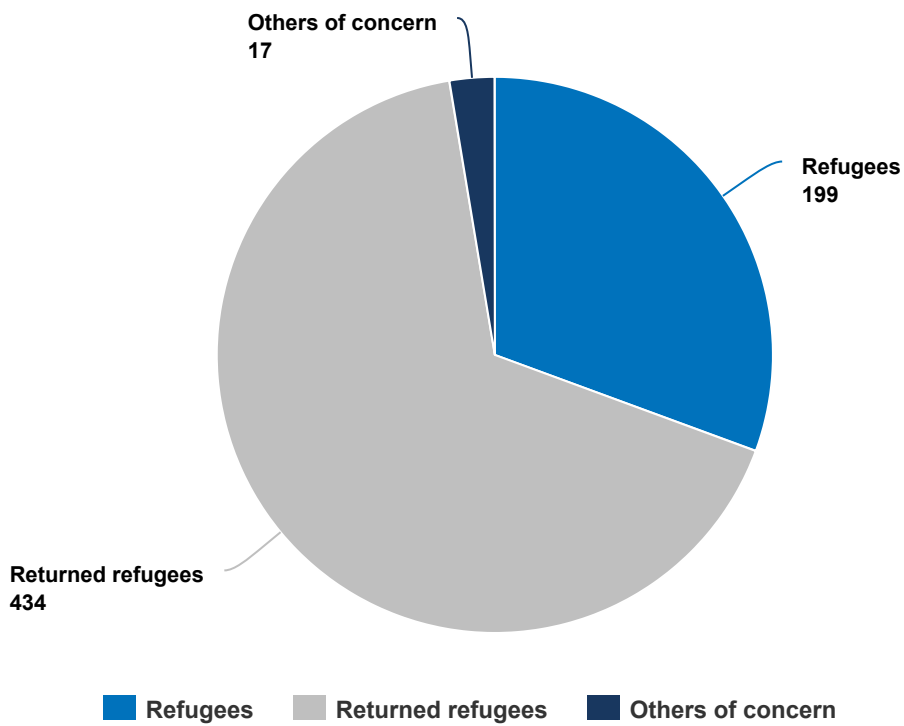


The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

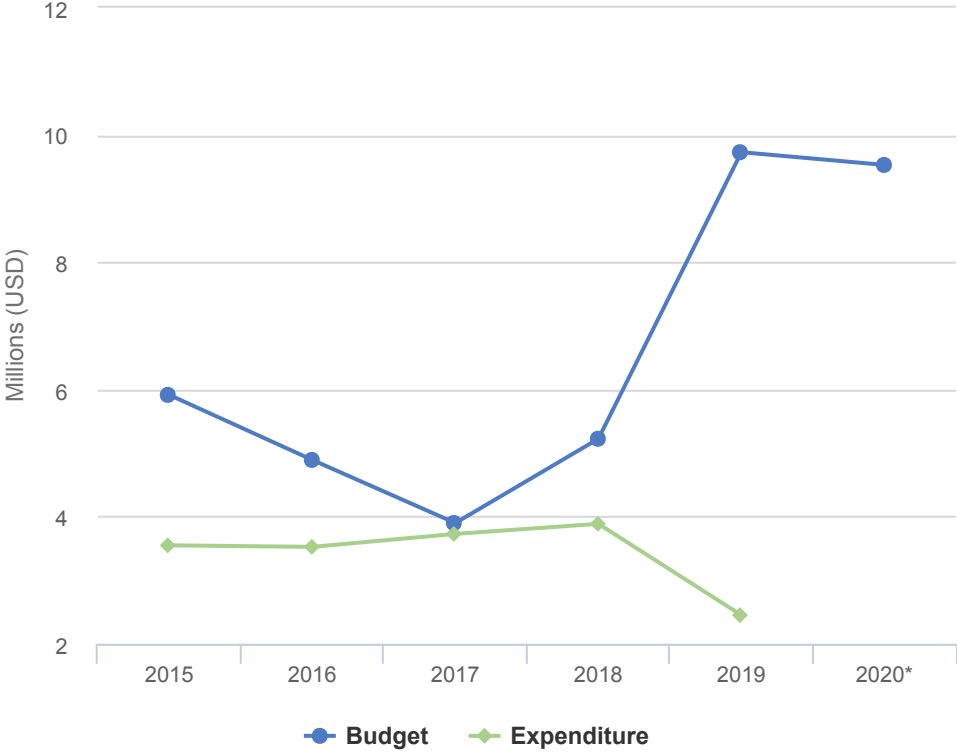
People of Concern

75% DECREASE IN
2019

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| 2019 | 650 |
| 2018 | 2,570 |
| 2017 | 2,879 |



Budgets and Expenditure for Eritrea



Operational context

In 2019, the protection and working environment in Eritrea remained extremely challenging. Relations with the Government of Eritrea remained strained, with cooperation increasingly conditional on UNHCR repealing its eligibility guidelines for assessing the international protection needs of asylum-seekers from Eritrea. UNHCR's access to refugees and operational activities in Eritrea were tightly constrained as a result.

In March 2019, the project partnership agreement (PPA) between UNHCR, the Office of Refugee Affairs and the Ministry of National Development was suspended. From mid-December UNHCR was no longer authorized to register new asylum-seekers, nor allowed access to the Umkulu refugee camp or to interact with refugees in urban areas. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs was designated as UNHCR's focal point for all operational issues and could only be accessed through an appointment granted by the Protocol Department. UNHCR national staff were authorized to deliver corn soya blend to refugees in the camp on a monthly basis, but no communication with the refugees was permitted.

From mid-December 2019, UNHCR was also no longer authorized to support the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees.

UNHCR continued to advocate for the development of a national legal framework for asylum-seekers and refugees, as well as accession to the relevant international instruments relating to refugees and statelessness.

Population trends

At the end of 2019, Eritrea hosted over 200 refugees – mostly originating from Ethiopia and Somalia. Some 140 refugees were residing in urban settings (and considered by the Government as immigrants), and almost 80 were camp-based refugees.

Following the suspension of the PPA in March 2019 and the rumors of the closure of the camp, over 2,000 Somali refugees left Eritrea spontaneously for Ethiopia in 2019, reducing the camp population to some 80 people. UNHCR did not have further information on refugees remaining in the camp, nor on more than 300 individuals that remained unaccounted for.

In 2019, almost 60 Eritrean refugees returned from Libya. However, due to the operational restrictions described above, monitoring was not possible.

Key achievements

- UNHCR supported school enrollments through the payment of school fees, materials, and salaries for teachers.
- 70% of urban refugees' resident permits were renewed.
- One urban refugee departed on resettlement and one returned voluntarily to their country of origin.

Unmet needs

Although the operation was only funded at 32%, unmet needs were related more to government restrictions than underfunding.

- UNHCR was prevented from implementing certain planned activities including cash assistance for camp-based refugees beyond March 2019.
 - The suspension of the partnership agreement with the Government in March 2019 resulted in large-scale spontaneous departures from the camp, due to the lack of protection services and fears the camp would close.
 - While the water supply network to the camp was well established, UNHCR was not permitted to provide regular maintenance to ensure continuity of water supply to the camp.
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