

Ethiopia- Refugee Emergency Update 14 October 2011



Just arrived in Tongo, a woman carrying a bed frame on her head from the truck that transported their goods.
UNHCR/P.Rulashe

Highlights

- Relocation to Tongo camp continues
- Adimazine transit centre to receive new arrivals from 15 October
- Significant increase in arrival trend in Dollo Ado
- Crude Mortality Rate in all Dollo Ado camps below emergency threshold

Update on Sudanese refugees

Background

Since 1969, Sudanese refugees fleeing civil war settled in Ethiopia's western region of Gambella. Successive refugee influxes followed in 1983, 1987 and the early 1990s necessitating the opening of five refugee camps in western Ethiopia-three in the Gambella Regional State and two in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State. The signing of the CPA in January 2005 between the Sudanese Government and the SPLM/A ended more than two decades of conflict in Sudan and paved the way for Sudanese refugees to return home. Since March 2006 UNHCR and ARRA have assisted the voluntary repatriation of over 36,000 refugees. Three camps were closed as a result and, by 31 August 2011, the remaining two camps-Fugnido in Gambella and Sherkole in Benishangul-Gumuz-hosted nearly 27,000 refugees, hoping to return home after the independence of South Sudan. However, the break out of fresh hostilities at the beginning of September 2011 between the Sudanese army and the SPLM-N has displaced over 27,500 more refugees into Ethiopia.

Current situation

Currently, there are an estimated 54,000 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia, about 34,000 of them registered and accommodated in three refugee camps-Sherkole, Tongo and Fugnido. Most of the new arrivals from Blue Nile State are staying with the host communities along the border areas. UNHCR and ARRA continue encouraging them to relocate to safer locations further inland.

- As at 12 October, a total of 1,425 refugees have been transferred from Kurmuk, Bamza and Almahal to the new camp at Tongo. This brings the total number of refugees relocated to the camps so far to about 7,000. More are expected to be moved in the coming days. Basic necessities including food, core relief items, water, shelter and sanitation facilities are in place. Over 200 family tents were pitched and 14 communal latrines readied to serve the new arrivals. Tongo is still a work in progress with more facilities and services under development.
- Together with partners, UNHCR and ARRA are putting up basic infrastructure at a transit centre in Adimazin which is expected to start receiving new arrivals on 15 October. The 2,000-capacity transit centre near Sherkole will temporarily shelter refugees who are now spread in Geissan and Teiba border entry points. This arrangement will help move refugees away from the border while at the same time giving time for UNHCR to develop additional camps. Already 200 tents have been pitched; four communal toilet blocks completed and two 10,000 liters-capacity water bladders installed. A hangar for preparing hot meal was being put up and work on the health and registration centers is expected to be completed today (14 Oct.) ARRA registers refugees who are ready to go to the camp and shares the list with IOM which organizes the transportation of refugees and their belongings.
- There has been a lull in bombings in Kurmuk in the last couple of days and refugees were reported to be traveling to and from the border entry point into Sudan to collect domestic items they had left behind.

Update on Dollo Ado refugee emergency

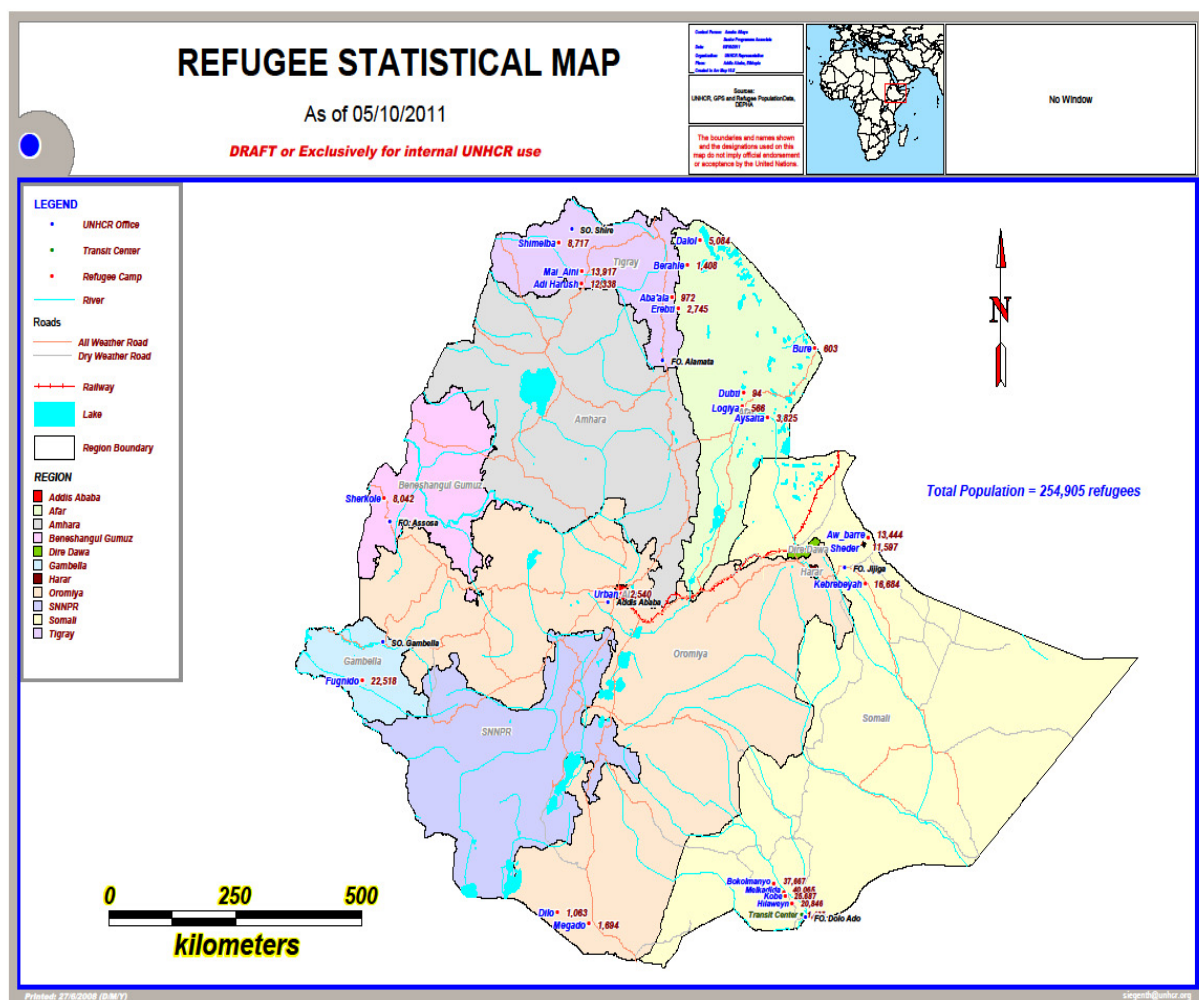
Background

More than 173, 800 or 66 % of the registered 256,000 refugees in Ethiopia today are Somalis. Over 90,850 came in the last nine months fleeing conflict and drought in Somalia which drove hundreds of thousands to neighboring countries as refugees and displaced some 1.5 million within Somalia itself. Those in Ethiopia are accommodated in seven refugee camps, three in the Jijiga area and four in the Dollo Ado area where a fifth camp is being developed.

UNHCR and its government counterpart ARRA, together with a number of NGO partners and several UN agencies are involved in extending international protection and emergency assistance to the refugees in sectors including shelter, food, non-food relief items, water, health and education.

- The arrival trend in October continues to show a significant increase, with a total of 4,968 Somali refugees crossing into Ethiopia over the last 12 days. This brings the average daily arrival rate to 414, which is more than twice the trend back in September. Hilaweyn has almost reached its full capacity of 25,000, leaving UNHCR and ARRA with no option other than hastening the opening of a fifth camp at Buramino.
- Crude Mortality Rate (CRM) in all Dollo Ado camps is below the emergency threshold of 1/10,000/day. This week the CRM calculated from grave counting was 0.3/10,000/day in Kobe and 0.4/10,000/day in Hilaweyn. This is thanks to the excellent team work between UNHCR, ARRA and health partners, and calls for continued monitoring and control measures to ensure the levels remain within the acceptable level.

Location map of refugee camps in Ethiopia



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