

# Ethiopia- Refugee Emergency Update 18 November 2011



R-L-, Ambassador of Brazil, Head of Goal, UNHCR Representative, Deputy Director of ARRA, Ambassador of Germany and Ambassador of Denmark, standing at Tongo refugee camp, preparing to meet refugees. UNHCR/K.G.Egziabher

## Highlights

- Donor country Ambassadors, MPs visit Tongo refugee camp
- More refugees coming as Kurmuk (S) and Geissan(S) fell to SAF; accelerated site development underway
- High malnutrition rates in Kobe and Hilaweyn but dramatic decrease in child mortalityrate
- Fifth camp in Dollo Ado under development
- Heavy downpour has flooded Dollo Ado airstrip
- New webportal providws key information on Sudanese emergency:  
[http://data.unhcr.org/Sudanese\\_Refugees\\_in\\_Ethiopia/country.php?id=65](http://data.unhcr.org/Sudanese_Refugees_in_Ethiopia/country.php?id=65)

## **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 over 36,000 refugees to repatriate voluntarily. 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 to the world's newest nation. However, the break out of hostilities at the beginning of September 2011 between the Sudanese army and the SPLM-N has displaced an estimated 35,000 more refugees into Ethiopia's Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State.

### **Current situation**

Currently, there are an estimated 61,000 Sudanese refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia, a little over 42,000 of them registered and accommodated in three refugee camps-Sherkole, Tongo and Fugnido, as well as at Adimazin Transit Centre. Some 15,000 of those already in camps are part of the stream of new arrivals that were displaced following the break out of hostilities in Sudan's Blue Nile State in early September. The remaining 19,500 asylum seekers are believed to be staying with the host communities along the border areas, but the Government refugee agency (ARRA) is in consultations with local authorities to precisely establish their exact number.

- Donor country ambassadors and other diplomats as well as an Irish parliamentary delegation from the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs, visited over 7,000 Sudanese refugees in Tongo Refugee Camp on Tuesday 15 November. Ethiopia's newest refugee camp, Tongo was opened on 05 October and has now grown into a camp of 7,500 refugees. Jointly led by UNHCR Representative Moses Okello and Ayalew Aweke, Deputy Director of ARRA, the team included the Ambassadors of the USA, Serbia, Germany, France, Ireland, Denmark, and Brazil; senior diplomats from Japan and Italy; the UN Resident Coordinator in Ethiopia as well as heads/representatives of several UN agencies. The visitors took time to talk to a cross-section of the refugees to more deeply understand their situations. At the end of the visit the guests appreciated the work of UNHCR, ARRA and other humanitarian partners and reaffirmed their commitment to continue supporting the ongoing humanitarian response effort.
- As at 16 November, 19,800 Sudanese refugees have been hosted in three sites in the Benishangul Gumuz Region: Sherkole camp (8,891), Tongo camp (7,484) as well as at Adimazin Transit Centre (3,425). Of these, 15,984 arrived since last June. Those in camps are receiving basic services including food, core relief items, water, shelter, health and sanitation facilities.
- The recent take over of the Sudanese border towns of Kurmuk and Geissan by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) apparently forced an increase in the number of refugees into Ethiopia at the beginning of November. However, while the number of people crossing through Kurmuk and Geissan border crossings has dropped, there has been an increase in people entering through unofficial border crossings. Refugees were arriving at the rate of 500 per day for several days. Border monitors have described the new arrivals as exhausted and traumatized, many having spent several days in hiding before crossing into Ethiopia through unofficial crossing at Kutaworke. A few children were diagnosed with fever and diarrhea on arrival and

they were given medical treatment by IOM. Refugees are currently being relocated to Tongo the day after arrival. Hot meals are being provided.

- The growing influx has led to accelerated site development on Tongo Refugee Camp, which will now have the capacity to accommodate 15,000 refugees. Together with the regional authorities, UNHCR and ARRA are also in the process of identifying an additional site for the development of a new refugee camp to accommodate new arrivals; those already in the host community and willing to move as well as those that are housed in a temporary site at Adimazin.

## **Update on Somali refugees**

### **Background**

More than 180, 000 or 65.5 % of the registered 276,000 refugees in Ethiopia today are Somalis. Over 98,000 of them came in since the beginning of 2011 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 at Bur Amino, near Dollo Ado.

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.

### **Current Situation**

- With the arrival of well over 8,000 refugees, October was the 4<sup>th</sup> highest month in 2011 in terms of Somali new arrivals into the country. The majority came during the first half of the month. The second half of the month witnessed a sudden drop in the number of new arrivals, and this could be explained by the extremely heavy rains the region experienced at the time. In November, the influx continues at the rate of between 170 and 200 people a day.
- A nutrition survey in the two camps opened already in 2011, Kobe and Hilaweyn, has found high levels of malnutrition among children under five. The population of both camps arrived from Somalia in extremely poor health condition, with many families losing children to malnutrition en route or after arrival in Ethiopia. Health and nutrition programmes have been set up by a range of experienced partners to address malnutrition, especially among the youngest children, but progress is slow, as confirmed by this survey. However, the number of deaths among children under five has decreased dramatically compared to the very high level seen at the height of the refugee influx this summer, reflecting improved access to quality health care and nutrition services, as well as improved water and sanitation facilities. UNHCR is leading the coordination of a nutrition response to the survey's findings.
- Work continues on development of the fifth refugee camp at Bur Amino. The rocky ground is slowing down the digging of latrines, a minimum number of which must be in place before refugees can be relocated from the transit centre. UNHCR will transfer its excavator from Hilaweyn to Bur Amino to accelerate the construction of latrines. About 7,800 recent arrivals are now sheltered at the transit centre, where they receive basic shelter, relief items and hot meals.



**A young Somali girl sitting at the Transit Centre in Dollo Ado. UNHCR/K.G.Egziabher**

- Heavy rains in Dollo Ado continue to cause flash floods in the area. The airstrip was hit by floods in the past two weeks and has subsequently remained out of service. The airstrip has been completely flooded by a particularly heavy downpour on Thursday, 17 November. A WFP road convoy had to turn back due to flooded roads and slow progress. Air transport has been replaced by a road convoy, putting a lot of pressure on the limited fleet of vehicles.

## Who Does What Where in Assosa

<b>"WHO DOES WHAT WHERE" IN ASSOSA REFUGEE CAMPS</b>				
Sector	Sub-Sector	Adamazin	Sherkole	Tongo
Camp Management		ARRA	ARRA	ARRA
Core Relief Items		ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR
Education	Primary School		ARRA	
Environment	Environment Preservation		NRDEP	
Food	Food Provision	WFP	WFP	WFP
	Food Distribution	ARRA	ARRA	ARRA
	Hot Meals	ARRA		ARRA
Health	Primary Health Care & Health Promotion	ERCS, ARRA	ARRA	ERCS,ARRA
	Vaccination	ARRA	ARRA	ARRA
	Reproductive Health	ERCS, ARRA	ARRA	
	Referral System	ERCS		ERCS
	Malaria Prevention	ARRA, UNHCR		ARRA, UNHCR
	Community-Based Mental Health		ARRA	
Livelihoods				
Logistics	General Logistics	UNHCR	UNHCR	UNHCR
	Transportation of Refugees	IOM	IOM	IOM
Nutrition	SAM & TFP	ERCS, ARRA	ARRA	ERCS,ARRA
	MAM & SFP		ARRA	
	Blanket Feeding		ARRA	
Protection	General Protection	ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR
	SGBV		UNHCR, ARRA	
	Return	UNHCR, ARRA, IOM	UNHCR, ARRA, IOM	UNHCR, IOM, ARRA
	Camp Security	ARRA	ARRA	ARRA
Registration		ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR
Shelter	Emergency Shelter	ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR	ARRA, UNHCR
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	Water	IRC	IRC	WVI
	Hygiene Promotion & Sanitation	IRC	ARRA	

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