

# ETHIOPIA

December 2020

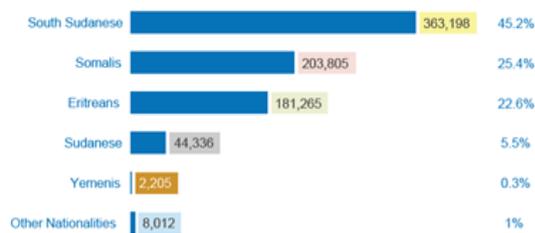
Ethiopia is the **third largest refugee-hosting country** in Africa, sheltering **802,821** registered refugees and asylum-seekers as of 31 December 2020. The overwhelming majority originate from **South Sudan**, **Somalia**, **Eritrea** and **Sudan**.

In coordination with WFP and ARRA, UNHCR distributed a one-month food ration to **25,000 Eritrean refugees** in Adi-Harush and Maiaini camps. It is still unable to access Hitsats and Shiemelba camps following the eruption of an **armed conflict in the Tigray Region** on 4 November 2020.

UNHCR continues to respond to the **situation** of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia, leading the **Protection Cluster** and providing protection, emergency aid and other support to IDPs and **IDP returnees**, including those displaced by recent flooding and conflict.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN

### Countries of Origin

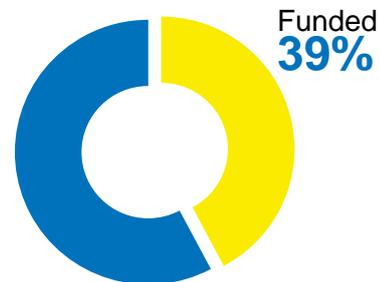


*At the end of December 2020, Ethiopia hosted over 802,800 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly sheltered in 26 refugee camps established in five Regional States. There is a sizeable group of refugees and asylum seekers living out of camp, including over 35,000 who are registered as urban refugees in the capital Addis Ababa.*

## FUNDING (AS OF 30 DECEMBER 2020)

requested for the Ethiopia Operation

USD 385.1 M



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

386 National staff

117 International staff

170 Affiliated work force

### Offices:

1 Representation in Addis Ababa

5 Sub-Offices in Assosa, Gambella, Jijiga, Melkadida and Shire

5 Field Offices in Embamadre, Mekelle, Pugnido, Sherkole and Tongo



*For the first time after the conflict in Tigray, UNHCR, WFP and ARRA distributed food ration to 25,000 Eritrean refugees in Adi-Harush and Maiaini camps. ©UNHCR*

## Working with Partners

UNHCR's main government counterpart in the refugee response in Ethiopia is the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). UNHCR also works closely with 57 humanitarian and development partners and is part of the Humanitarian Country Team, where refugee programmes are discussed strategically to ensure the needs of refugees are adequately presented and addressed across the UN System. UNHCR builds on well-established coordination fora, including the inter-sector Refugee Coordination Group together with national and regional sectorial working groups. Committed to pursuing refugee inclusion in national services and economies, as per the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR is furthering partnerships with Ethiopian line Ministries, regional and local authorities, development partners and the private sector.

## Main Activities

### Protection

- Together with ARRA, UNHCR coordinates the delivery of protection and assistance for refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, as well as the promotion of solutions. It works to strengthen refugee protection through the expansion of improved community-based and multi-sectorial child protection and GBV programmes. Moreover, UNHCR works with government, national and international partners, including NGOs and UN agencies, to provide protection and assistance to IDPs and IDP returnees in different parts of the country.
- UNHCR also provides technical support to ARRA in the registration and status determination of new arrivals using an advanced biometric registration system (BIMS), which provide a more reliable means for the identification of refugees and asylum-seekers in Ethiopia, thereby enhancing their protection.
- UNHCR is working with UNICEF on a model and transformative Blueprint partnership to secure refugee children a fair deal in line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and as reflected in the commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The main objectives of the Blueprint encompass strengthening existing national child protection systems, including birth registration systems; developing the capacity of national partners on refugee protection; and integrating refugee children into the national child protection systems.
- As a COVID-19 prevention measure, vital events registration including birth registration, was suspended in all refugee camps. Following continued advocacy, ARRA resumed birth registration in all refugee camps as of November.
- UNHCR is strongly committed to ensure consistent and effective communication with refugee communities. Therefore, social media groups throughout the operation were mapped and analysed. Key findings show that (i) 22% of refugee households in Ethiopia own one telephone, (ii) 90% of refugees in Addis Abba have connectivity compared to only 16% in refugee camps throughout Ethiopia and (iii) 3 out of 6 refugee locations in Ethiopia have WhatsApp groups in place. UNHCR actively makes use of these results for communication with refugee communities. Internal consultations with the objective to share good practices and to discuss UNHCR's strategic, consistent and continuous engagement with such groups were also organized,

### Durable Solutions

- Providing resettlement opportunities remains a top priority, as conditions for voluntary repatriation are unfavourable for most refugee nationalities in Ethiopia, and local integration programmes are yet to be put in place. In 2020, UNHCR resettlement submission target was 1,800 individuals. As of December, 1,625 individuals have already been processed for resettlement. 339 individuals have departed to different resettlement countries so far. UNHCR also facilitated the transfer of 89 persons to Italy as part of the Second Protocol of the Italian Humanitarian Corridor and assisted 108 cases through the Family Reunification Project.

### Shelter

- Access to adequate shelter remains below the standard in all the refugee camps in Ethiopia with only about half of the refugee population living in adequate shelter.
- Working with various shelter partners across the operation, UNHCR continues to improve the shelter gaps in all the refugee camps. In 2020, the completion rate for the planned construction of new shelters and maintenance of existing transitional shelters stood at 68% with delays attributed to scarcity of construction materials and limited availability of labour due to COVID-19-related movement restrictions.
- In the Tigray region, shelter activities were halted due to the Tigray situation.
- UNHCR continues to provide shelter assistance to IDP returnees. In the West Guji and Gedeo region, all the planned 150 shelters were completed and occupied by the beneficiaries.

### Education

- Thousands of refugee students sat for the grade 8 regional examination except those in camps in the Tigray Region where over 15,000 students remain out of school due to the conflict. UNHCR is working with ARRA and other pertinent partners to prepare grade 12 students for the national examination which is expected to be administered early this year.
- In the Tigray Region, the conflict is expected to aggravate the dire situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees' access to education by creating further displacement and raising psychosocial and protection concerns, limiting access to learning.
- Following the extended closures due to COVID-19, all the schools in the refugee camps, except those in Tigray, have reopened with an attempt to put in place COVID-19 precautionary measures. However, meeting the minimum guidelines set by the Ministry of Education to curb the spread of coronavirus in the schools remains a challenge for most schools. Shift systems and alternate learning are being used as a temporary measure to maximize the use of available resources. Despite the good efforts, over 60% of all refugee schools in Ethiopia do not meet the standards of safe learning environments. Schools lack minimum basic facilities, including furniture, water, appropriate sanitation facilities, ventilation, separate latrines for girls and boys and have inadequate functional handwashing facilities. Some classrooms are dilapidated while some temporary facilities are not conducive for learning.

### Health

- UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and its partners, facilitates access to primary and emergency secondary and tertiary healthcare services for refugees and asylum-seekers. It supports the operational costs of primary healthcare services in the different refugee camps, as well as the referral care costs for secondary and tertiary health services in regional and central referral facilities. In urban settings such as Addis Ababa, UNHCR covers the cost of medicines and investigations. Due to the prevailing situation in the Tigray region, health service delivery in the four camps has been seriously disrupted.
- UNHCR, together with ARRA, Regional Health Bureaus and other health partners continued to carry out preparedness and response to COVID-19 in refugee camps and other locations sheltering refugees in the form of risk communication and community engagement, service reorientation, training of health personnel, case identification, contact tracing and referrals, distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) and essential medicines and materials to strengthen health services. UNHCR is also supporting the Inter-agency COVID-19 response to the IDP situation by providing PPE and sanitation materials, equipping isolation and quarantine centres and providing community sensitization.

### Food Security and Nutrition

- UNHCR contributes to the preventive and curative aspects of nutrition programmes through the Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) model. It monitors the nutrition status of refugees through Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) assessments and coordinates with partners in nutrition response programming. While UNHCR works with the World

Food Programme (WFP) on food distribution to ensure refugees have sufficient access to basic food, they continue to receive only about 84% of the minimum standard food ration of 2,100 kcal per person per day. This has kept the Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate in most camps higher than the acceptable standards. UNHCR is advocating for additional resources, so that refugees can receive the minimum standard of food in-take per day.

- After complete disruption of food distribution in the refugee camps located in the Tigray Region, UNHCR was able to distribute a one-month food ration to 25,000 Eritrean refugees in two camps out of four.

#### **Water and Sanitation (WASH)**

- UNHCR works with its partners to provide access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services to refugees and asylum-seekers. An average of 18.6 litres of water was provided per person per day in the 20 camps from where data were available. Water supply has been re-established in two of the four refugee camps in the Tigray Region where WASH services have been disrupted following the eruption of conflict in the region.
- COVID-19 prevention activities such as the provision of adequate water and soap and hygiene promotion activities continued in all other camps except in the Tigray region. Almost the entire population in the other camps have been reached by COVID-19 related hygiene promotion messages. 42,695 handwashing stations were functional in the camps at the end of December.

#### **Cash-Based Interventions (CBI)**

- A small number of urban-based refugees in Addis Ababa (some 4,300) received cash assistance from UNHCR to cover their basic needs. There are ongoing efforts to expand this assistance modality in the different refugee camps in Ethiopia. There are a significant number of urban-based refugees mainly in Addis Ababa, who previously sustained themselves by working in the informal sector and received remittances, whose income has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNHCR is advocating for these groups of refugees and those living out of the camps to be supported in order to cope with the current situation.
- Following the piloting of cash assistance for shelter construction in two refugee camps -Awbare and Shedder- in Jijiga in 2019, UNHCR is working to expand CBI to other refugee hosting locations while increasing the number of target populations in the two camps. UNHCR and ARRA have conducted a cash feasibility assessment and are currently finalizing the implementation plan in discussions with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) to provide cash to older refugees and those with underlying health conditions, who are particularly affected by the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. CBI is also used to provide reintegration support to Ethiopian refugees, who voluntarily return to their country of origin. It will also be used to a limited extent to respond to the basic needs of IDPs in various locations.

#### **Access to Energy**

- UNHCR Ethiopia is part of a strong multi-actor partnership working to improve refugees' access to energy for cooking, lighting and other uses. However, needs, particularly for alternative cooking energy, remain largely unmet with less than 11% of all refugee households in the different refugee camps having access to alternative cooking energy sources. To improve the situation, UNHCR distributed approximately 288,000 pieces of charcoal briquettes and 868m<sup>3</sup> of firewood to targeted refugee households in camps in the Afar and Benishangul-Gumuz regions in the course of 2020. Over 2,289 Fuel Efficient Stoves were also distributed. Before conflict erupted in the Tigray Region in early November, 16 communal kitchens that are connected to the national power grid, were functioning well in camps in the Tigray Region. Similarly, one grid-connected communal kitchen in the Benishangul-Gumuz regions is operational while three others in Aysaita and Barahle camps in the Afar Region will soon be electrified as the two camps were already connected to the national grid. This will also light up 66 streetlights and provide basic lighting to 805 households in the two camps. 112 malfunctioning solar streetlights were maintained and 26 new ones installed in COVID-19 isolation and quarantine centres in the Melkadida refugee camps, Somali Region. UNHCR and

partners planted more than 900,000 multipurpose trees in and around the different refugee camps as part of the agency's environmental rehabilitation and re-afforestation programme.

#### **Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance**

- To support the Government of Ethiopia's commitments to foster refugee economic inclusion, UNHCR continues technical support to ARRA, bolstering their lead role in bridging the humanitarian and development nexus. ARRA continues to issue resident permits to qualified refugees and UNHCR is supporting to ensure the process addresses protection related concerns.
- UNHCR continues to engage closely with strategic development partners to include refugees in upcoming development projects in Ethiopia. Such initiatives include the World Bank-funded Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), where design of a second phase is ongoing to include refugees as primary beneficiaries. The Bank's pilot Urban Productive Safety Net and Jobs Project (UPSNJP) is also being designed with UNHCR's input and will also target refugees in urban areas. Other initiatives include the implementation of IKEA Foundation-funded projects in the Somali region, where sustainability is a priority, as well as the support for expanded advocacy for additional partnerships to create an enabling environment for refugee inclusion.

## External / Donors Relations

#### **UNHCR is grateful for the direct contribution to the UNHCR Ethiopia Operation in 2020**

USA | Denmark | UK (FCDO) | Netherlands | Sweden | IKEA Foundation | European Union (ECHO) | Industria de Diseño Texti S.A | Unilever (UK) | Ireland | "la Caixa" Banking Foundation | Canada | Education Cannot Wait | Japan | Finland | Latter-day Saints Charities | Spain | Muslim World League Luxembourg | Country-Based Pooled Fund | UPS Corporate | France | UN Programme on HIV/AIDS | Other private donors

#### **Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2020**

Sweden 88.2 million | Private donors Spain 73.5 million | United Kingdom 45.7 million | Norway 41.4 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 37.5 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Japan 27.8 million | Germany 25.9 million | Japan 23.8 million | Private donors Italy 17.6 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Sweden 14.2 million | France 14 million | Private donors USA 10.8 million | Italy 10.6 million

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#### **LINKS**

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