

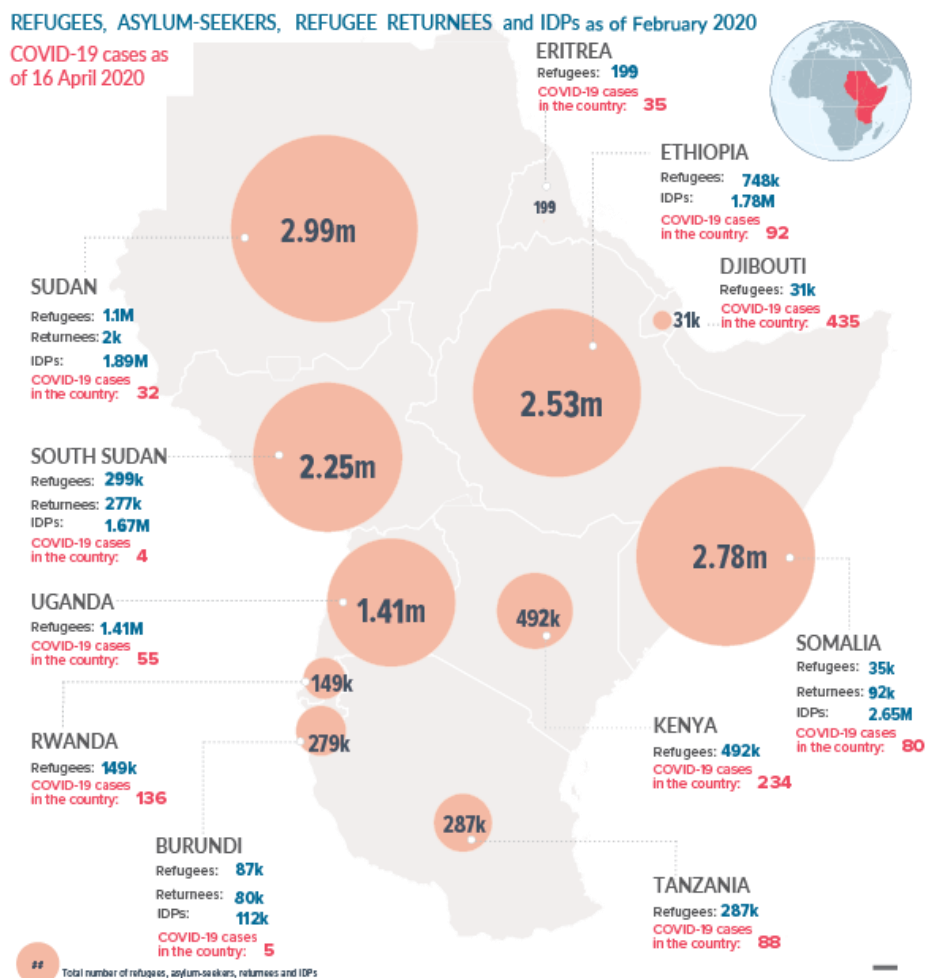
East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

9-16 April 2020



Operational Context

The COVID-19 situation in the East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region continues to evolve rapidly. As of 16 April, there were 1,196 confirmed COVID-19 cases in all countries covered by UNHCR's EHAGL Regional Bureau. While there has been no large-scale outbreak amongst UNHCR's populations of concern so far, 4.6 million refugees and 8.1 million IDPs and their host communities are at risk. The need for preparedness is urgent. Cases of local transmission have now been reported in all countries of the region. Measures by governments in the region to contain the spread of COVID-19 are evolving rapidly, with frequent changes to border/entry restrictions or limitations on internal movement. On 10 April, the **Ethiopian** Parliament approved a five-month state of emergency declared to avert the spread of the COVID-19 virus and reduce its impact on the country. Following a rise in the number of cases, **Sudan** is the latest country to impose a lockdown, which will go into effect in the capital Khartoum on 18 April for three weeks. On 12 April, the government of **Tanzania** suspended all international passenger flights and **Uganda** extended its lockdown for another 21 days to 5 May.



Key Measures Taken

- **Assessment of protection risks – including access to asylum, potential for increased sexual and gender-based violence, and loss of livelihoods – to inform adapted responses.**
- **Emphasis on access to water and soap for handwashing.**
- **Efforts to reinforce health care facilities and the screening, isolation and treatment infrastructure in and around refugee camps and settlements.**

*COVID-19 Case information: WHO, John Hopkins University, Ministries of Health, Governments.
Note: COVID-19 cases refer to total cases reported in the countries of asylum.

UNHCR Response

Protection

UNHCR continues to assess the impact of border closures and travel restrictions on access to asylum. In **Djibouti**, the Government agency in charge of refugees (ONARS) continued to register Yemeni refugees and asylum seekers from Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, access to registration and RSD is difficult due to the current lockdown. Across the region, UNHCR has appealed for special measures to be put in place, to allow for asylum-seekers to be screened, quarantined and admitted, and for UNHCR to be granted access to areas hosting refugees. We continue to advocate with Government partners to be able to carry out border monitoring activities, especially in lockdown situations.

Communication with communities is ongoing. Emphasis is being put on feedback systems and complaint mechanisms. Helplines and hotlines have been set up or expanded in most operations, to enable direct interactions with refugees and other persons of concern and identify those with specific needs during this crisis.

In West Darfur, **Sudan**, UNHCR supported the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) to distribute relief items to IDPs. Every IDP family received information about how to protect themselves against the virus before receiving blankets, jerry cans, sleeping mats, plastic sheets and kitchen sets.

In **Somalia**, on 13 April, the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs appealed for attention to the situation of IDPs and returned refugees and stressed that the outcome of an outbreak of COVID-19 in IDP settlements would be catastrophic.

Voluntary repatriation of **Burundi** refugees from Tanzania has continued with 229 Burundians returning on 8 April and 463 on 16 April. Additional health screening measures and protocols have been put in place while UNHCR and partners continue to advocate with the two governments to temporarily suspend the program.

Education

1.1 million refugee children and youth
out of school as result of COVID-19

The spread of COVID-19 has led to the closure of more and more schools for an indefinite period of time across the region. Many national discussions centre around selecting the right e-learning resources, digital platforms and mass media instruction modes to ensure continuity of learning. While some refugee students are already taking advantage of these alternative learning methods, the challenges of access are great for many. In addition, the longer children stay out of school, the less likely they are to return once schools reopen, leading to a potentially large number of school dropouts among refugee learners, particularly those in secondary school.

11 countries have closed
their borders, impacting
access to asylum

All countries
in the East and Horn of
Africa and the Great Lakes
have confirmed cases of
COVID-19 including
imported and local
transmission.

**Risk communication with
Persons of Concern to
provide fact-based
information on COVID-19
through a wide variety of
methods.**

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

25,000 bars of soap distributed to IDPs in
Ethiopia.

Emphasis remains on blanket prevention activities in camps - increased COVID-19 specific handwashing, water/soap/storage availability, hygiene promotion, public awareness, social distancing - and working with health colleagues to assess and prepare for WASH needs and infection prevention control in identified health structures to isolate and treat COVID-19 patients. UNHCR and partners are engaged in the regular distribution of core relief items (CRIs) in the region including soap and sanitary material packages. In **Uganda**, for example, distribution of 650 cartons of soap and 75 boxes of sanitary pads is underway in the West Nile region this week.

Health

Major health challenges include the immediate availability of trained personnel, protective materials for health personnel, equipment necessary to detect, test and treat complicated cases, medication and adequate facilities for isolation.

UNHCR remains actively involved across the region with Ministries of Health on the inclusion of refugees in national preparedness and response plans to combat COVID-19. Securing medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPEs) has proven challenging for several operations putting staff and persons of concern at risk. Given the anticipated delays in receiving medical supplies through international procurement, countries are also seeking to procure PPEs locally while waiting for the international supply. This includes sourcing from the UN-AU solidarity flights that are being dispatched to countries across Africa.



Screening room in Nyarugusu camp, Tanzania. UNHCR/M. Shakya

High risk of further deterioration of nutrition and food security situation in the region as a result of negative impacts of COVID-19 on livelihoods

Food Security

As part of COVID-19 readiness and response, UNHCR and WFP have been jointly implementing double distribution (two-months food assistance, both in-kind and cash) to refugees in **Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda**, while exploring similar arrangements in **Burundi, Sudan and Rwanda**. UNHCR and WFP are working closely on the prepositioning of adequate supplies of food commodities for on-going nutrition programmes (treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, nutritional support to pregnant and lactating women, and preventive blanket supplementary feeding programs for children). UNHCR is also working with UNICEF to preposition required supplies for therapeutic treatment (outpatient and inpatient) of severe acute malnutrition in refugee sites in the region.

Inter-agency Coordination

Operations are working closely with UN Country Teams, Resident Coordinators and the World Health Organization on crisis management, personnel and business continuity arrangements, programme criticality, preparedness, and response planning. Existing refugee response coordination structures continue to function, through virtual communication where relevant.

At the regional level UNHCR is engaged with the Regional Humanitarian Partners Team to map the impact on humanitarian operations and coordinate on advocacy messaging, as well as with many sectoral groups including health, nutrition, education, and child protection which have been developing context specific inter-agency guidance on programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Sensitization campaigns in IDP settlements in Baidoa, Somalia. SWSCRI/L.A. Mohamed

Funding needs

On 25 March, the UN launched an inter-agency [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) seeking US\$2.01 billion, which includes US\$255 million for initial, prioritized requirements in UNHCR's operations in affected countries. Monthly updates to the appeal are expected, including the addition of increased partner requirements.

On 27 March, UNHCR issued an [Emergency Appeal](#) providing more details on the initial \$255 million requirements in the GHRP, including a country and sectoral breakdown. Within the appeal, \$15 million has been requested for eight countries in the East and Horn and Great Lakes Region.

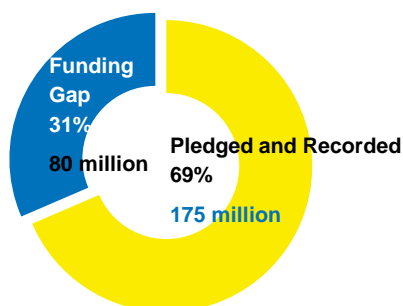
Activities covered by the appeal – and already underway – include life-saving interventions across a number of sectors: procurement of medical supplies and personal protective equipment; establishing shelter and other quarantine arrangements; upgrading water, sanitation and hygiene; and health services; emergency shelter; communications with communities; and adapting registration, refugee status determination and other protection programmes to the changing circumstances.

USD 255 million requested by UNHCR in the inter-agency Global Humanitarian Response Plan on 25 March

USD 15 million requested for 8 countries in the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes region on 27 March

Funding (as of 16 April 2020)

USD 255M requested on 27 March for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally:



Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal

USD 175M including:

United States \$64M | UK \$25M | Japan \$23.9M | EU \$17.9M | Denmark \$14.6M | CERF \$6.9M | Canada \$6.4M | Ireland \$3.3M | Sweden \$3M | Sony Corporation \$3M | Education Cannot Wait \$1.8M | Australia \$0.8M | Private donors \$0.3M

Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR's regular global programmes:

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors in Spain 20M | Switzerland 16.4M | Private donors in Republic of Korea 10.5M

Links:

Ethiopia COVID-19 Response Update: http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Ethiopia%20-%20Weekly%20COVID-19%20Update%20-%2016ARP20_0.pdf

Somalia COVID-19 Response Update: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/75327>

Sudan Flash update on COVID-19: <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/sudan-flash-update-issue-no-5-15-april-2020>

Story: Drawing on Ebola lessons to protect Tanzania camps from coronavirus:

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/4/5e96ce514/drawing-ebola-lessons-protect-tanzania-camps-coronavirus.html>

Live blog - Refugees in the COVID-19 crisis: <https://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/stories/2020/4/5e85708a4/live-blog-refugees-in-the-covid-19-crisis.html#>

Click [here](#) to access a [live dashboard](#) providing information on COVID-19 cases in the region, as well as travel restrictions and movement and border controls put in place by Governments.

Contacts

Joyce Wayua Munyao-Mbithi, Senior Donor Relations Officer, Regional Bureau for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, Nairobi - munyao@unhcr.org, Tel: +254 20 422 2305

Kabami Kalumiya, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, Nairobi - kalumiya@unhcr.org, Tel: +254 20 422 2350