

ETHIOPIA SITUATION (TIGRAY REGION)

25-27 November 2020



Ethiopian refugees collect blankets and mattresses at Hamdayet reception centre in Sudan, where days are intensely hot and night-time temperatures plummet.

Key Developments

SUDAN

- UNHCR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi is in Sudan from 26-29 November to meet with government officials and partners along with visits to Hamdayet reception center and Um Rakuba camp.
- More than 43,000 Ethiopian refugees have crossed into East Sudan where humanitarian actors continue to expand assistance and seek to meet the needs of new arrivals amidst complex logistical challenges.
- The Inter-Agency Refugee Emergency Response Plan for the Ethiopian refugee influx to Sudan was finalized on 25 November. The High Commissioner will publicly announce the plan on 29 November in Khartoum. Total requirements for the 30 partners participating are US \$149 million to meet the needs of up to 100,000 refugees. The Sudan response plan will be the major component of the Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Ethiopia (Tigray) situation.
- There is an urgent need for additional refugee settlement sites in Sudan as the Um Rakuba site has reached its current maximum capacity of 10,000 persons. Assessment missions are being conducted to additional locations identified by the government.
- The first UNHCR airlift with emergency assistance has arrived in Khartoum. The cargo was deployed from UNHCR's global stockpile in the UAE by International Humanitarian City (IHC) donated flights.

ETHIOPIA

- Concerns are growing for the safety of civilians inside the Tigray region of Ethiopia, particularly in and around the capital Mekelle that is home to 500,000 people. There are reports of basic services coming

- to a halt while the security situation continues to deteriorate. It is feared the numbers of those internally displaced inside Tigray by the fighting as well as to other regions of Ethiopia is growing daily.
- Access remains a major constraint in the Tigray region. UNHCR staff have no access to the four Eritrean refugee camps due to the security situation. Information on the condition of refugees at the camps is extremely limited and difficult to verify.
- The last general food distribution in the refugee camps supplied food for the months of October and November. At most three days of food supplies are estimated to be left in the camps.
- Humanitarian actors continue to request for immediate and unhindered access to provide lifesaving assistance to the increasing number of internally displaced persons and the 100,000 Eritrean refugees across the Tigray region.

UNHCR Response

Ethiopia

UNHCR's critical staff who have remained in Shire and Mekelle currently have no access to the four Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray due to the security situation. UNHCR has been unable to reach the Main-Ani, Adi Harush and Hitsats camps for over a week – longer for the Shimelba camp. Information about the conditions of refugees in the camps is extremely difficult to verify.

There have been unconfirmed reports of hostilities reaching the Adi Harush and Hitsats camps. UNHCR and partners are trying to ascertain the situation. UNHCR continues to stress that no civilians should become a target and all possible measures must be taken by all parties to ensure that civilians – whether refugees or host communities – are kept out of harm's way.

Due to lack of communication, there is no confirmation on whether basic services are still available in the camps. UNHCR and partners are increasingly alarmed over the food situation. The last food distribution was in October, to last two months, which would run out at the end of November. Immediate efforts are needed to safe guarantee access to deliver food aid.

Water supply in the camps remains another key concern. The fuel supply that had been pre-positioned to keep the water systems running – if still intact – would be expected to run out in the coming days. UNHCR has received reports of damage to the water system infrastructure in Hitsats and Mai Ani camps.

In Shire town, UNHCR and partners have identified some 3,000 IDPs who have taken shelter in three schools, with some hundreds in other parts of the town. Initial information on their needs include lack of food, water, blankets, mattresses and access to health care services. Humanitarian actors are coordinating to distribute core relief items, water, high energy biscuits and other assistance to the most vulnerable with the stock currently available in Shire.

Total New Arrivals From Ethiopia ¹

42,651

Individuals

¹ Since 7th of November 2020.

Per State

 Kassala **29,309** 69%
 (Hamdayet)

 Gedaref **12,640** 30%
 (Ludgi, Abderafi)

 Blue Nile **702** 1%
 (Algazira, Yagolo, Yabisher)

 Arrivals average per day ²
 (since 10th Nov)

2,656
² Arrivals average since beginning of Nov 2,245.

Sudan

The influx of refugees from the Tigray region into Sudan continues, reaching 43,335 by 26 November.

Refugees are arriving to the remote border locations of Hamdayet in Kassala State, and Ludgi and Abderafi in Gedaref State. Since 24 November, the numbers have been trending downward to under 1,000 per day. Factors contributing to the decrease cannot be verified. Sudan's Commissioner of Refugees (COR) continues to register the new arrivals at household level.

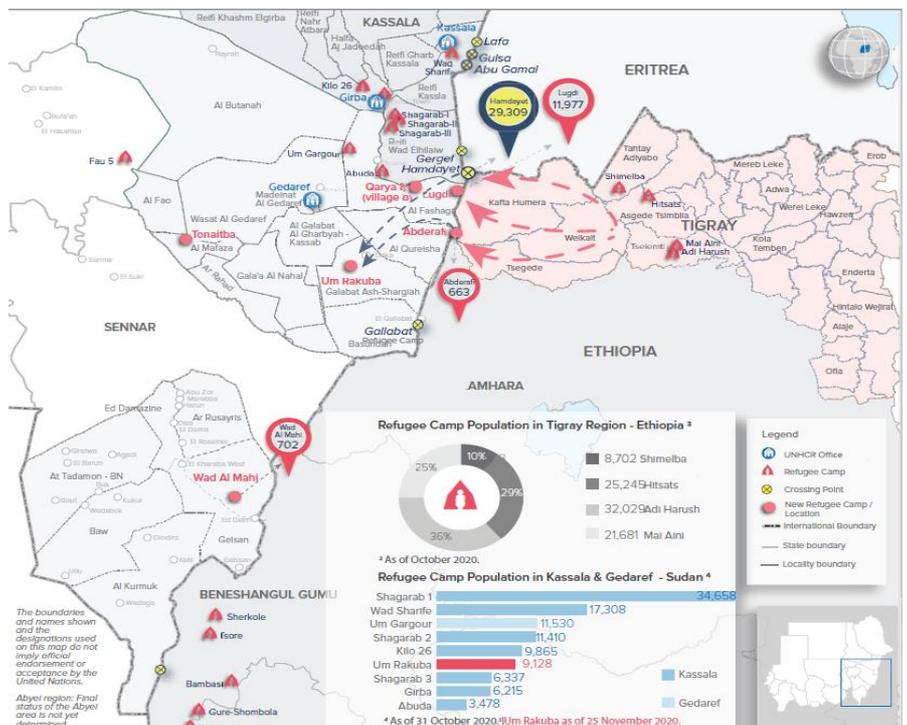
The remote border areas are still heavily congested with overall poor living conditions despite the arrival of more assistance. Gaps remain across all sectors including shelter, food, health and WASH.

Health screening of children and pregnant and lactating women found that 10.7 percent of 5,578 children and 20 percent of 170 pregnant and lactating women are at risk of acute malnutrition. The situation is likely to deteriorate due to risks related to the poor living conditions, food insecurity and susceptibility to diseases.

Since 13 November, some 10,000 people (25 percent of the new arrivals) have been relocated to Um Rakuba camp from the Hamdayet and Abderafi border points. Some Refugees have raised concerns about relocating to Um Rakuba camp as they would prefer to stay near the border to wait for family members still in Ethiopia or hope they will be able to return to Ethiopia soon. UNHCR continues to provide support through protection desks at all sites and additional protection monitoring by mobile teams. Family tracing services have been established with a number of separated children and families already reunited.

The Um Rakuba site has reached its current maximum capacity. The Sudanese government has identified the Tenetba site and two additional possible sites – Mafaza in Gedaref State and Wad al Hileow in Kassala State to meet the immense needs. Discussions with the government continue and inter-agency assessments are underway to determine their suitability.

The first airlift of relief supplies arrived on Friday 27 November carrying 32 tons of UNHCR emergency aid from UNHCR's global stockpile in Dubai. The cargo included 5,000 blankets, 4,500 solar lamps, 2,900



mosquito nets, 200 plastic sheets and 200 plastic rolls. A second airlift will carry 1,275 family tents and 10 prefabricated warehouses. This aid will meet the immediate shelter needs of more than 16,000 people.

Lugdi in Gedaref State: Refugees arriving at Lugdi are transported by the Sudanese government to Village 8, further away from the border. There are now some 12,000 people at the site and UNHCR has begun basic registration of the arriving families. The site is still in need of infrastructure works.

UNHCR, through COR, is distributing core relief items to new arrivals, including blankets, sleeping mats, soap and plastic sheets and reached as of 25 November nearly 5,000 families. UNFPA and ZOA International Sudan (ZOA) distributed 3,000 dignity kits, including sanitary pads, underwear, tooth paste and soap to 1,000 families. Dry food rations, including supplementary super cereals for 4,150 pregnant and lactating women and children under five were provided by WFP.

The emergency clinic run by a group of refugee health staff from Ethiopia is being supported by the Ministry of Health with UNHCR providing medicine and medical equipment. Mercy Corps has set up a mobile health clinic. SRCS and a team of volunteers continue to conduct nutritional screenings (MUAC) and have referred children with acute malnutrition to the community-based management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) centre, supported by UNICEF.

UNHCR remains for now the only WASH actor on site. The logistics to enhance WASH support is complicated as the site can only be reached by ferry. Refugees have access to clean drinking water in the nearby village while UNHCR is also trucking in water to the additional water tanks that have been installed.

The UNHCR protection help desk on site provides information on legal and SGBV issues, right and obligations of refugees in country of asylum, and facilitates the registration process. A community committee has been established to enhance communication with the refugees by disseminating information on registration and help to report protection concerns. ICRC is working with SRCS volunteers to establish family tracing and reunification in the camp. This initiative has so far located the families of 34 children.

Hamdayet in Kassala State: In Hamdayet, nearly 20,000 people remain at the registration centre and further into the town and host community. UNHCR has set up an electronic registration and case management system to register the new arrivals, which was previously done manually.



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A UNHCR staff member activates a water pump for Ethiopian refugees to fill jerrycans at a transit site in Hamdayet, Sudan.

UNHCR core relief items have been distributed by COR, to more than 14,000 families so far. Most families are sleeping out in the open. Hot meals are provided by Muslim Aid with the support of WFP food and kitchen utensils. Clean drinking water is being delivered by Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) to the Hamdayet transit centre. In addition, MSF is providing water to the Hamdayet market where many refugees are staying.

UNHCR established a solid waste management system, engaging daily workers from the refugee community to clean the transit centre compound. Twaki and MSF have constructed 14 additional new drop hole latrines; eight at the reception centre and six at the border point. ICRC installed three hand washing facilities at the

clinic and protection desk, another was installed close to where those being relocated receive a meal before their departure.

In Hamdayet, two state clinics continue to provide health services. Additional medicines and an ambulance have been provided to support them. MSF has established a health screening desk by the Tekeze river and the reception centres to ease the pressure on the health clinics. UNFPA continues reproductive activities through its mobile clinic.

UNHCR protection teams are on the ground in Hamdayet to identify persons with specific needs including pregnant women, people with disabilities, unaccompanied children and other vulnerable people, to be referred to specialized protection services.

A child protection desk has been established at Hamdayet transit centre to strengthen screening and identification of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and other vulnerable children. After conducting rapid Best Interest Assessments with 15 unaccompanied children, UNHCR was able to place them with caregivers. ICRC supported the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) to establish a Family

Reunification and Tracing desk to meet the high demand of refugees searching for their missing family members. Free phone calls are provided in addition to collecting information on missing persons. UNHCR and MoH have organized recreational group activities for refugee children. The Danish Red Cross (DRC) supported ten SRCS volunteers who attended a two-day training on first aid and psychosocial support.

UNHCR continues awareness campaigns in the market areas of Hamdayet to ensure refugees are receiving critical information on the importance of registering and how it serves as a vital link to access protection and relief services while in the country of asylum. The awareness campaigns also inform refugees on the movement of convoys from Hamdayet to Um Rakuba camp.

Um Rakuba camp: The site has reached its current maximum capacity of 10,000 people and requires major infrastructure work. Site planning continues and plots have been allocated to families. Emergency shelters are being constructed. UNHCR has recently updated its shelter strategy due to challenges with locally procured items and will now provide family tents rather than shelter kits.

UNHCR through SRCS continues to distribute core relief items and shelter assistance to nearly 7,200 families. In addition, Islamic relief provided 2,600 blankets and 100 tents; 1,500 dignity kits were distributed by Green Peace.

Muslim Aid supported by WFP and WedCo prepares two hot meals per day although there is difficulty to sustain this as the numbers increase. WFP has also started to provide one-month dry rations, reaching 150 households so far.

UNHCR continues to truck water for the site, using water containers provided by UNICEF.



UNHCR provide masks, water and High Energy Biscuits to the Ethiopian refugees prior to their relocation to Um Rakuba refugee camp.

Mercy Corps (MC) is supporting the government Primary Health Care clinic near the camp with staff, medicines, medical supplies and basic equipment. MSF is also running a health facility and has provided medicines and medical supplies to the site while referring urgent cases to the government clinic.

A help desk was established with the support of COR and SRCS to respond to the needs and grievances of refugees regarding their needs and the services they receive. UNHCR conducted community dialogue sessions and reached out to over a thousand individuals, focusing on available services, the process to transfer from communal to family shelters, and distribution of relief items. To improve community mobilization and ensure that all members of the community are represented in decision making and information sharing, UNHCR promoted the creation of representative meetings among community-leaders, highlighting the importance of the participation of women and youth.

UNHCR has also established a protection desk at the reception centre, providing new arrivals with a safe space to raise their protection concerns. UNHCR protection staff continue to identify persons with specific needs and provide support as well as facilitating access to services.

Djibouti

No arrivals have been reported in Djibouti. UNHCR and the Government have registered a total of 66 Ethiopians of Tigray origin who were stranded after returning from Yemen. They have been relocated to Holl Holl camp. An inter-agency contingency and response plan is being finalized to be shared with the Djibouti government.

Eritrea

There have been reports of refugees arriving and possible internal displacement along the border with Ethiopia, but these cannot be verified as access to the border areas is restricted. Contingency and response plans are being finalized under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. Discussions between the Resident Coordinator and the government on the response to possible new arrivals or internally displaced are ongoing.

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