

September 2021



Protection

Documentation of Eritrean refugees from Hitsats and Shimelba camps: In Addis Ababa, UNHCR, in partnership with the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) and the Organization for Women in Self-Employment (WISE) concluded the documentation of over 6,700 Eritrean refugees who fled the former Hitsats and Shimelba camps in northern Tigray region after the camps had been destroyed in January 2021. The registered refugees have been issued with three-year ID cards enabling them to open bank accounts, gain access to cash assistance, health services, durable solutions like resettlement or family reunification and provide protection against protection risks.



UNHCR and ARRA provide documented refugees with ID cards, enabling them to receive assistance and access basic services ©UNHCR/Olga Sarrado

Decongesting Dollo Ado Reception Centre: UNHCR and ARRA are working to fast-track the relocation of over 3,000 asylum-seekers from Somalia who have been sheltered within and outside of the overcrowded Reception Centre in Dollo Ado in the Somali Region. To quickly decongest the Reception Centre, new arrivals will be relocated to the camps soon after registration. There they will be provided with materials to build their temporary shelters pending the provision of a more appropriate shelter solution.

Voluntary repatriation from Kenya: As part of the voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from Kenya that commenced in February 2020, UNHCR, together with the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya, facilitated the return of 122 refugees in August. Since February 2020, 820 refugees have returned home from Kenya. More than 1,000 others are expected to return before the end of the year. UNHCR supported the returnees with transportation and cash assistance to help them reintegrate in their areas of return.



Education

Schools across the refugee camps remain closed for the summer holidays but are expected to reopen in early October. In the meantime, preparations are underway for the next academic year.

In the Gambella Region, as part of the LEGO Foundation's 'learning through play' project, 256 boxes of Duplo LEGO Six Bricks (a hands-on tool for learning through fun and short activities) were distributed to UNHCR partners Plan International Ethiopia (PIE) and Save the Children (SCI) in different refugee camps to support learning through play. The items will facilitate practical and joyful learning activities at home and in classrooms. With the help of UNHCR, PIE has already piloted the project by implementing sessions that were facilitated by refugee children.



Shelter & CRIs

Support to IDPs: Of the planned construction of 200 IDP shelters in four districts within the Guji and Gedeo zones in the southern part of Ethiopia, 46 are nearly completed, while the remaining 154 are close to completion. UNHCR and its partner Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE) are working to ensure that the construction works are finalized and handed over to the beneficiaries as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to deliver basic relief items, - including blankets, buckets, soap, kitchen sets and mosquito nets, to the most vulnerable internally displaced persons in the Tigray Region. Similar support was extended to 297 freshly displaced families in Sasiga Woreda of East Wollega zone of Oromia region, and to 1,000 displaced families in the Konso Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPR).

Support to refugees: In Bambasi refugee camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, UNHCR distributed through ARRA 4,574 pieces of clothes to a selected group of vulnerable refugee women and girls.

The rehabilitation of three accommodation hangars at the Pagak Reception Centre, Gambella Region, is ongoing with 90% of the work completed to date. Internal roads have also been levelled and the drainage system improved, saving the centre from being overflooded as during previous rainy seasons.



Health

General Health Services: UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and its partners, facilitates access to primary, emergency secondary and tertiary healthcare services for refugees and asylum-seekers. While primary health services are often provided within the refugee camps, patients are referred to regional or federal hospitals for secondary and tertiary health care services. In urban settings such as Addis Ababa, UNHCR covers the costs of medicines and medical check-ups for the affected refugees.

Eye and vision care: UNHCR's partner Help Age International in collaboration with the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) and a team of ophthalmologists from Yirgalem Hospital organized ophthalmological check-ups and awareness campaign for refugees and the host community in Gambella town and Itang woreda. During the campaign, the team identified and treated 460 people with visual problems at the health centre in Jewi camp. The campaign, which also aims to increase awareness of the importance of eye and vision care, will continue in Kule, Tierkidi and Nguenyiel refugee camps. Similarly, in collaboration with ARRA and the Assosa General Hospital, UNHCR facilitated cataract screening for refugees and the host community in Bambasi, Sherkole and Tsore refugee camps, with the aim to treat those with the disease and raise awareness among others on how to prevent the disease.

COVID-19 response: Refugees have been included in the Government's COVID-19 vaccination plan. A total of 3,860 refugees have received first dose, while 254 refugees have been fully vaccinated so far in line with the Government's prioritization criteria. Ethiopia's health authorities confirmed the first case of the highly infectious Delta variant of COVID-19 virus, urging the public to take stringent prevention measures. Of late, Ethiopia has reported a surge in the number of positive COVID-19 cases and warned against the risk of the third wave of the pandemic in the country. UNHCR provided 334,400 surgical masks, 36,100 respiratory masks, 36,100 surgical gowns and 304,000 gloves to humanitarian agencies in the Gambella Region to support the ongoing effort to curtail the spread of the virus.



WASH

General WASH Services: UNHCR works with partners to provide access to clean water and sanitation and improve hygiene practices through awareness raising, upgrading water systems, supporting the

construction of latrines and solid waste management. An average of 18 litres of water per person/day was provided across all the camps during the reporting month.



Livelihood

Members of the Agricultural Cooperatives in the Melkadida area harvested over 140,000 kg of onion so far this year. The cooperatives, consisting of refugees and members of the host communities, have already sold the produce, generating income.

In Gambella, 120 refugee women and girls from Jewi, Nguenyiel and Pugnido I refugee camps attended a five-day business skill training that was organized by UNHCR's partner International Medical Corps (IMC) in partnership with the University of Gambella. The participants managed to develop a joint business plan at the end of the training and will receive funds to put their plan into an actual small business activity that would promote their self-reliance.

Tigray Emergency: As the Tigray conflict enters its 10th month, the overall security and access situation remains complex and fluid, hindering effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to the most affected populations in Central, Southern-Eastern, Eastern, North-Western and Southern Zones. Fresh displacement from fighting in Ethiopia's Amhara and Afar regions has been recorded as the conflict spreads beyond the Tigray region. In addition to some 2.1 million internally displaced people in Tigray, 250,000 people in Amhara region and 112,000 in Afar region have been internally displaced according to the local authorities and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Of particular concern is the safety and wellbeing of thousands of Eritrean refugees living in the three camps: Mai Aini and Adi Harush in Tigray region and Berahle in Afar region. Regular Ethiopia country and regional UNHCR updates on the crisis can be found at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/rbehagl>

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