

Bi-weekly Operational Update: 1-15 February 2020

Ethiopia ratifies Kampala Convention: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, welcomes Ethiopia's ratification on 13th February of the African Union (AU) Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa, known as the Kampala Convention. The Convention, a key regional legal instrument aimed at protecting, assisting and resolving the plight of IDPs, was unanimously passed by Ethiopia's parliament, making Ethiopia the 31st African Union Member State to ratify the Convention since its adoption in 2009. This represents a significant achievement for a country that has had to recently manage massive internal displacement within its borders.

The Kampala Convention is the world's first and only regional legally binding instrument for the protection and assistance of IDPs, who often face heightened risks of sexual and other violence during their displacement, while they struggle to access their basic rights.

Ethiopia has one of the world's largest IDP populations, estimated to be 1.78 million individuals, according to the 2020 UN Humanitarian Response Plan. UNHCR is part of the inter-agency humanitarian effort in Ethiopia to assist those displaced by conflict and climate shocks and has been encouraging the Government to ratify the Convention. UNHCR is also supporting national authorities in the drafting of an IDP Policy which will provide a domestic legal framework for the protection of and assistance to IDPs. Following the Government-led large-scale IDP return operation last year, UNHCR has been supporting reintegration and recovery efforts for displacement affected Ethiopians, including returnees and vulnerable host communities.

UNHCR donates ambulances in Gambella, school furniture in Afar: UNHCR donated two ambulances to the Gambella Regional Health Bureau to facilitate health service delivery in the Region. The ambulances will support the Gambella general hospital where refugees are referred to as well as the Gambella Town Primary hospital. Similarly, UNHCR handed over 190 combined desks and 150 chairs to the secondary school in Barahle, Afar, to furnish the newly completed academic block. Currently 83 refugee students are enrolled in Barahle secondary school.

51 South Sudanese refugees relocated to Gure-Shembola Camp: UNHCR, ARRA and IOM relocated 51 newly arrived South Sudanese refugees from Pamdong Reception Centre in Gambella to Gure-shemobola camp in the Benishngul-Gumuz Region. They were flown to Assosa airport and transported by road to the camp. This brings the total number of refugees in the camp to 8,831.

Rehabilitation & reconstruction of infrastructure in Gedeo and West Guji: UNHCR is in the final phase of the rehabilitation/reconstruction of nine projects in the Gedeo and West Guji areas for the benefit of displacement affected Ethiopians, including IDP returnees and vulnerable host communities. The projects are currently being inspected by UNHCR experts before an official inauguration and handover to the regional authorities.

UNHCR coordinates with local authorities and FAO to mitigate locust infestation: UNHCR is working closely with the local administration in Dollo Ado and FAO to urgently respond to the desert locust infestation in the area before it causes irreversible harm to livelihoods. It has requested FAO to arrange for aerial anti-locust sprays while also coordinating with the Dollo Ado Woreda administration in reviewing local response plans to the threat.