

Bi-weekly Operational Update: 1-15 March 2019

Comprehensive biometric data registration continues throughout the country

In line with the registration multi-year plan of action (2017 – 2020), UNHCR and Ethiopia's Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) have continued the rollout of Level 3 registration, with a total of 346,471 refugees registered so far, representing 41.6% of the refugee population in the country. The advanced registration system, also known as the Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS), involves the collection of biometric information, including fingerprints, iris scan and digital photos. The additional information thus gathered, which includes detailed information on individual skills, education, occupation and family members abroad.

UNHCR has experienced modest delays in roll-out, virtue of the prevailing security environment in the Gambella and Somali regions. Nonetheless, over 4,000 Kenyan refugees in the Borana area have been fully registered, while over 90% of refugees in Sheder, Sherkole, Kebribeyah and Bambasi camps have completed the exercise. While the Agency will continue to provide registration services during this period, no new population updates and statistics will be produced until the exercise is finalized in June 2019. Progress can be tracked on a daily basis via the UNHCR Operational Data Portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org>, and <https://im.unhcr.org/eth/>.

Planned relocation of South Sudanese refugees to Gure-Shembola

UNHCR Sub-Office Assosa, together with ARRA and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have initiated initial planning consultations concerning the relocation of more than 250 South Sudanese refugees currently residing in the Gambella Region to Gure-Shembola Camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region. The latter was opened in May 2017 in response to the renewed influx of South Sudanese refugees.

Peaceful co-existence in Gambella

In light of sub-clan conflict which disrupted public order in a number of camps within the Gambella Region last month, Plan International conducted a mass awareness raising campaign on peaceful coexistence in Kule Refugee Camp, home to over 55,000 South Sudanese refugees. Key messages, including on peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms and the impact of violence in the lives of the refugees were disseminated. The feedback of the community was positive with refugees reaffirming their commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict. Youth representatives in Jewi Camp were also engaged in outreach activities, reinforcing their essential role in maintaining their camp's stability.

Refugees and host communities to benefit from sustainable livelihoods initiative

Concern Worldwide and the World Food Programme (WFP) launched a new livelihoods initiative in Pugnido Camp in Gambella, benefitting 7,500 refugees and members of the host community. Planned interventions will focus on fishery, vegetable, roots, and cereal production, and is expected to strengthen food security in the two communities. In a related development, a total of 31 elderly refugees and persons with disabilities in Jewi Camp in Gambella received training on basic business development skills by HelpAge International. The importance of collecting and using market information to inform business development plans, as well as the management of start-up, working capital, together with financial record keeping were key themes.

Betty G calls for a more balanced world on International Women's Day

UNHCR High Profile Supporter and Ethiopian singer, Betty G, called for a more balanced world on International Women's Day. Her official statement is available [here](#).