

Bi-weekly Operational Update: 16-31 March 2019

National Comprehensive Refugee Response Strategy (NCRRS). To facilitate the transition away from a camp-based approach, to an integrated model of refugee assistance, UNHCR continues to support the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) to develop a ten-year NCRRS. The Agency has encouraged broad-based consultations, studies and analysis, together with experience sharing with other UN Member States to inform the development of the Strategy. This includes a Study Tour to Jordan and Turkey that is planned for June 2019. The transition to the provision of protection and assistance in off-camp locations is anticipated to be undertaken in a phased approach, with existing camps formally closing or transforming into sustainable settlements during the lifespan of the Strategy; while aligned to and reflecting the needs of the refugee response during that time.

Refugee fatalities in Gambella. On 23 March 2019, two refugees were shot and killed in Gambella. They were part of a group of refugees who were hunting in the bush near Pugnido Camp, who came under attack from unknown gunmen. In a separate incident, a refugee was reportedly stabbed to death by an unknown perpetrator while travelling between Tierkidi and Nguenyiel camps. The incident is under investigation by ARRA. The following day on 24 March 2019, a refugee returning to Pugnido Camp from Pugnido town escaped from individuals who were armed with knives. The attackers reportedly seized a bicycle from the victim.

Relocation of South Sudanese refugees to camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region: In collaboration with ARRA, IOM and other partners, UNHCR relocated 77 South Sudanese refugees from Gambella to Gure-Shembola camp in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region on 28 March 2019. The relocation followed extensive discussions and registration of those who were willing to relocate to the camp established in May 2017 to accommodate additional new arrivals from South Sudan, and ease the pressure on the Gambella Regional State.

Theft of humanitarian aid in Gure-Shembola. In Gure-Shembola Camp, in the Benishangul-Gumuz Region, a number of organizations were negatively impacted by a recent spate of thefts of items from humanitarian stores, together with the removal of emergency shelters. ARRA is investigating the theft together with the relevant local authorities. UNHCR is working with partners on remedial actions and recommendations to mitigate further incidents of theft in the camp.

Fire incidents in Shimelba Camp. During the period 16-22 March 2019, separate fire accidents were reported in Shimelba Camp in the Tigray Region, hosting Eritrean refugees. The accidents damaged nine refugee shelters and affected 40 individuals. Refugees lost relief items, monthly rations and scholastic materials. The affected families were provided with blankets, text books and plastic sheets along with food assistance. The majority of family members have subsequently managed to temporarily rehabilitate their shelters.

Comprehensive biometric data registration continues throughout the country. During the period 16-31 March 2019, an additional 38,826 individuals completed the process, bringing the overall total to 385,297 persons. Progress by Camp can be tracked on a daily basis via the UNHCR Operational Data Portal, <https://data2.unhcr.org>, and directly at <https://im.unhcr.org/eth/>.

Crown Princess Mary of Denmark visits UNHCR operations supporting Eritrean refugees. On 27 March 2019, Crown Princess Mary and the Danish Minister of Development, Ulla Tørnæs, visited the Tigray Region where they met and had discussions with Eritrean refugees in Hitsats camp, including women and girls as well as children who arrived alone or were separated during the flight. The high-level delegation also visited the Endabaguna Registration centre and the secondary school in Hitsats which was recently built thanks to Danish funding. The school serves both refugees and Ethiopian students living within close range of the refugee camp.