

UNHCR Kenya

8 May 2020



Left: South Sudanese refugees have their temperature taken before accessing a food distribution at Kakuma refugee camp.

Right: Refugees washing their hands outside a food distribution centre in Hagadera refugee camp in Dadaab. © CARE Kenya

General Update on the COVID-19 Situation in Kenya

As of 7 May 2020, there are 607 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kenya, of which 197 have recovered and 29 have passed away. In total, 28,445 people have been tested. There are no confirmed cases among refugees and asylum-seekers.

In order to contain the spread of the virus, the Government of Kenya has taken the below measures:

- A country-wide curfew from 7 pm to 5 am has been in place since 27 March.
- Cessation of movement in and out five Counties (Nairobi Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi and Mandera) and the two refugee camps (Kakuma and Dadaab) is in effect.
- All learning institutions remain closed.
- All commercial passenger flights in and out of Kenya are suspended.
- Physical distancing measures have been introduced in public transport and supermarkets, among others.
- Patients who die from COVID-19 are to be buried within 24 hours. Less than 15 family members are allowed to attend the burials.

The Garissa and Turkana Counties, where the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya are located, have formed taskforces to enhance strategic plans and have put in place several measures, including toll-free numbers to provide information to residents.

UNHCR Kenya's COVID-19 Response Priorities



Impact

- The Kenya operation is reviewing its planned activities and has started, together with all partners, to re-allocate available resources in order to prioritise lifesaving activities.

Actions

- A part of the broader UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan, UNHCR has issued an Emergency Appeal requesting USD 255 million for life-saving interventions and preparations in response to COVID-19, of which an initial USD 15 million will be dedicated to countries in East and Horn of Africa.
- On 9 April, the Government of Kenya, the United Nations and humanitarian partners launched an Emergency Appeal for Kenya requesting USD 267 million to respond to the most immediate and critical needs of more than 10 million people. UNHCR Kenya's total budget requirements in the Emergency Appeal amount to USD 4.9 million to cover the needs of refugees and asylum-seekers, with a focus on Health, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Education and Protection.

COVID-19 Impact on UNHCR Key Areas



Protection

Impact

- Structures have been set up to ensure continued monitoring of the protection situation of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons during this time. In particular, this is realised through strengthened virtual community and coordination networks allowing UNHCR to receive real-time information and address gaps and needs through coordinated responses with authorities and partners.
- Despite COVID-19, UNHCR retains a two-way communication with the refugee community. Toll-free helplines by UNHCR and partners and dedicated e-mail boxes allow them to reach out when they want to report security incidents or are in need of further support. There are also complaint boxes in the camps.
- The Refugee Affairs Secretariat (RAS) Processing Centre in Nairobi remains closed. Therefore, there is no access to registration, documentation or Refugee Status Determination (RSD).
- Refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons in urban areas continue to be disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of restrictions in place due to COVID-19.
- In urban areas, an increased number of domestic/intimate partner violence cases have been reported.
- Increasing restrictions on movements of people, goods and services, including supply chains is the risk associated with UNHCR and its partners continued ability to service the refugee camp populations.

Actions

- Many protection activities in the camps continue remotely. For example, in Kakuma, resettlement interviews are conducted virtually to ensure that submissions move forward.
- UNHCR, together with the Turkana and Garissa Counties, has set up structures in the refugee camps to ensure health screening and self-isolation of arrivals to the camps. Currently, the flow of new arrivals is low.
- Even though the Processing Centre in Nairobi remains closed, UNHCR is working closely with RAS to address urgent cases. Supplementary hygiene materials and PPE have also been provided to RAS offices in urban areas to allow for premises to re-open, when possible.
- UNHCR is closely coordinating with the authorities, the national sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) Working Group and partners to ensure adequate response and support. It has also rolled out a targeted information campaign focusing on prevention and is working with the community to provide alternative safe spaces for women and girls at risk.
- UNHCR is advocating for inclusion of the most vulnerable refugees and stateless persons in urban areas in the social protection and safety nets, which is being set up by the Government of Kenya. In the meantime, it has developed a Risks, Benefits and Comparative Cost Analysis of Possible Targeting Strategies for COVID-19 Cash Response in Urban Areas (focus on asylum-seekers/refugees), which should pave the way forward with regard to the type of assistance (blanket assistance versus targeted assistance), transfer value and duration.



Education

Impact

- Schools in the country remain closed. Efforts are being undertaken to support remote learning, which is particularly challenging in a camp environment.

Actions

- Refugees and asylum-seekers are included in the Ministry of Education's response plan. Stateless children are already included in the national system and are captured in the plan under "other vulnerable groups".
- A total of 104 camp-based schools have been identified for post-emergency support (i.e. teacher training and WASH). Another 500 schools that will receive support are located in urban informal settlements and therefore should cover some urban refugee learners.
- The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) has provided UNHCR with audio content from the national radio education programme. UNHCR will facilitate broadcasting from local radio stations in the refugee camps.
- UNHCR is expanding the provision of solar-powered radios, textbooks and other learning materials, aiming to finalise preparations before the beginning of the new term.
- Teachers are being supported with mobile data to allow individual follow-up with their learners, while higher education students are receiving the same support to enable them to continue their studies online.



Public Health

Actions

- The Kenyan Ministry of Health has adopted an area-based response, which also includes refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons. UNHCR continues to work closely with the RAS, the Ministry of Health and other relevant authorities to ensure a coordinated response.
- UNHCR has procured so far, a stock of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), medication, 67 thermo guns and eight oxygen concentrators with 40 splitters, among others.
- A total of 135 UNHCR and partner staff have received training on COVID-19 response from the Kenyan office of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ministry of Health, supported by the US Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM).
- UNHCR has received 100,000 medical masks from its international supply and has already dispatched the majority to the camps. Some of the masks will be distributed to the Counties.
- Isolation facilities have been established in both camps. Additional facilities have been identified in the event of an overwhelming number of cases.
- In order to support the host communities, in line with the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR), UNHCR has handed over to the Turkana County an ambulance, which will be used for the COVID-19 response in Turkana West. Another ambulance will be handed over to the Garissa County for the same purpose.
- Both Kakuma and Dadaab camps are equipped with laboratories that can test for different conditions, such as HIV and tuberculosis. Discussions are ongoing to build the capacity of the labs to support COVID-19 testing in Turkana and Garissa Counties, once the Ministry of Health decentralizes COVID-19 testing.



Food Security and Core Relief Items

Actions

- In order to limit the number of mass gatherings, a general food distribution by WFP covering two months (April and May) has taken place in both Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps. Concurrently, UNHCR is distributing core relief items (CRI), such as soap, sanitary items and jerrycans. Measures are in place during distribution to avoid overcrowding, improve hygiene and ensure health screening of all refugees and asylum-seekers.



Public Information/Communication

Impact

- Fear, uncertainty, and the proliferation of misinformation on COVID-19 have the potential to weaken the national and global response to the virus and a risk to create panic in the refugee camps.

Actions

- Communication with the communities continues through various means (mass communication campaigns and radio shows/spots in the camps; WhatsApp groups; community representatives and social media) on issues surrounding health/hygiene, curfew and whom to approach in case of an emergency (e.g. medical, arrests). Furthermore, campaigns have been initiated to reduce misinformation.

Inter-Agency Coordination

- UNHCR Kenya participates actively in the UN Country Team (UNCT), whose activities are now focused on the response to COVID-19. The UNCT has also pooled together the human resources and expertise of various UN agencies to support the Government of Kenya. UNHCR is contributing in the areas of health, information management, education, socio-economic impact and communication.
- UNHCR participates in the county-led response mechanisms and coordination meetings.
- UNHCR holds weekly meetings with non-governmental organisation partners at Nairobi and field level.
- UNHCR holds regular briefings with its main donors on challenges and gaps in the COVID-19 response.



Funding Requirements

UNHCR Kenya's COVID-19 Response Budget (as reflected in the Emergency Appeal, April – Sept. 2020):

| Sector | Main activities | Amount |
|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate physical and electronic transmission of Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) radio content and materials to learners; Support teachers to engage with and provide individual follow up to learners; Enable students to access e-learning platforms; Provide psychosocial support to learners and their families; Provide learners with textbooks, stationery and workbooks. | \$1,000,000 |
| Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) material, including personal protective equipment (PPE), medical supplies and equipment; Communication with communities on COVID-19 prevention and response including referral pathways; Establishing isolation facilities in each camp; Surveillance, rapid response teams and case investigation; Training of rapid response teams; Training of lab techs on sample collection, handling and testing; Sourcing for COVID-19 testing kits; Procurement of equipment for isolation and treatment centres. | \$1,630,385 |
| WASH | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance WASH capacity at hospitals, clinics, reception and transit facilities, schools and other communal facilities (incl. handwashing facilities, increased water supply and improved sanitation); Support ongoing hygiene promotion in the camps, incl. procurement of 5-litre jerrycans converted to leaky tins, functioning as hand-washing stations in households and provision of extra water to cover increased need of hand washing; Provision of 450mg of soap per person/month and sanitary kits to women of reproductive age; Provide washing stations for stateless persons in urban areas; Timely maintenance of water reticulation system. | \$1,550,000 |
| Protection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of information on COVID-19, including referral pathways; Protection, detention and border monitoring and response; Support persons with specific needs; Provide cash/in-kind support to vulnerable refugee and stateless households; Support to refugees whose businesses are struggling due to COVID-19. | \$750,000 |
| PI/Comms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Information (PI), communication and community engagement; Regular and accurate information adapted to the needs and priorities of different community members to counter derogatory, xenophobic or false messaging; Ensure wide information dissemination through various media. | \$50,000 |
| Total (USD) | | \$4,980,385 |



Contacts – UNHCR Kenya

- Fathiaa Abdalla, UNHCR Country Representative in Kenya
- Glenn Jusnes, Senior External Relations Officer
jusnes@unhcr.org
- Eujin Byun, Communications Officer
byun@unhcr.org; Tel.: +254 (0) 20 423 2122; Cell: +254 798 487 988
- Ariadne Kypriadi, Associate Reporting Officer
kypriadi@unhcr.org; Tel.: +254 (0) 20 423 2121; Cell: +254 714 639 279



Web and Social media

- UNHCR Kenya Website: <http://www.unhcr.org/ke>
- Facebook: [UNHCR Kenya](#)
- Twitter: [@UNHCR_Kenya](#)
- Instagram: [@unhcrkenya](#)

- UNHCR web portal on the COVID-19 Situation: <http://reporting.unhcr.org/covid-19>
- Web portal on Somali Displacement: <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>
- Web portal on South Sudan Displacement: <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>

Story



Refugee students get lessons over radio during Kenya school shutdown Teachers broadcast classes over community radio to keep refugee students learning

In normal times, Amina Hassan would stand in front of her class at Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya. But with schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers are forced to improvise.

These days, Amina, a Kenyan teacher, broadcasts to her Grade Five class of around 100 over Radio Gargaar, a community station.

“I am happy to relate with most of my students over the radio. They sometimes call me at the studio to ask questions,” she says. “I believe they are learning even though I can’t see them.”

With schools in Kenya closed for over a month, radio lessons help Amina and her fellow teachers in Dadaab support over 100,000 students who attend the camp’s 22 primary and nine secondary schools.

With the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic globally, the needs of refugee children have become even more pressing. To ensure education continues, Kenya’s Ministry of Education along with UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and other partners have devised creative approaches to enable home studies.

“We are looking at ways to build up existing connected learning programmes in the camp,” says Alan Mwika, a UNHCR education officer in Dadaab, who stresses that conditions for education were difficult even before the pandemic.

Those initiatives include the Instant Network Schools supported by Vodafone, which uses the internet to supplement classroom learning. They also include Borderless Higher Education for Refugees (BHER), which facilitates distance university education by refugees through partnerships with universities.

“We must find innovative ways to ensure education continues despite the challenging situation.” Amina and 800 other teachers in Dadaab are also connected through WhatsApp groups with their students, Mwika adds.

In all, the groups reach more than 64,000 students and UNHCR and partners hope to increase the reach of the project.

Amina’s work does not end with the live broadcasts. She mentors her students over the phone, through WhatsApp and direct calls, encouraging them to keep learning.

“We must find innovative ways to ensure education continues despite the challenging situation,” she says.

Amina began her teaching career in 2011, specializing in English and Swahili. Her school, Umoja Primary School in Hagadera camp in Dadaab, has over 1,200 students.

In nearly a decade of teaching, she has embraced working in refugee settings, despite the difficult conditions and limited resources. COVID-19 is just an extra challenge, but she tries to act as a role model particularly for girls.

“I did not know that working in a refugee camp was going to change my perceptions completely,” she says. “Refugees are very respectful and very interested in education because they know it empowers them.”

By Alan Mwika in Dadaab, Kenya

Additional reporting by Catherine Wachiaya and Caroline Opile in Nairobi, Kenya

Photo: © Radio Garaar/Ahmed Aden Ibrahim



A video from Dadaab featuring Somali refugee teacher Amina Hassan is available via this link:

[Radio lessons keep learning going for refugee students despite Coronavirus lockdown](#)