

# East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

1-22 July 2020

 **4.6** MILLION  
 REFUGEES & ASYLUM-SEEKERS

 **8.1** MILLION  
 INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

 **33,528**  
 REFUGEE RETURNEES IN 2020

**50,420** CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES IN HOSTING COUNTRIES

## Operational Context

The COVID-19 situation in the East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region continues to evolve. While so far there has been no large-scale outbreak in the approximately 100 refugee camps and settlements in the region, 4.6 million refugees and their host communities are at risk, as are some 8.1 million IDPs. The need for preparedness remains urgent as local transmission is ongoing and cases are still rising in all countries of the region. Governments have put in place various measures to contain the spread of the virus and are periodically announcing changes to movement and other restrictions.

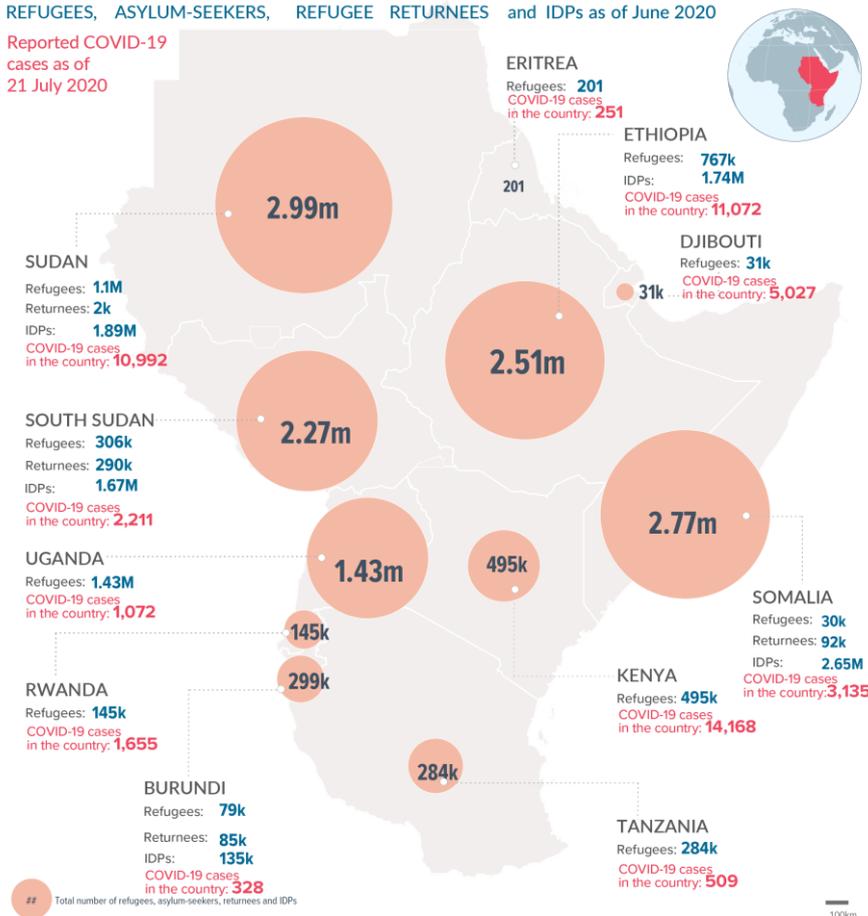
The airspace in the region is gradually opening with airports in **Kenya** and **Rwanda** to resume international flights on 1 August while **Sudan** is already partially open. **Djibouti** resumed international flights on 18 July. Airports in **Somalia**, **South Sudan** and **Uganda** remain closed to commercial flights but remain open to cargo flights and the movement of humanitarian staff.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the region is plagued by multiple crises including political instability, armed conflict, and climate related disasters. The rainy season has led to increased humanitarian needs in **Somalia**, **South Sudan** and **Sudan** as a result of additional displacement due to flooding and landslides.

As of 21 July, there were 50,420 confirmed COVID-19 cases in all countries in the EHAGL region.

REFUGEES, ASYLUM-SEEKERS, REFUGEE RETURNEES and IDPs as of June 2020

Reported COVID-19 cases as of 21 July 2020



## Key Measures Taken

- Supporting national authorities in ensuring that prevention and response preparedness are ongoing in all locations.
- Ensuring basic assistance and minimum standards during quarantine for new asylum seekers and refugees who have travelled internally within host countries.
- Procurement and distribution of health and sanitation equipment and supplies is ongoing.

\*COVID-19 Case information: WHO, John Hopkins University, Ministries of Health, Governments. Note: COVID-19 cases refer to total cases reported in the countries of asylum. IDP figures source: IOM, OCHA and UNHCR.

## UNHCR Response

### Protection

UNHCR continues to assess the impact of border closures and travel restrictions on access to asylum. Access to registration and refugee status determination for new asylum seekers remains difficult due to the current lockdowns. Movements continue through unofficial border crossing points where screening and provision of information is not in place. Across the region, UNHCR has appealed for special measures to be put in place, to allow for asylum-seekers to be screened, quarantined and admitted, and for UNHCR to be granted access to areas where new refugees are arriving. On 30 June, UNHCR launched a [global online Platform](#) on the protection impact of temporary measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including access to territory and national asylum systems.

In **Uganda**, following the temporary opening of Uganda's borders between 1 and 3 July, over 3,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were able to enter the country, some 65 per cent of whom were children. The new arrivals were taken to a quarantine facility, as part of COVID-19 measures, where UNHCR and its partners provided aid and health care services. After 14-days in mandatory quarantine, the group was transported to existing refugee settlements, in line with national guidelines and protocols. UNHCR continues to support the Government of Uganda in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through constructing and strengthening quarantine and isolation facilities and increasing handwashing supplies and availability of masks. For more details, see UNHCR's [Briefing Note](#). In a [press release](#), UNHCR commended the Government of Uganda's decision to temporarily re-open the country's border, despite restrictions in place to curb the spread of COVID-19, as an example of how careful border management can respect international human rights and refugee protection standards amid the pandemic.

In **Ethiopia**, efforts are ongoing to address the situation of more than 8,000 new arrivals from South Sudan who have been sheltering at the newly re-opened Pagak Reception center in Gambella and a nearby school. Both facilities are overcrowded, and services overstretched. As part of the agreement reached with the Government of Ethiopia to decongest the centers and start relocations to refugee camps, random sample COVID-19 testing has been initiated. Negative cases will be relocated, while positive cases will be moved to government isolation facilities. Treatment facilities in the region are quickly nearing capacity and there is an urgent need for additional quarantine and isolation facilities, as well as PPE, testing kits, and other medical equipment.

In **South Sudan**, reports indicate that cross border movements have continued including of new refugee arrivals as well as spontaneous South Sudanese refugee returnees through unofficial border crossing points in spite of the COVID-19 restrictions. This trend will require deployment of additional resources towards facilitating access to territory and asylum at border points of entry. UNHCR has strengthened active participation including advocacy with partners at the National Technical Working Group on Points of Entry.

Voluntary repatriation of **Burundian** refugees in **Tanzania** resumed on 2 July, after being suspended on 15 May due to the elections. Three other convoys have taken place since. COVID-19 testing of returnees began with the convoy on 16 July 2020 consisting of 201 individuals. A total number of 400 Burundians have so far returned this month from Tanzania. A meeting of the Technical Working Group of the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania is taking place 22-24 July 2020 in Kigoma, Tanzania to review the joint workplan.

UNHCR continues to **advocate with Government partners** to be able to carry out border monitoring activities, especially in lockdown situations.

**Strengthening** and seeking innovative approaches to support in developing guidance documents on **Risk Communication & Community Engagement** and disseminating information to persons of concern.

**Continue to adapt and strengthen** provision of **Mental Health and Psychological Support** to persons of concern through various ways.

**Adaptation of premises** and procedures are underway to provide protection assistance; services are delivered through remote options that are relying increasingly on **community-based structures**.

On 21 July, Amnesty International issued a [statement](#) calling on authorities in **Somalia** to “place a moratorium on forced evictions including in IDP settlements.” The statement also called on international partners to ensure that IDP families have access to water, sanitation, health and adequate housing when responding to COVID-19. UNHCR has continuously advocated - closely with the DSRSG/RC/HC – for the Federal Government of Somalia to issue a national evictions moratorium.

On 28 June, UNHCR conducted protection monitoring for IDPs in Abu Jubayhah town, Kordofan, **Sudan**, targeting community-based protection networks, IDP community leaders and community volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic to understand the general situation as well as emerging protection concerns or issues. Key findings include, amongst others: IDP difficulties in accessing their areas of origin for seasonal cultivation; rise in security incidents of killings, armed robbery and theft; inter-communal conflicts; protests or demonstrations; shortage of fuel; lack of health services and theft/robberies against NGOs.

## Education

With five countries in the region proposing school reopening in September 2020 (**Djibouti, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan**), the safe re-opening of schools remains an important priority. Discussions are on-going with UNICEF in **Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda** on provision of tents to serve as extra learning spaces to address social distancing in schools.

The Government of **Rwanda**, with funding from the World Bank is in the process of constructing 22,000 extra classrooms and 31,000 latrines countrywide including schools enrolling refugees. Construction is to be completed by September.

**Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Uganda** have received a total of \$4 million from DFID to support teacher salaries between August 2020 – February 2021.

In **Sudan**, to contribute to safe learning spaces, in North Kordofan State, Plan International, Save the Children International, Islamic World Union, Islamic Relief Worldwide and UNHCR supported examination centers through the Ministry of Education (MOE) with hand washing facilities, sanitizers, disinfectants, soap and 2 knapsack spray pumps where students, including refugees and IDPs, were to sit in for their final Basic Primary School Leaving Examinations commencing on 19 July. As part of COVID-19 preventive measures, UNHCR provided 5,000 masks made by refugees in the camps to both the refugee and host community pupils as well as the examination invigilators. UNHCR also provided 10 cartons of soap and other cleaning materials to be used during the examinations, and installed handwashing facilities in the exam centers.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

**Emphasis remains on blanket prevention activities in camps and working with the health sector to assess and prepare for WASH needs and infection prevention control in identified health structures to isolate and treat COVID-19 patients.**

*WASH prevention activities targeting all camp populations, such as increased water supply, provision of soap for handwashing and public awareness activities are progressing throughout the region. The replenishment of hygiene material requires longer term planning and additional funding as the timeline of the pandemic continues to extend.*

In **Djibouti**, awareness against COVID-19 continues in the village of Markazi through the *Centre Médical Hospitalier d'Obock* and ONARS while the *Direction de l'Hydraulique Rurale* ensured the supply of drinking water to all households in Markazi. In the village of Ali-Addeh, daily water production has more than doubled (30m<sup>3</sup>/d to 76m<sup>3</sup>/d) after the replacement of standpipes and solar panels. In **Rwanda**, UNHCR's partner, World Vision International, continues to provide support (handwashing stations, infection prevention and control) at the new quarantine sites in schools at Mahama, Kigeme and Mugombwa camps. Additional mobile latrines are under procurement to supplement the existing facilities at these sites. Soap distributions were carried out in several parts of **Sudan**: 10,248 individuals were provided with soap between 20-30 June in Al Jameya camp, West Nile State. Water, Environment and Sanitation, UNHCR's partner in West Kordofan, distributed 3,000 pieces of 60 mg of hand sanitizers to refugees and host communities in Al Meiram, Kharasana and El Fula. Between 14-20 July, the Sudanese Red Crescent Society, in coordination with UNHCR, distributed 62,220 pieces of soap to 3,111 refugees and hosts in El Fula and neighboring villages.

## Health

**Major health challenges include the immediate availability of equipment necessary to detect, test and treat complicated cases, medical and PPE supplies and adequate quarantine facilities, as well as the feasibility of practicing physical distancing at the community level.**

The geographical locations of refugee and IDP locations and their proximity to borders pose challenges for the COVID-19 response. The movement of refugees, new arrivals and pendular movements complicate required testing. The limitation of some national responses has been observed, including excessive centralization and lack of testing in remote areas.

In Palabek settlement, in **Uganda**, the distribution of washable facemasks to refugees was launched in a ceremony officiated by the Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. At the time of the launch ceremony, 13,000 face masks had been produced through the 122 refugee tailors currently engaged in the production exercise. Palabek settlement aims to produce 41,270 facemasks to be distributed to all refugees aged 6 years and above, in line with the guidelines from the Ministry of Health. In **Somalia**, as part of UNHCR Somalia's ongoing COVID-19 response, 500 Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) and 10 temporary housing units were handed over to medical facilities in Somaliland at a ceremony attended by the Vice President and the Minister for Health on 8 July. The targeted facilities included Hargeisa Group Hospital, Berbera General hospital as well as Ifiin, Saxardid and DAMI-B health centres.

## Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

Responding to the need for up to date information on the impact of the pandemic on host communities and refugees, UNHCR and the World Bank, in close cooperation with national statistics offices, have launched impact surveys in **Kenya** and **Uganda**. Having completed the first-round, evidence from Kenya shows:

- The global economic downturn has led to a substantial drop in remittances for refugee households dropping from 20% in May to 7% in June.
- In Kenya, refugees experienced a massive drop in access to employment opportunities, declining from 32% before the pandemic to 7% in June.
- Only one third of refugee children in camp settings remain engaged in learning activities.

The detailed statistics can be accessed via the [COVID-19 economic tracker](#). The datasets have been uploaded to [UNHCR Microlibrary](#).

Results from UNHCR's 2019 global monitoring of programs show that refugees cite the lack of employment opportunities, followed by difficulty in accessing financial services, as the biggest obstacles to earning a living. The annual monitoring also surveys refugees about the livelihoods support they had received in the past year from UNHCR and its partners both before and after the interventions. The results of the survey are published on the [Livelihoods Information System \(LIS\)](#), an initiative funded by the European Commission. The monitoring cycle usually ends in June of the following year; but due to COVID-19 and restrictions the monitoring for 2019 programs has been extended to September 2020. Early results from 178 camps across 21 countries implementing livelihoods programs demonstrate programs are on average improving employment, income and savings for refugees. Among refugees who benefitted from UNHCR livelihoods programs, their overall employment rate increased by 10 percentage points. Most program beneficiaries also reported higher incomes after the livelihoods interventions (44 percent). Encouragingly, 42 percent of programme participants reported increased savings, potentially an indicator of improved resilience to future income shocks. In Dadaab refugee camp, **Kenya**, a recently concluded self-employment program targeted 100 refugees and 20 host community resulting in an 87% increase in self-employment, and over 80% increase in over income and savings as a result of the program. With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting refugees' livelihoods, the survey results will help to inform livelihoods programming going forward.



*A Somali refugee farmer from Kenya's Dadaab camp proudly shows off his okra harvest. He keeps some produce to feed his family and sells the surplus to markets in the camps around Dadaab. UNHCR/A. Nasrullah*

## Inter-agency Coordination

Operations are working closely with UN Country Teams, Resident Coordinators and the World Health Organization on crisis management, personnel and business continuity arrangements, program criticality, preparedness, and response planning. Existing refugee response coordination structures continue to function, through virtual communication where relevant.

At the regional level UNHCR is engaged with the Regional Humanitarian Partners Team (RHPT) to map the impact on humanitarian operations and coordinate on advocacy messaging, as well as with many sectoral groups including health, nutrition, education, and child protection which have been developing context specific inter-agency guidance on programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 1 July, a meeting of the RHPT took place during which the highlights of UN-INGO Regional Director meeting, updates from the SGBV Area of Responsibility, access-related issues and a proposal for the creation of a Cash Working Group under the RHPT were discussed.

On 16 July, the 17th virtual NGO consultations addressed the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 by working with development partners, as well as considering SDGs. On 8 July, the 16th virtual NGO consultations looked at the theme of Reform in Implementing Partnerships.

The 15th virtual NGO consultations, held on 1 July, focused on internal displacement in the context of COVID-19. The discussion featured the UN High Level-Panel on Internal Displacement.

## Funding needs

The second revision of the [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) was launched on 16 July with overall funding requirements rising to \$10.3 billion, with the inclusion of additional country response plans and other increased needs. The spread of the pandemic necessitates more intensive health prevention and treatment measures and increasing investments to maintain other essential health services in parallel. UNHCR's revised requirements of US\$745 million reflected in the revised May [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (launched on 7 May seeking US\$6.7 billion) remain unchanged.

UNHCR's [Revised Emergency Appeal](#) detailing the country and sectoral breakdown of UNHCR's global budget requirements was launched on 11 May. Within the revised appeal, \$126 million has been requested for ten countries in the East and Horn and Great Lakes Region.

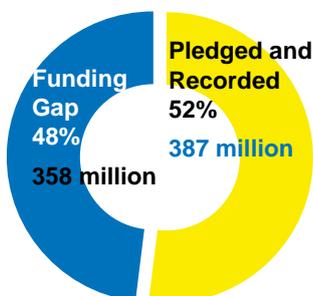
The initial [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) was launched on 25 March seeking US\$2.01 billion, and which included US\$255 million for initial, prioritized requirements in UNHCR's operations in affected countries.

**USD 745 million**  
 requested by  
**UNHCR in the**  
 revised inter-agency  
**Global**  
**Humanitarian**  
**Response Plan**

**USD 126 million**  
 requested for 10  
 countries in the  
**East and Horn of**  
**Africa and Great**  
**Lakes region**

## Funding

USD 745M requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally:



### Total contributed or pledged to the COVID-19 appeal

**USD 387M** including:

United States \$186M | EU \$43M | Germany \$39M | UK \$25M | Japan \$23.9M | Denmark \$14.6M | UN Foundation \$10M | CERF \$6.9M | Canada \$6.4M | Qatar Charity \$3.5M | Spain \$3.4M | Ireland \$3.3M | Sweden \$3M | Sony Corporation \$3M | Education Cannot Wait \$1.7M | UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe \$1.7M | Private donors UK \$1.5M | Norway \$1.4M | Unilever (UK) \$1.3M | USA for UNHCR \$1M

### Unearmarked contributions to UNHCR's regular global programmes:

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Private donors Spain 39.8M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors Republic of Korea 20.5M | Switzerland 16.4M | France 14M | Private donors Japan 11.7M

**Links:**

**UNHCR COVID-19 country updates:** [Ethiopia](#), [Kenya](#), [Uganda](#), [South Sudan](#)

**UNHCR Press release:** [UNHCR and WFP warn refugees in Africa face hunger and malnutrition as COVID-19 worsens food shortages](#)

**UNHCR Press release:** [UNHCR calls for solidarity and continued support in its efforts to strengthen COVID-19 preparedness and response in Rwanda](#)

**UNHCR Blog:** [Beneficiaries of monitored livelihoods programmes see gains in employment, income and savings](#)

**UNHCR COVID-19 Platform:** [Temporary Measures and Impact on Protection](#)

**MADE-51 Shop:** <https://shop.made51.org/>

Click [here](#) to access a [live dashboard](#) providing information on COVID-19 cases in the region, as well as travel restrictions and movement and border controls put in place by Governments.

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