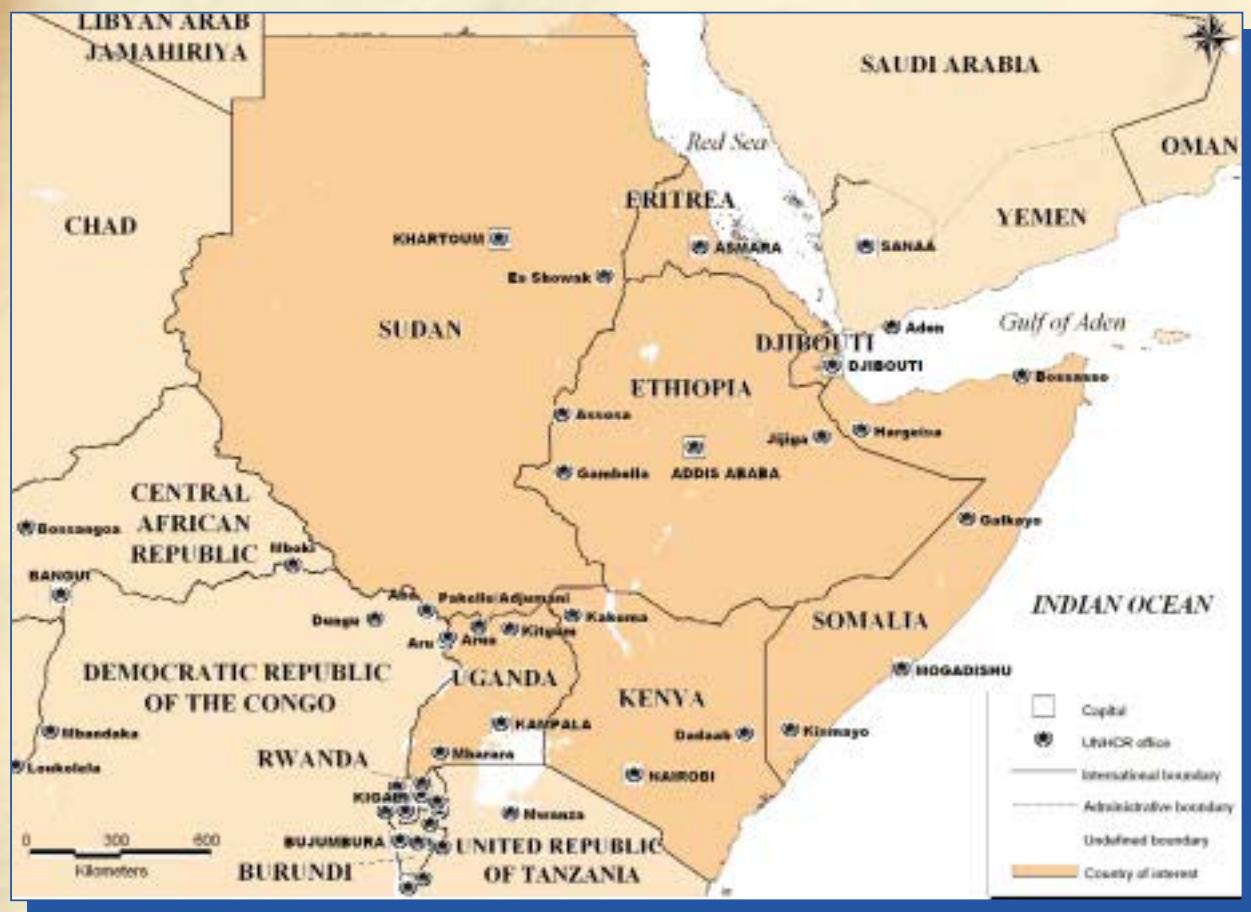


Djibouti,  
Eritrea,  
Ethiopia,  
Kenya,

Somalia,  
Sudan,  
Uganda.

# EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA REGIONAL OVERVIEW



## Recent Developments

The refugee situations in East Africa and the Horn of Africa date back more than three decades. The root causes form a nexus of political and economic factors, as well as inter-clan disputes. The region currently hosts some 1.1 million refugees and an estimated 3.2 million internally displaced persons.

The on-going conflict in the central and southern parts of Somalia and the civil war in southern Sudan have prevented the launch of large-scale organised voluntary repatriation to these two countries, with the exception of north-west and north-east Somalia. The conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and rebel activities in northern and western Uganda have added new dimensions to population movements in an already volatile region. Although Ethiopia and Eritrea

have agreed to abide by the recent OAU framework agreement for peace, practical arrangements for its implementation are still anxiously awaited so that thousands of internally displaced persons can return to their areas of origin. Sudanese refugees continue to arrive in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

Many refugee camps and settlement areas have become increasingly unsafe for refugees and humanitarian workers. The proximity of camps to borders continues to expose refugees to armed conflict that poses a threat to life and limb both within and outside the camps. Violence is instigated by criminal and/or politically-motivated elements within the refugee community, often resulting in serious injury and, in some cases, death. In many camps, refugee women and girls have been particularly vulnerable to sexual violence.

lence whilst venturing into remote areas in search of firewood.

The security situation for refugees in Kenya, though still a concern, has improved largely thanks to UNHCR's material and logistics assistance to the Kenyan police, as well as the establishment of a mobile court. A project to provide firewood to refugee women has contributed to a reduction in incidents of sexual violence in and around the refugee camps. Counselling services for survivors of violence have also been enhanced.

The absence of a central government in Somalia continues to impede efforts to find long-term solutions for Somali refugees. UNHCR is also concerned about continued armed clashes between rival militias in southern Somalia: these have forced Somalis there to take refuge in various countries. Meanwhile, a successful programme is underway for the voluntary repatriation to north-west Somalia of Somalis in refugee camps in Ethiopia.

Having successfully completed the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from Sudan between 1993 and 1998, UNHCR has applied the cessation clause to those Ethiopian refugees who arrived in Sudan and other countries of asylum prior to 1991, as they are no longer considered to need international protection because of the changed circumstances. The voluntary repatriation of Eritrean refugees still in Sudan is at an impasse since 1996. Efforts are underway to persuade the Eritrean Government to agree to receive its citizens.

### **Strategic Objectives**

One of UNHCR's main goals for the region in 2000 is to build and reinforce the skills and material resources of governments to respond to the needs of refugees, provide them with protection and promote respect for refugee law and basic humanitarian principles. This will take place in the form of training and advocacy but also through logistical support to relevant government departments and local authorities. The protracted nature of some refugee situations will be reviewed and the relevant groups' continued need for international protection reassessed.

UNHCR will promote the voluntary repatriation of refugees in the region to their countries of origin when conditions allow, and sustainable reintegration programmes are in place in areas of return. When feasible, attempts will be made to hand

over UNHCR's programmes to development agencies and NGO partners to allow for a subsequent phase-out of direct assistance.

Pending lasting solutions, UNHCR will continue to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and others of concern by providing basic services: health, water, sanitation, education and planning of camp infrastructure. The strategy will vigorously promote self-reliance for refugees in food production and other aspects of life.

UNHCR will work to further improve camp security, with special emphasis on the security of refugee women and children. Activities for refugee women and children will be made an integral part of protection and assistance strategies, and workshops on gender issues will serve to increase awareness among refugee workers. Refugee women will benefit from adult literacy classes and UNHCR will ensure that refugee children have access to basic education.

UNHCR also plans to become more involved in conflict prevention and management in the region. This will take place through closer cooperation with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) based in Addis Ababa in matters relating to the humanitarian sector of the organisation. In 2000, UNHCR expects to formulate an Action Plan for cooperation with IGAD. The Action Plan relates to peace-making initiatives, area-based reintegration, emergency preparedness and response, expansion and training at the IGAD Secretariat, and the wider issue of population movements.

### **Operations**

In line with the High Commissioner's decision to restructure the Africa Bureau, the Regional Directorate based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, covers East Africa and the Horn of Africa as well as the Great Lakes Region. The Regional Directorate will in 2000 operate with twenty staff (seven international and 13 national). One Junior Professional Officer will also be deployed to this office. The role of the Directorate is to harmonise policy making and oversee operations in 12 countries in the two regions. The Regional Director will work closely with the other two Regional Directors to bring an Africa-wide perspective to UNHCR's interventions. Policy advice and guidance will be provided to country representatives on issues related to international protection as well as programme and financial management.

The following section provides information on objectives and activities in those countries that are not covered in country chapters. Information on **Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda** is presented in separate chapters hereafter.

Most of the 21,600 Somali refugees in **Djibouti** are expected to continue to receive basic humanitarian assistance. This is because voluntary repatriation to their areas of return in north-west Somalia is still unfavourable as many areas are believed to be mined and lack the basic infrastructure to sustain the returnee population. Solutions to these problems are being sought, which may help pave the way for voluntary repatriation. It is expected that most Ethiopian refugees will be repatriated to Ethiopia in 2000. Further efforts will be made to explore long-term solutions for the remaining refugees, many of whom are ex-soldiers.

UNHCR helped 25,000 Eritrean refugees return from Sudan to **Eritrea** in a pilot repatriation programme that was completed in 1995. Due to various political and technical constraints, a larger

repatriation operation has not yet been possible despite the fact that more than 147,000 Eritrean refugees in Sudan would like to return home. UNHCR plans to continue discussions with the Eritrean authorities on this issue.

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA	
BUDGET (USD)	
Country	Annual Programme
Djibouti	2,732,512
Eritrea	1,232,483
Ethiopia *	22,598,062
Kenya	22,987,560
Somalia	10,592,219
Sudan	10,778,367
Uganda	19,642,821
Sub-total	90,564,024
Liaison Unit at Headquarters	668,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,232,024</b>

\* Includes administrative costs for the Regional Director's Office of USD 1,382,835.

## The Sudanese Refugee Situation

The civil war in Sudan has lasted for 15 years, leaving an immense country divided and impoverished. Civilian populations have been targeted by all sides in the conflict. As a result, there are about 375,000 Sudanese refugees worldwide, mainly in Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Central African Republic, DRC and Chad. Another roughly four million Sudanese are thought to be internally displaced – the largest internally displaced population in the world. Due to the on-going fighting between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), UNHCR does not promote voluntary repatriation to Sudan.

In Uganda, there are some 195,000 Sudanese refugees, mostly settled in rural areas in the north-western districts of Mayo, Arua and Adjumani, many of them there since 1988. A four-year strategy, designed to provide a lasting solution, is being implemented by UNHCR in cooperation with central and local authorities. Its aims are two-fold: to help the refugees attain complete self-sufficiency, and to merge

refugee programmes with national programmes, so that refugee services become absorbed into district structures. It is envisaged that by 2003 the refugees will be able to grow or buy their own food, access and pay for basic services and maintain self-sustaining community structures. The overall goal is to improve the standard of living of all the people in these districts, both refugees and nationals.

Due to the continuing conflict in southern Sudan, the influx of Sudanese refugees into western Ethiopia has continued, though more slowly than in previous years. UNHCR provides protection and multi-sectoral assistance to some 70,000 Sudanese refugees in four refugee camps in the west of Ethiopia. The focus of the assistance is on helping the refugees attain partial self-sufficiency in food production through agricultural activities. However, the Government of Ethiopia is reluctant to make more agricultural land available to them because of limited resources.

In Kenya, 55,000 Sudanese refugees are protected and assisted, mainly in the Kakuma camp. Local integration is not a possible solution at this stage. UNHCR also facilitates the voluntary return of a few people to Khartoum and northern areas of Sudan, and the resettlement in third countries

of certain vulnerable refugees with special protection needs, notably women at risk.

UNHCR will need **USD 29,966,896** to help Sudanese refugees in the year 2000.

## The Somali Refugee Situation

For years, many parts of Somalia have experienced inter-factional fighting, resulting since 1991 not only in the absence of a central government, responsible governing structures or law and order in large areas of the country, but also in human rights violations, including arbitrary killings and rape, and complex humanitarian emergencies. The consequences of war and insecurity have been aggravated by natural disasters and the outbreak of diseases such as cholera.

These circumstances forced an estimated one million Somali nationals to seek safety in exile at the height of the crisis in 1991/92. Large numbers of Somalis were and continue to be internally displaced. While many Somali refugees returned home either spontaneously or with UNHCR's assistance, over 350,000 remain in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Kenya where they continue to benefit from UNHCR's protection and assistance programmes. Others are hosted in countries outside the immediate region, Egypt and Yemen, as well as in Europe and North America.

Today, Somalia is a complex mosaic of areas of crisis, areas of transition to more stable forms of local governance and areas of recovery with functioning authorities, as in the north-west (Somaliland) and the north-east (Puntland). The levels of peace, stability and governance in the different areas of Somalia vary greatly, so the UN and UNHCR have had to adapt their strategy to fit local conditions. While killings and kidnapping of humanitarian workers continued to be a cause of grave concern in southern Somalia in 1999, UNHCR and other agencies were able to operate safely in the north of the country.

In the past, the search for peace in Somalia has not been helped by a perceived proliferation of

initiatives driven by various actors. This is now being minimised thanks to growing support for and willingness to speed up the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) process through the Standing Committee on Somalia. Indeed, Somali civil society is making itself heard, having grown tired of continued fighting and insecurity. Interest and support has been voiced for initiatives aimed at bringing about lasting peace. Ordinary Somalis are pressuring their leaders to pursue peace and the international community for support for the peace process. This includes women's groups, which have started to raise their voices as credible interlocutors for peace.

With approximately half of the territory of Somalia peaceful, the IGAD "building block-peace dividend" approach presents a way forward for the UN and the international community. It aims to bring together all conceivable segments of the Somali population in building a peaceful existence in an increasing number of areas of Somalia. The peace dividend will result from work to rebuild and rehabilitate infrastructure and support institutions, and law and order in regions which have shown a commitment to peace and reconciliation. The Secretary-General's report to the Security Council in August 1999 encouraged a reappraisal of the international community's relationship to Somalia, considering that it may be appropriate for the UN to play an enhanced role in Somalia in an effort to re-establish a functioning state and seek national reconciliation.

Within this context and against a background of important linkages between people, economies and population movements in the region, UNHCR has forged partnerships with important actors like IGAD, UNDP and other UN agencies to establish comprehensive plans and a division of

labour along the lines of agency mandates. In October 1999, UNHCR Representatives from countries hosting sizeable numbers of Somali refugees met the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, the UN Political Office for Somalia and the UN Chief Security Advisor for Somalia. Together they reviewed UNHCR's approach and the concerns of the host governments.

UNHCR's strategy in 2000 will be to promote the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees to areas of relative peace and stability in Somalia (areas of recovery in the north-west and north-east), monitor the reintegration of the returnees, and – within the confines of its mandate – support their sustainable reintegration through community-based interventions. Refugees originating from areas of crisis and areas of transition in other parts of the country have limited prospects for voluntary repatriation in the short-term. UNHCR will however facilitate the return of those who decide – on the basis of a well-informed picture of the prevailing security situation – to repatriate to these areas.

Given this situation, it is clear that host governments and UNHCR will have to ensure the

international protection and well-being of thousands of Somali refugees in exile for the foreseeable future. Individual status determination may be considered for new refugees coming from the north-west and north-east. Refugees fleeing fighting and insecurity in other areas will continue to be granted refugee status on a *prima facie* basis as long as they arrive in countries bordering Somalia. Asylum requests by newly arrived Somalis in countries not neighbouring Somalia will be individually determined.

UNHCR's strategy for Somali refugees in countries bordering Somalia and further afield will be multi-faceted. Firstly, the Office will consider conditions in areas of origin to determine the potential for voluntary repatriation. Secondly, a comprehensive and constructive approach will be taken to create suitable living conditions in countries of asylum, particularly for Somali refugees without any immediate prospects of return. This approach is rooted in the premise that self-sufficiency is preferable to interminable dependence on humanitarian assistance. Thirdly, resettlement to third countries will be sought for those meeting UNHCR criteria. UNHCR will require **USD 34,208,018** to pursue these goals.

