

UNHCR Evaluation Management Response			
Evaluation title:	Evaluation of UNHCR's Response to the L3 Emergency in Ethiopia 2021–2022		
UNHCR evaluation reference:	EVO/2023/01		
Entity that commissioned the evaluation:	Evaluation Office		
Due date of Management Response:	13.08.2023		
Coordinator of Management Response:	Martin Manteaw	Principal Situation Coordinator	UNHCR Ethiopia Operation
Management Response approved by (<i>senior manager in commissioning office</i>):	Raouf Mazou	Assistant High Commissioner, Operations	UNHCR Headquarters
Date:	17 Nov 2023		
General comments on the evaluation:	<p>While the report acknowledges the presence of challenges in the North, such as the absence of a communications network, limited access to financial services, fuel shortage and electricity blackouts, restricted humanitarian supply routes, and significant safety and security impediments, it does not provide explicit connections between these challenges and their impacts on the operation. Establishing these linkages would have provided a stronger basis for some of the recommendations, and understanding how the operation would function within such a constrained environment would be crucial. However, it is worth noting that the operation largely agrees with the recommendations, as most of the suggested actions have already been implemented or are currently underway.</p>		
RECOMMENDATION 1:	<p>In follow up to the current “peace agreement”, UNHCR should review its leadership role in the inter-agency IDP response to define its ongoing contributions to the inter-agency humanitarian response and continue to ensure the centrality of protection in all humanitarian action in northern Ethiopia. Humanitarian principles must be at the core of the UNHCT/interagency protection strategy and a firm basis for its ongoing relationship with the RRS as visions, plans and programmes under RRS’ new mandate are established.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p>		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure continuous and appropriate protection and CCCM cluster coordination and leadership at subnational level in northern Ethiopia. • Build on and expand protection interventions, for both IDPs and host communities and go beyond life-saving assistance, reassessing protection risk and amend protection strategies. • Make use of the long-term relationship with RRS and its expanded mandate for IDPs to optimize synergies, coordination, and collaboration in favour of protection in humanitarian crisis going forward. • Leverage high-quality data and analysis, as well as knowledge, to strengthen inclusive collaboration in the HCT response. 				
Management response:		Agree X Partially agree Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		Note for clarification: Despite initial discussions, RRS does not have a mandate on IDP response. Any previous plans or discussions regarding this matter did not materialize. Furthermore, in accordance with the draft domestication proclamation for the Kampala Convention, a national coordination council will be established to address the prevention, protection, and provision of durable solutions for IDPs. The Ministry of Peace will serve as the of the secretariat Council.				
Unit or function responsible:		<i>[add name of divisions, bureaux, and/or country operations to which recommendation is addressed]</i>				
Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Revise the Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategy	HCR Protection/Protection Cluster	The EHCT renewed its commitment to place protection at the centre of the humanitarian response, strategically leverage the resources of the HCT to establish a system to address protection within assistance delivery, promote legal norms, advocacy, confidential representations, and humanitarian diplomacy to ensure a coherent protection approach. The draft is currently under review by the HCT for endorsement.	Dec 2023	Completed	EHCT protection strategy was endorsed. The HCT is in the process of setting up an advisory group to monitor implementation. Protection is now a standing agenda in the HCT meetings. Some actions are underway

						and more needs to be done to realise the action of the strategy
2	Maintain leadership in the protection and CCCM clusters	Protection and CCCM clusters	<p>UNHCR has maintained appropriate dedicated Protection and CCCM cluster capacity ensuring its leadership. UNHCR strengthened sub national coordination in six (6) field units in Tigray, as well as coordination at field level in Amhara region.</p>	Sep 2023	Completed	<p>UNHCR's leadership in Protection and CCCM Cluster has been strengthened at field level. Currently, UNHCR is chairing Protection Cluster and Co-chairing CCCM Cluster with IOM in Tigray, with highly active participation.</p>
3	Develop Protection Monitoring and Solutions Tool	BO Protection Section	<p>The tool was developed by the Protection Cluster led by UNHCR to enable re-assessment of risks and contextualization of protection and solutions strategies. As part of the area-based approach, the Protection Cluster is also strengthening community-based approach, through community structures to promote community-led initiatives and synergies with on-going programmes for sustainability. In order to leverage high-quality data and analysis, as well as knowledge, the tool will also help scale-up of protection data collection and analysis, mobile assessment and services in hard-to-reach areas and enhance case management and referrals, to ensure inclusive collaboration in the HCT response.</p>	March 2023	Completed	<p>Protection Monitoring and Solutions Tool has been developed. Three (3) Protection Monitoring and Solutions (PMS) reports were published in January 2022 (Afar region), May 2022</p>

						<p>(Tigray) and October 2023 Tigray, available on the data portal. The Protection Cluster is also committed to publishing regular protection analysis to inform the humanitarian response.</p> <p>Interactive dashboard is also available.</p>
4	Expand protection interventions and go beyond life-saving assistance	Sub/field offices (HoOs)	<p>UNHCR is playing a key role in the Durable Solutions Working Groups (DSWGs) established in the three (3) regions, in guiding the operationalization of durable solutions and ensuring centrality of protection in DS implementation. Area based approach solutions such as drop-in community centers have been established to provide services/ solutions for both IDPs and communities in Mekelle, Shire, Sheraro, Axum and other locations within the region. Working under the umbrella of the DSWG co-led by the regional/zonal governments, UNHCR and IOM, IDPs are being returned to their places of origin, thereby emptying classrooms for the resumption of schools. The DSWG has refurbished health centers, animal clinics, warehoused and schools.</p>	Completed	Completed	<p>Through Area-Based Approach, assorted services including access to information, WASH, psychosocial support, and indoor & outdoor games are being provided in Drop-In-Centers. UNHCR, under the DSWG, is actively involved in IDP return and relocation</p>

						activities. In April, IDPs were relocated from Endabaguna to Mai Dimu site.
RECOMMENDATION 2:	<p>The evaluation confirms the policy directive that orients UNHCR operations to work towards solutions from the onset of displacement. UNHCR in Ethiopia should continue to build upon its current joint planning for IDP solutions and contribute to sustainable reintegration/integration, ending IDP needs and preventing a protracted crisis.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate the current Durable Solutions initiatives in leading solutions aligned with the 2019 UNHCR IDP policy and the UN Secretary-General's Action Agenda on IDPs. • Follow the current peace agreement and assess how solutions for northern Ethiopia can be merged into the CO's ongoing solutions initiatives. • Use the strategic planning process for the MYSP 2025 to consolidate a transition towards a whole of displacement approach that goes beyond IDP return service delivery (context-dependent). • Expand a whole-of-society approach, including civil society, national human rights institutions, and the private sector. • Ensure solutions are locally owned and informed by IDPs and host communities through meaningful participation and inclusion. • Consolidate development solutions by linking them to development partners and donors as per the Multi-year Strategy 2022–2024. • Increase operational support and funding for solutions where possible. 					
Management response:	X Agree Partially agree Disagree					
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):	<i>[add only if partially agree or disagree was selected]</i>					
Unit or function responsible:	<i>[add name of divisions, bureaux, and/or country operations to which recommendation is addressed]</i>					
Top-line planned actions	By whom	Comments				Progress

				Expected completion date	Status	Comments
1	Advocacy	Protection cluster	UNHCR proactively promotes the forcibly displaced persons and other civilians affected by conflict through concerted advocacy and negotiations aimed at unlocking barriers to the protection and wider humanitarian response.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Protection Cluster continues to hold meeting bi-weekly basis where advocacy and resource mobilization for protection interventions are discussed.
2	Durable Solution Working Groups	Sub/field offices (HoOs)	UNCHR working with other sister agencies like IOM and the regional governments have established DSWGs in the three Northern regions (Afar, Amhara, Tigray). DSWGs are functioning in Mekelle, Shire, Semera, and Bahir Dar led by the regional authorities and co-led by UNHCR and IOM/UNDP. ToRs and the operational plans of the different WGs have been endorsed by authorities and partners, while UNHCR is hosting regular (weekly/monthly) coordination meetings in these locations. Return activities, including sensitization workshops, intention surveys, counselling, and registration of IDPs, explosive ordnance risk education, and mapping of return areas, are ongoing. Post Return support interventions are also provided to IDP returnees and vulnerable communities in the areas of return. These activities are being monitored and documented by the DSWG and include food assistance, emergency cash for spontaneous/ self-assisted returns, and rehabilitation of shelters in return areas. The DSWGs carry out protection monitoring and solutions assessments in the areas of returns that aim to inform recovery and reintegration programming and help ensure that returns are sustained and that returnees and their communities are provided	June 2023	Completed	The planned actions have been completed, but the interventions of the DSWG (monitoring and assessment, return activities) are ongoing. In Tigray, the DSWG has played a crucial role in facilitating the return of 111K individuals throughout 2022 and 2023. In 2023, the DSWG, led by regional governments in

			basic services, shelter solutions, livestock, agriculture, and livelihoods activities.			<p>Tigray and Somali regions, developed Durable Solutions Strategies with costed action plans. Afar and Amhara regions are also in the process of developing their own costed action plans.</p> <p>The strategy for Tigray has been endorsed by the regional government and is pending its launch.</p>
3	Quick Impact Projects	Sub/field offices (HoOs)	<p>UNHCR has been implementing Quick Impact Projects as a vector to durable solutions through renovating public infrastructures in places of return. For instance, two communal infrastructures (one communal agricultural input warehouse and one Animal health clinic) damaged due to the conflict were rehabilitated in Jirra district of Adet. Grinding Mill construction is under way in Adi-Waela district of North-western zone where massive spontaneous return was noted after the Peace Agreement. The grinding mill will be provided to IDP returnee women through which they would generate incomes thereby restoring their livelihoods to ensure self-reliance. In addition, three elementary schools in (1-Sheraro, 1-Selekaleka, and 1-Axum) which have been occupied by IDPs for more than two years were decommissioned and renovated after the IDPs returned</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>The planned Communal Agriculture input warehouse and Animal Health Clinic have been completed. Construction of the grinding mill is currently ongoing, with funds allocated and expected completion soon.</p>

			to their places of origin. It is worth noting that, these schools are serving IDP returnees who have returned from places like Shire and Mekelle to these communities.			
RECOMMENDATION 3:		<p>UNHCR must ensure that vulnerable populations of Eritrean refugees receive necessary protection. This should start with identifying the whereabouts of refugees displaced from the destroyed camps in Tigray and ensuring registration as a protection critical activity.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop approaches or review how to better protect Eritrean refugees. • Revisit protection and solutions for refugees in Tigray. • Promote a framework to the Ethiopian government, to help better coordinate and harmonize a mixed IDP and refugee humanitarian response. • Advocate to the RRS for additional NGO/INGO partners to support refugee responses in humanitarian crises. • Continue the construction of refugee sites and refugee inclusion as per the GCR and the Multi-year Strategy 2022–2024. • Expand the urban refugee CBI response in Addis Ababa and revisit the amounts of cash distributed. • Continue to innovate in preventing and responding to mental health and GBV. 				
Management response:		X Agree Partially agree Disagree				
Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):		<i>[add only if partially agree or disagree was selected]</i>				
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Top-line planned actions		By whom	Comments	Expected completion date	Progress	
					Status	Comments
1	Revisit protection and solutions for refugees in Tigray	Protection	UNHCR acknowledges the recommendation to ensure necessary protection for vulnerable populations of Eritrean refugees and has been taking proactive	Ongoing	Ongoing	As of July 2024, the presence of RRS in Tigray

			<p>measures and actively involved in addressing this issue. Refugees from the destroyed camps in Tigray have relocated to Alemwach settlement in Amhara, with some 40,000 becoming urban refugees in Addis Ababa, while others have remained in Tigray within the host community. Most of these individuals have been receiving assistance to meet their basic needs in the form of MPC and CRIs. In order to ensure registration of refugees and asylum seekers in the region as a critical protection activity, UNHCR has advocated for the resumption of operations by RRS in the region since the signing of CoHA.</p> <p>UNHCR is contextualizing its urban refugee strategy in line with the GCR and country multi-year protection and solutions strategy for Ethiopia to respond to the needs of the urban population in Tigray region, focused on inclusion in national systems. Integrated refugee settlement has been established in Alemwach hosting over 22,000 refugees and asylum seekers who were relocated from camps in Tigray. Other Eritrean refugees who remain in the region will be supported in line with the urban refugee strategy.</p>			<p>remains limited. UNHCR office in Tigray continues to provide direct support to the Eritrean refugees in the region including the provision of MPC, CRIs and protection counselling. UNHCR also continues to collect data of new arrivals in an excel sheet through its protection and registration and counselling sessions.</p>
2	RRS presence in Tigray	Programme/ PSC	<p>UNHCR is advocating for RRS presence in Tigray region and for enhancing protection of refugees and asylum seekers through registration and documentation. In the meantime, UNHCR continues to verify refugees and asylum seekers, provide targeted assistance to the most vulnerable and pursue solutions (relocation to Alemwach, resettlement, and complementary pathways). RRS is scheduled to resume its protection and operational activities in Tigray in collaboration with UNHCR from December 2023.</p>	Dec 2023	Ongoing	<p>UNHCR continues to advocate for the resumption of RRS services in Tigray. A joint RRS-UNHCR assessment for their service resumption has been conducted and is currently under discussion. Additionally, an</p>

						<p>assessment for a settlement in Afar was carried out from 11th to 14th July 2024.</p> <p>Based on this assessment, a higher-level decision is pending regarding the establishment of a new settlement in Afar for Eritrean refugees, with plans for two reception centers in Tigray (Endabaguna and Adigrat).</p>
3	Preventing and responding to mental health and GBV	Protection/ Health clusters	<p>UNHCR is supporting Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)T to expand MHPSS services to refugees and asylum seekers and supporting the Health Cluster in the region through provision of medicines distributed to health centers and advocating for inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in health services.</p> <p>In North-western zone of Tigray that was highly affected by conflict, which hosts mostly Kunama refugees and asylum seekers, UNHCR has collaborated with WHO to establish institutionalized MHPSS for severe cases of mental health and GBV. Through Joint UNHCR/ UNFPA/ UNICEF, GBV services have been scaled up in the northern region, focused on improving services at One-stop-centers, building capacities for case management</p>	June 2023	Completed	<p>MHPSS Needs Assessment Report for Children in Alemwach Refugee Site conducted in June 2023. Report available HERE</p> <p>Joint UNHCR/UNFPA GBV assessment was also undertaken</p>

			and comprehensive GBV assessment in the region is finalised.			and report published.	
RECOMMENDATION 4:	<p>UNHCR should address key efficiency challenges arising from the L3 response at a corporate level. These include challenges related to emergency preparedness, and streamlining of internal procedures and businesses processes, e.g., supply processes and staff recruitment and deployments – particularly of national staff fast-tracks. Implementing a “whole-of-UNHCR” response at speed, at scale and at multiple levels will always be difficult, but UNHCR processes can be improved by addressing persistent barriers. The oversight role of the RB is critical. An important part of addressing preparedness should be the thorough familiarization of emergency staff with fast-track procedures and authorities in an L3 emergency response.</p> <p>Suggested actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response was hindered by insufficient preparedness in early 2021. Solutions may involve ensuring the emergency preparedness system reliably escalates from risk analysis to L1, L2 and L3. It may also involve clarified accountabilities at CO, RB, and HQ levels. • The response scale-up was hindered by internal processes that were poorly adapted for emergencies, which reduced the quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of the response. Solutions may involve ensuring that all relevant CO/RB staff are trained on the rules and flexible processes as described in the UNHCR Emergency Handbook and standard operating procedures. It may involve clarified accountabilities for using simplified procedures and working to accelerated time frames in emergencies. • In the response, UNHCR struggled to deploy the right people at the right time, leading to insufficient cluster coordination capacity at subnational level and gaps between deployments, which negatively affected UNHCR’s leadership. Solutions may involve more streamlined procedures for Fast Track deployments, corporate approaches to emergency staffing and more delegation of authority to subnational level for hiring national Fast Track staff and for signing PPAs. 						
	Management response:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Partially agree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree					
	Reasons (if partially agree or disagree):	<i>[add only if partially agree or disagree was selected]</i>					
	Unit or function responsible:	<i>[add name of divisions, bureaux, and/or country operations to which recommendation is addressed]</i>					
	Top-line planned actions	By whom	Comments				Progress

				Expected completion date	Status	Comments
1	Simplification workshops	Exec. Office/ Heads of Units	<p>UNHCR initiated a simplification process last year to address issues under this the conclusions leading to this recommendation through stronger coordination with HQ and simplification of procedures to enable efficiency of responses. Two rounds of this workshop conducted in Nov 2022 and June 2023, on Programme management and Supply related procedures, and Human resource management, and Protection, Admin and Finance issues, respectively.</p>	June 2023	Completed	
2	Strengthened engagement in risk management practices	Risk and Inter-agency teams	<p>There are ongoing efforts in the operation on strengthening engagement in risk management practices including better use of the Operational Risk Register at both the CO and SO levels, ensuring more systematic follow-through on the agreed [proactive] risk treatments (for potential emergencies), and improved contingency planning with the direct support of the Regional Bureau.</p> <p>Implementing proactive treatments in preparedness activities, such as enhancing the level and pre-positioning of CRI stock and establishment of local emergency response rosters has helped the operation respond to emergencies in a seamless manner. The recent announcement by the RB on the establishment of emergency roster within the region will go a long way to support the operation in meeting urgent emergency human resource needs.</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing	<p>UNHCR has held a workshop on emergency preparedness and contingency planning on 9-10 July 2024 with participation from RRS and teams from UNHCR's Regional Bureau and various sub-and field offices in Ethiopia. Updated national contingency plan is being drafted.</p>