

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA

Djibouti
Somalia

Eritrea
Sudan

Ethiopia
Uganda

Kenya

Recent Developments

The East and Horn of Africa region witnessed significant upheaval in the first six months of the year, as most countries continued to be affected by internal and external crises.

Three consecutive years of poor rains and the drought last April throughout the region affected many of the highland areas of Ethiopia and pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Prolonged food shortages resulted in an increase in internal and cross-border movements as people moved with their animals in a desperate search for food, water and better grazing land. Many drought victims turned to the refugee camps for assistance.

Despite mediation by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), renewed fighting broke out between Ethiopia and Eritrea on 12 May. As a result of this border dispute, one million persons were internally displaced in Eritrea, while thousands fled to neighbouring countries, including some 95,000 to Sudan, 1,000 to Djibouti and 1,000 to Yemen. In Ethiopia, an estimated 350,000 persons were internally displaced. Hostilities between the two countries ceased following a cease-fire agreement negotiated by the OAU and signed on 18 June.

A reconciliation conference for Somalia, launched by Djibouti in September 1999 and backed by the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), is currently taking place in Djibouti with representatives of the Somali clans, including traditional elders and women. Termed by some as the "last chance" for Somalia after 13 previous attempts to resolve the crisis, the peace plan envisages the formation of a transitional government. However, the break-away provinces of north-west and north-east Somalia have reportedly rejected the plan. Neither of these provinces is participating in the conference in an official capacity. Meanwhile, large areas of southern Somalia remained off-

limits to humanitarian agencies, due to continuing violence.

The IGAD-sponsored north-south negotiations for a political settlement in Sudan did not make much progress. An upsurge in conflict between Government forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in eastern and southern Sudan caused new outflows of Sudanese refugees into Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

In Uganda, the relative calm that held through most of last year was shattered, as rebel groups in the northern and western parts of the country increased and intensified their attacks on the civilian population, including refugee camps. Similarly, in Kenya and eastern Ethiopia, deteriorating security in and around the refugee camps was a major source of concern.

The situation was not entirely bleak. Some improvements in relations were witnessed between some countries. The Ethiopian and Kenyan Governments jointly resolved to ensure that peace and security prevails along their common borders, following a month of fighting in north-east Kenya. The Sudanese and Ugandan Governments agreed to cease hostilities against each other and restore diplomatic ties. The Eritrean and Sudanese Governments re-established diplomatic relations and reopened their common borders.

Strategic Objectives: Progress and Constraints

Developments in the region had negative consequences for UNHCR's operations in most countries and some of the objectives will inevitably not be met. Elsewhere, prospects for durable solutions remained on course, albeit at a reduced pace.

UNHCR's overriding strategy remains the regional focus, especially with regard to ending, where possible, protracted refugee situations

for long-staying Ethiopian, Eritrean, Kenyan, Somali and Sudanese refugees.

On 1 March, the "ceased-circumstances" Cessation Clause for Ethiopian refugees who left their country before 1991 took effect. UNHCR has withdrawn automatic refugee status from this group. They have been given the choice to repatriate with UNHCR's assistance or to prove, through screening, claims for continued international protection. The Cessation Clause is applicable to pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees everywhere, but mainly affects those in Sudan and Kenya. In Sudan, UNHCR advised the Government that effective 1 September, pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees who neither repatriate nor can prove a claim for continued international protection will no longer be assisted. Some 3,700 out of 12,000 camp-based pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees registered for voluntary repatriation. A screening exercise, scheduled to take place in May, did not take place because of the Eritrean influx into Sudan. In Kenya, the Government agreed to regularise the status of 3,500 pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees through a screening committee.

In April, a Tripartite Agreement was signed between UNHCR and the Governments of Sudan and Eritrea, to facilitate voluntary repatriation of some 160,000 Eritrean refugees who had been living in Sudan for 30 years. While arrangements for voluntary repatriation were well underway, the resumption of fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea in May caused a new influx of 95,000 Eritrean refugees into Sudan. Following the cease-fire agreement of 18 June, some 20,000 Eritreans returned to the Gash Barka area in Eritrea and it is anticipated that rest will also return.

On the eve of Africa Refugee Day in late June, UNHCR and the Governments of Ethiopia and Kenya signed a Tripartite Agreement that will pave way for the return of over 5,000 Kenyan refugees who have been in Moyale district in southern Ethiopia since 1992. The return of these refugees will commence in August and is scheduled for completion by the end of September.

The voluntary repatriation of Sudanese and Somali refugees to Sudan and southern Somalia respectively is not considered to be feasible in

the near future. Consequently, UNHCR's main responsibility towards these two refugee groups remains to ensure their continued protection and meet their basic needs. The voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Ethiopia to north-west Somalia and the dispersal of Ethiopian nationals from the camps are ongoing. About 18,000 Somali refugees from the Aware camps voluntarily repatriated to north-west Somalia and some 3,000 Ethiopians dispersed to their areas of origin in Ethiopia. Another 85,000 refugees registered for repatriation from the Jijiga camps.

UNHCR participated actively in the activities of UN Country Teams in the region, particularly with regard to the advancement of the humanitarian sector. In Ethiopia, UNHCR, in collaboration with UNDP, agreed to support the IGAD initiative on conflict prevention, management and resolution and the alleviation of humanitarian crises through the development of plans of action tailored to the concerned areas. These plans of action are aimed at phasing out humanitarian assistance and bringing in long-term development programmes. In this context, a strategic framework and programmes were elaborated for implementation in Djibouti, Ethiopia's Region 5, north-west and north-east Somalia. UNHCR also worked closely with IGAD to ensure that humanitarian issues, including refugees and their voluntary repatriation, stay on the agenda of peace initiatives for Somalia and Sudan.

UNHCR entered into discussions with the OAU and its Committee on Human and People's Rights to explore ways to intensify collaboration, addressing issues such as the root causes of refugee movements, the promotion of refugee protection, and assistance to areas affected by the presence of refugees. As the chair of OAU's Co-ordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection of Refugees, UNHCR consulted with the OAU members to expand both the mandate and membership of the Committee. The consultations resulted in the adoption of new rules and procedures. Both the OAU and UNHCR are currently considering how best to implement them, with a view to harmonising refugee and other humanitarian programmes, especially during emergencies.



Activities until 30 June

In addition to the country programmes in **Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan** and **Uganda**, which are presented in separate chapters, UNHCR's activities in Djibouti are described below.

In **Djibouti**, UNCHR assists some 2,000 Ethiopian and 23,000 Somali refugees. Most refugees live in Ali-Ade and Hol-Hol camps or in urban areas. Due to the extreme climactic and arid conditions in which the camps are located, there are no opportunities for income-generation activities aimed at self-sufficiency. Refugees are therefore completely dependent on assistance.

Some 1,680 pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees repatriated with UNHCR's assistance in May, bringing to an end UNHCR's voluntary repatriation operation. Seven families of ten persons from the post-1991 Ethiopian refugees opted for voluntary repatriation. Another 250 refugees are being encouraged to opt for voluntary repatriation. Three families of nine were resettled.

Voluntary repatriation to north-west Somalia

could not take place due to a variety of reasons, including the strained political relations between the Government of Djibouti and the authorities in Hargeisa. Some 144 refugees are under review for resettlement. Living conditions in the camps attained minimum standards, especially with regard to the provision of water, and medical and educational assistance. Although parents were sensitised to the importance of education for all their children, the drop-out rate for girls after grade four continued to be a concern. Owing to financial constraints, household items, which were provided more than eight years ago, could not be replaced. Some 1,000 Somali refugees fled from Harsile camp in Eritrea to Djibouti at the end of May, as the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea intensified. The group was settled in Obock, as requested by the Government. UNHCR is continuing negotiations with the Government to relocate the refugees to the existing camps. An office was established to cater to these refugees and plans are underway to reunite families that were separated during flight. Assistance, however, will cease by the end of 2000. The Office will facilitate voluntary repatriation of some 200 Somali refugees to the Mogadishu region.

Even though the Eligibility Commission re-

sumed its functions in 1999, refugee status determination is still pending for some 2,000 urban refugees, comprising Somalis, Ethiopians and other nationalities. It has however, been agreed to fix a date for the Eligibility Commission to convene. Meanwhile, the results of the micro-credit scheme started this year are encouraging. The scheme, implemented in cooperation with an international and a local NGO, deliberately limited the number of loan recipients to ten women. If the current reimbursement rate (100 per cent) continues, the project will be pursued with more beneficiaries next year. Financial constraints hampered the provision of adequate medical assistance and community services. Children who completed their school studies were particularly affected by the lack of funds, as planned projects aimed at broadening their skills could not be implemented.

The 1999 environment project yielded 600 seedlings, which were planted in Hol-Hol camp. Despite lack of water, the survival rate was more than 70 per cent. The second phase of the project, which consists of familiarising

refugees with energy-saving cooking methods, started off with the production and use of 250 mud stoves. The project will be replicated in Ali-Ade camp when the water situation improves.

Outlook for July - December

The region is beset with many challenges. However, indefatigable efforts continue to be made at all levels by Governments, UN organisations, international and national NGOs to create conditions conducive to peace and stability in the region. To this end, UNHCR will continue to work closely with IGAD and OAU. The Office will continue to facilitate voluntary repatriation, whenever feasible, and reintegration. Pending durable solutions, UNHCR will continue to provide protection and assistance to refugees in countries of asylum. Due to the deteriorating security situation in some countries, coupled with the effects of the drought, UNHCR will continue to update its contingency plans to cope with possible new displacements.

FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

Countries	Initial Budget		Revised Budget		Total Funds Available*		Total Funds Obligated	
	AB and TF	SP	AB and TF	SP	AB and TF	SP	AB and TF	SP
Djibouti	2'732'512	0	3'444'241	426'448	1'607'030	0	1'576'900	0
Eritrea	1'232'483	0	4'841'550	12'646'200	3'804'300	561'167	3'804'300	0
Ethiopia**	22'598'062	0	24'352'810	0	11'481'212	0	11'207'796	0
Kenya	22'987'560	0	26'571'109	0	11'116'750	0	11'033'200	0
Somalia	10'592'219	0	11'128'933	0	4'254'699	0	4'254'700	0
Sudan	10'778'367	0	12'819'221	8'649'574	7'119'570	0	6'178'000	0
Uganda	19'642'821	0	19'330'565	0	9'544'101	0	8'254'150	0
Regional Projects	0	0	0	0	0	782'123	0	0
Sub-total	90'564'024	0	102'488'429	21'722'222	48'927'663	1'343'290	46'309'046	0
Liaison Unit at Headquarters	668'000	0	664'457	300'000	294'238	0	294'238	0
TOTAL	91'232'024	0	103'152'886	22'022'222	49'221'901	1'343'290	46'603'284	0

*Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the region and countries within the region, opening balance and adjustments.

**Includes administrative costs for the Regional Director's Office.