

East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region

October – December 2021



Yisak, together with his wife Rishan and son Adonay inside their new shelter in Sabacare 4, eastern Sudan.
© UNHCR/Olqa Sarrado Mur

KEY FIGURES (AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2021)

4.93M Refugees and Asylum-seekers
12.37M Internally Displaced Persons
337,522 Refugee Returnees in 2021

REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

SOURCE COUNTRIES*

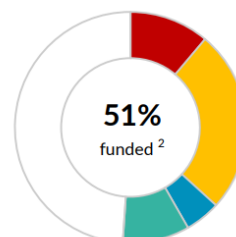
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|-------------|--------|
| South Sudan | 2.28 M |
| D.R. Congo | 761K |
| Somalia | 580K |
| Sudan | 368K |
| Eritrea | 313K |
| Burundi | 282K |
| Ethiopia | 145K |
| Rwanda | 29K |
| Other | 162K |

*The figures here refer to refugees and asylum seekers hosted within the EHAGL region. They vary slightly from the situation figures provided above, as the situation figures also include those hosted in non-EHAGL neighboring countries region (e.g. DRC, Chad)

FUNDING UPDATE (AS OF DECEMBER 2021)

USD 1.9 Billion

2021 financial requirements for the EHAGL region (inclusive of COVID-19).



■ Tightly earmarked
■ Earmarked
■ Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
■ Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
□ Funding gap (indicative)

EAST HORN AND GREAT LAKES
as of 29 December 2021

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

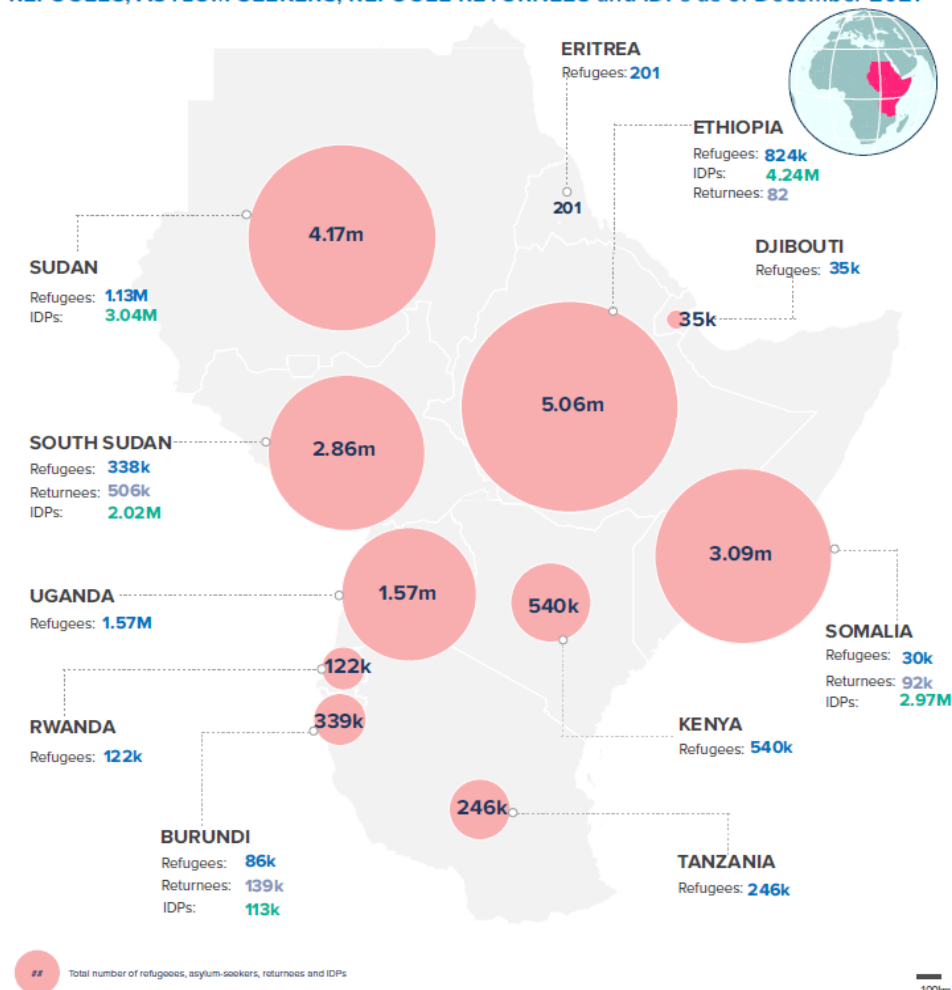
The East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) region is host to some **4.93 million refugees and asylum seekers**, as at the end of December 2021. The majority are from South Sudan (2.28 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, with significant numbers from Burundi, Sudan, and Eritrea. The region hosts 67 per cent of the refugees on the African continent and 20 per cent of the global refugee population. The region also has 12.37 million mostly in Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Burundi, displaced due to both conflict and natural disasters. Some 337,522 refugees returned to their countries of origin in 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to adversely affect the livelihoods, health and wellbeing of Persons of Concern and host communities in the region, the majority of whom live in camps and settlements. As of 31 December 2021, there had been 9,912 confirmed COVID-19 cases among PoCs in the 11 countries in the EHAGL region. A total of 135,173 refugees in the region have received at least the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and about 48,000 have been fully vaccinated (in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda). Eritrea is the only country in the region yet to initiate COVID-19 vaccinations.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, the region is plagued by multiple crises. Funding shortfalls have resulted in major reductions of food assistance for over 3.3 million refugees (or 72 per cent of refugees in the region) in Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. This remains a critical issue in the region as refugees are largely dependent on food assistance to meet their basic food and nutritional needs.

In December, the Government of Uganda announced that it would reopen all schools in 2022, after nearly two years of closure since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020.

REFUGEES, ASYLUM-SEEKERS, REFUGEE RETURNEES and IDPs as of December 2021



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

SITUATIONAL UPDATES

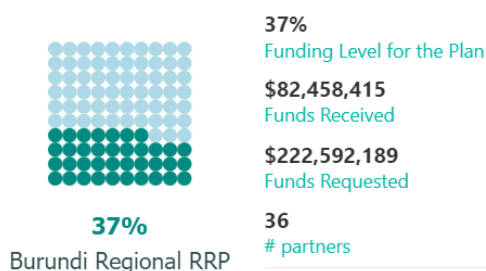
BURUNDI SITUATION: By the end of December 2021, countries in the Great Lakes Region were host to 264,769 Burundian refugees. The country has experienced relative political stability since the political transition in May 2020 and the overall working environment, political and security situation have improved. However, Burundi remains fragile with continued reports of human rights violations and COVID 19 cases on the rise.

The voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees continued through between October and 31 December 2021, with a total of 6,645 Burundian refugees returning home mainly from Tanzania (1,479), Uganda (3,857), Rwanda (803) and the DRC (506). Since 2017 UNHCR and partners have facilitated the voluntary repatriation of assistance to over 185,000 Burundian refugees.

While the Government of Burundi did not make any pledges during the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), the following two initiatives continue to demonstrate the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in action: 1) UNHCR and UNDP are jointly spearheading the Burundi Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (JRRRP) which is an interagency response to support repatriation and

reintegration of returnees as a durable solution, spanning the humanitarian-development nexus. 2) The national Durable Solutions Working Group was reactivated in 2021. It brings together the Government and partners and is chaired by the *Direction Générale de la Réintégration des Sinistrés* and co-chaired by UNHCR and UNDP. This group will also lead the updating of the National Strategy on Durable Solutions which is expiring by the end of this year.

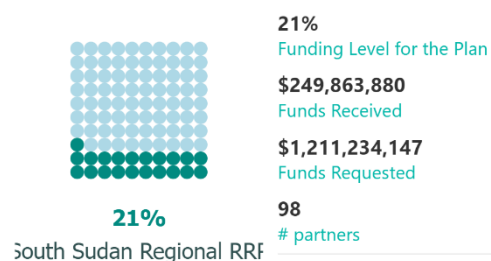
Inter-agency funding overview



The Burundi RRRP remained underfunded with only 37 per cent of the resources required (as of 31 December). This led to acute gaps, including food ration cuts, inadequate shelters, lack of medicines, deficient WASH infrastructure and insufficient livelihoods activities. A large majority of the refugee population remained dependent on humanitarian assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded the situation. While the overall funding for the JRRRP stands at 21 per cent, financing for the reintegration component currently stands at 18.6 per cent.

SOUTH SUDAN SITUATION: The South Sudanese refugee population, the largest in the region, remain extremely vulnerable. Over 2.3 million in camps, settlements, and urban areas, are living in precarious conditions, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. UNHCR and governments in the region have registered a total of 90,252 refugee new arrivals and 67,760 South Sudanese returnees between 1 January and 31 December 2021. Most refugees face high levels of poverty, limited access to livelihood opportunities, and are hosted in some of the poorest regions of host countries, where communities are already struggling to meet basic needs. As of 31 December, the South Sudan RRRP was only 21% funded.

Inter-agency funding overview



In 2022, the South Sudan RRRP includes 93 operational partners and will aim to comprehensively address the protection needs of South Sudanese refugees with a particular emphasis on children, women, and youth. Biometric registration, documentation, and data management – in collaboration with host governments to support implementation of durable solutions strategies – will continue. Exploring and pursuing innovative approaches to refugee protection and self-reliance based on participatory assessments with all stakeholders will be critical. This includes systematically expanding cash assistance and other initiatives aimed at alleviating the dependency of refugees on aid.

In October 2021, the worst flooding in decades resulting from weeks of heavy rains swept away homes and inundated farmlands in South Sudan. The floods impacted over 700,000 people across South Sudan, with families and livestock being forced to seek safety on higher grounds and in neighbouring towns. Together with the humanitarian country team and South Sudan's government, UNHCR urgently delivered the needed support to the most affected, including hygiene items, food, emergency shelter and solar lanterns. In addition, the Government of South Sudan, one of the world's poorest nations, allocated US\$10M to flood response efforts. Local governments are also working to alleviate suffering within the communities including building dikes, installing systems to pump out flood waters and to redirect excess water through canals. Host communities and displaced people themselves also continue to show incredible resilience and generosity.

SOMALIA SITUATION: More than 694,000 Somali refugees continue to reside in Ethiopia, Kenya, Yemen and elsewhere in the region with 2,967,500 persons internally displaced (IDPs). At the end of December 2021, there were 30,066 refugees and asylum-seekers registered in Somalia, mainly from Ethiopia (15,994 asylum-seekers and 4,400 refugees) and Yemen (8,341 refugees and asylum-seekers). Another 1,331 persons of concerns are from other countries including Syria (1,056), Tanzania (135) and other countries (140). A total of 133,996 Somali refugees returned from Kenya, Yemen, and other countries.

During the last quarter of 2021, the operational environment in Somalia remained fluid, shaped by the ongoing parliamentary elections as well as several large-scale internal displacements. UNHCR and partners responded to the internal forced displacement from Lasanood to other parts of the country, and to the large-scale civilian displacement resulting from the armed conflict in Guriel Galmudug. UNHCR continued to provide protection, assistance, and solutions to persons of concern across the country, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ETHIOPIA SITUATION: Over a year into the conflict, the overall security situation in Northern Ethiopia remains complex and fluid, hindering effective delivery of lifesaving assistance to the most affected populations, including refugees and internally displaced people. The conflict in the three regions of Northern Ethiopia (Tigray, Afar and Amhara) has led to the internal displacement of over 3 million people, with displacement continuing to occur daily, and with 9.4 million people are in urgent need of food and other aid. According to regional authorities, the conflict has displaced over 1.8 million people in the Tigray region, more than 1 million people in the Amhara region and 334,196 in the Afar region. UNHCR's presence has been scaled up in Amhara and Tigray regions.

UNHCR and partners however continued to face significant challenges in implementing planned activities, severely impacting their ability to work and deliver assistance. The continued volatile security situation, lack of unhindered access, scarcity of cash and fuel, and limited electrical power and telecommunication services curtailed service delivery. In November, UNHCR was able to obtain approval to move 5,000 litres of fuel into Mekelle. From 16 October to 3 December, UNHCR was unable to access or bring any case into Tigray.

UNHCR and the Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) have verified 22,345 Eritrean refugees (14,266 households) who previously resided in the two camps of Hitsas and Shimelba in Tigray most of whom self-relocated to Addis Ababa. Temporary identification documents were issued allowing them to reside in Addis for a three-year period and have also been able to open bank accounts.

UNHCR currently runs a network of 57 protection desks set up by UNHCR and partners in IDP sites in Shire, Mekelle, Sheraro, Adwa, Adigrat and Adi Daero towns for identification of persons with specific needs, referral to relevant services, provision of information and counselling on access to essential services. So far, 2,519 queries were received from which 1,036 referrals have been made to specific services by UNHCR and partners in IDP sites in Shire, Mekelle, Sheraro, Adwa, Adigrat and Adi Daero towns. UNHCR is currently training the Bureau of Women Children and Social Affairs staff to operate the UNHCR Protection Desks in Debre Birhan and Bahir Dar in the Amhara region. Protection desks are also used as Return Help Desks in all IDP sites to assist the returnees and provide counselling services.

Given the pressure to reopen schools, over 16,000 IDPs from 16 sites were evicted by zonal authorities from schools throughout Tigray. An Advocacy Paper on Prevention of Forced Eviction drafted by the Protection and CCCM Clusters shared with the Area Humanitarian Team encourages local authorities to ensure voluntariness, informed consent and movement in safety and dignity during relocation to other sites in the region. The paper also promotes access to shelters and services in the new sites.

In **Sudan**, UNHCR with Sudan's Commission for Refugees (COR) and partners are also responding to the needs of about 59,000 Ethiopian refugees and asylum-seekers from Tigray (nearly 51,000 in Kassala and Gedaref States) and Benishangul-Gumuz (around 8,304 in Blue Nile State). As of 31 December 2021, Sudan had biometrically registered 48,576 individuals. As part of the response to the Tigray situation in eastern Sudan, UNHCR has been actively supporting the authorities, with service mapping and inter-agency coordination. UNHCR is working with some 30 partners to provide lifesaving assistance and protection to the thousands of Ethiopian women, men and children who have crossed into the country.

Despite the volatile situation in Ethiopia, new arrivals remain relatively low in the eastern areas of Sudan. At the end of 2021, there was a slight decrease in the number of new arrivals from Ethiopia, with a total of 68 new arrivals being recorded in Kassala's State Hamdayet Transit Centre (58) and Gedaref's State Taya border entry point (6) and Village 8 (4) between 26-31 December.

While many activities inside the camps in the East of Sudan are so far unaffected by the military takeover of the government, the uncertainty of the current political situation at the national level risks disrupting the delivery of life-saving and essential services, including the distribution of much-needed food, shelter and CRIs. The Commission for Refugees (COR) continues to be present and engaged in refugee locations. In Gedaref, despite military presence in some parts of the town, humanitarian actors have been able to cross checkpoints along major roads.

The relocation of refugees from Hamdayet Transit Centre at the border with Ethiopia to Tunaydbah camp some 136 kilometres inland was successfully concluded on 16 December. Following the conclusion of the relocation exercise an additional 475 refugees and asylum-seekers who had crossed the border from Ethiopia into Sudan, were transferred to Tunaydbah (241), Um Rakuba (207) and Babikri (27). UNHCR, COR and partners, provided those relocated with shelters and basic assistance.

Contingency Planning and Preparedness: While it is difficult to predict how the ongoing conflict and resulting displacement may evolve, current contingency planning and preparedness efforts have been based on a scenario of continued escalation and spread of conflict beyond Northern Ethiopia, resulting in country-wide displacement coupled with external refugee outflows. Prudent contingency planning and preparedness efforts are underway within Ethiopia and in neighbouring countries (Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan) together with inter-agency partners.

In Ethiopia, preparedness plans include expansion of protection monitoring, establishment of an in-country emergency response team, and discussions with partners on readiness to respond flexibly to different scenarios. In neighboring countries this includes review of supply pipelines, additional procurement and prepositioning of core relief items and tents, frame agreements with partners, and in some cases readying existing reception and transit sites at the border and identification of potential settlement sites. Inter-agency missions have been undertaken to border locations in several countries. Advocacy and joint planning with governments is a

key part of these efforts to ensure borders remain open to asylum-seekers and that effective protection and assistance is efficiently provided.



Families displaced by the ongoing conflict in the Tigray region find shelter in Five Angels IDP site in Shire, Ethiopia.
 © UNHCR/Olga Sarrado Mur

COUNTRY UPDATES

ETHIOPIA: On 5 November, WFP, UNHCR, and ARRA, the national agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, [appealed for US\\$68 million](#) to avert food ration cuts for over 700,000 refugees in Ethiopia. Funding shortages have forced ration cuts of up to 60 percent of the minimum food basket recommended. The agencies warned of growing risks including increased malnutrition and anaemia, stunted child growth, deterioration of the health status due to susceptibility to diseases/infection and a myriad of protection risks further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A shortage of funds has forced WFP to cut the size of food baskets from 1,773 kilocalories per person/day (84% of the recommended minimum of 2100kcal/p/d) to 1,262 kilocalories per person/day (60% of the recommended minimum of 2100kcal/p/d) for some 710,000 refugees. The cuts started in November and will impact all refugees living in camps in Gambella, Afar, Shire, Melkadida, Assosa and Jijiga in Ethiopia. The ration cuts are a last resort to avert a complete break in food supplies across the country.

KENYA: As of 31 December, Kenya was host to 540,068 registered refugees and asylum-seekers (236,254 in Dadaab; 219,875 in Kakuma Refugee Camp and Kalobeyei Settlement; and 83,939 in urban areas). Of these, 84% live in camps, while 16% are living in urban areas. Most refugees and asylum-seekers are from Somalia and South Sudan, with smaller populations from DR Congo, Ethiopia, Burundi, Sudan, Uganda, Eritrea, and Rwanda.

A report, [From Displacement to Development - How Kenya Can Create Shared Growth by Facilitating Economic Inclusion for Refugees](#) was published in November 2021. This case study is part of the "Let Them Work" initiative, a three-year project led by the Centre for Global Development (CGD) and Refugees International and funded by the IKEA Foundation and the Western Union Foundation. The initiative aims to expand labour market access for refugees and forced migrants, by identifying barriers to economic inclusion and providing recommendations to host governments, donors, and the private sector. The initiative focuses primarily on refugees and forced migrants in Colombia, Peru, Kenya, and Ethiopia.

On November 17, the President of Kenya signed the Refugees Bill into law. The new Refugees Act, which had earlier been referred to Parliament for reconsideration, strengthens the management of refugees by consolidating provisions of several international legal

instruments. The bill is largely expected to provide for positive steps in protection and inclusion for refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly refugees from the East African Community, notably the South Sudanese in Kakuma.

UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner visited Kenya between 22 - 25 November. Field visits and meetings with refugees in both Dadaab and Nairobi underscored the importance of identifying and expanding solutions. In Dadaab, in line with the Roadmap for Solutions, work on the verification exercise and intentions survey, in coordination with the Government of Kenya (GoK) was on track for completion before year-end. While the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government remains in the lead on the Roadmap for Solutions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reiterated the GoK's commitment to the implementation of the Roadmap, while underscoring the need for additional support from the international community.

RWANDA: Rwanda hosts a total of 127,112 refugees and asylum-seekers at the end of December 2021. The population of concern includes mainly persons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (77,116) and Burundi (48,705).

On 14 October, the MoU Addendum between the Government of Rwanda, the African Union, and UNHCR for the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) [was renewed until 31 December 2023](#) to continue evacuating refugees and asylum-seekers from the State of Libya to the Republic of Rwanda. The addendum, which extends the provision and legality of the ETM Centre in Gashora, will allow for vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers, many of whom have been trafficked and experienced violence in Libya - including detention in dire conditions - to be assisted. The facility will also expand its capacity to evacuate and accommodate up to 700 people at any given time, an increase from the current maximum capacity of 500 persons.

Since September 2019, a total of 648 people have been evacuated in six flights from Libya to Rwanda. UNHCR and the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) conduct individual registration of all the individuals and issue registration documents that allow them to move within Rwanda and access assistance provided at the Centre. Cases are then processed for individual solutions, including Best Interest Determinations (BIDs) for unaccompanied and separated children and resettlement interviews. Currently, the ETM in Rwanda hosts 214 refugees and asylum-seekers from eight African countries: Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon.

UNHCR's Deputy High Commissioner visited Rwanda between 28 November – 02 December, including field visits and participation in the Africa Private Sector Forum. Site visits to projects, especially those supported by private sector donors, in and around Mugombwa camp for Congolese refugees, further demonstrated the impact of Rwanda's progressive policies on inclusion in education, infrastructure, environmental protection, and livelihoods programming alongside host communities.



UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner and the Regional Bureau Director for EHAGL during a visit to refugee camps in Rwanda ahead of the Africa Private Sector Forum. ©UNHCR.

SUDAN: Sudan hosted more than 1 million refugees and more than 3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the end of 2021, most of them coming from South Sudan and other neighbouring countries – including Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Central African Republic, and Chad – as well as Syria and Yemen. Around 66% of the refugees live in out-of-camp settlements, among the host community, while the rest remain in camps/settlements – especially in East Sudan and White Nile State.

Street protests have continued following the military takeover of the government on 25 October, including the detention of the Prime Minister and other civilian leaders in the transitional government, with several people reported to have been killed and scores of others injured.

The overall security situation in the Darfur region remained tense and volatile. Armed conflict incidents featuring sporadic inter-communal clashes were reported mainly in West and South Darfur. After the intercommunal violence in Jebel Moon that started between Misseriya Jebel and Nomadic communities in mid-November, UNHCR participated in an Inter-Agency mission to Jebel Moon from 29 November to 2 December to assess the situation including verification of those affected, priority needs, and provide initial NFI assistance to the IDPs who lost their shelters and belongings. The situation in Jebel Moon remains tense and unpredictable. UNHCR Chad and Sudan have started regular cross-border teleconferences since the influx of refugees from Sudan into Birak locality in Chad after the clashes in Jebel Moon. An initial headcount conducted by UNHCR in Chad found that 2,261 individuals had crossed the border, mainly women and children. Local authorities state that over 12,000 displaced have crossed the border. A pre-registration exercise is currently ongoing in Chad. In addition to Jebel Moon, there have been several other violent incidents in other West Darfur localities, culminating in an attack on Kreinik locality which reportedly left at least 29 killed and more than 40 injured.

Months after opening, the Alganaa refugee camp in Sudan's White Nile State was submerged by flood waters in November 2021, leaving 35,000 South Sudanese refugees in need of urgent assistance. Alganaa refugee camp was opened in February 2021, becoming the tenth camp in White Nile state, which hosts over 280,000 South Sudanese refugees. Availability of suitable land remains a serious challenge to finding the displaced population a more permanent home, further compounded by the large number of refugees arriving in the country. UNHCR provided relief items, including sleeping mats, kitchen sets and jerrycans. Floods have displaced over **314,000 people** across Sudan this year and resulted in loss of lives, homes, crops and livestock.



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