

Migration and Protection in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia & Ethiopia)

2015/16



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Facts and figures

Out of a total of 2.2 million refugees in the Horn of Africa, almost 1 million are Somali refugees hosted mainly by Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, Eritrea, Djibouti and Uganda.

It is estimated that there are between 1'100'000 and 1'300'000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia.

Ethiopia is the largest refugee hosting country in Africa with more than 730,000 registered refugees as of August 2015, mainly South Sudanese and Somali.

Kenya hosts approximately 593,000 refugees and asylum seekers; around 10% live in Nairobi.

A Tripartite Agreement was signed between UNHCR, Somalia and Kenya in support of the voluntary return of refugees from Kenya to Somalia. As of December 2015, 6'124 individuals had returned.

(Sources: RMMS & UNHCR)

SDC's focus for 2015/16

Mainstreaming protection into all activities related to refugees and ensuring displacement is addressed by all sectors of SDC's strategy.

Design interventions taking into account the protracted nature of the displacements.

Advocate for durable solutions.

Key partners

UNHCR, ICRC, DRC, IOM, Swisscontact, RMMS, NRC, IGAD.

Financial planning 2015/16

CHF 6'782'000.



Mother and children in front of their temporary home at the Dadaab Refugee Complex, North Eastern Kenya ©UNHCR.

Improving protection and living standards for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDP's) and migrants is one of Switzerland's key areas of focus in the Horn of Africa, as set in its Cooperation Strategy Horn of Africa 2013-2016.

Switzerland's Engagement

Through its complementary use of instruments (humanitarian aid, development cooperation, policy dialogue) and diversity of partners (UN agencies, international and national NGOs, regional institutions and governmental institutions), Switzerland contributes towards improving protection and livelihood standards for refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants. It focuses its interventions on:

- Increasing protection and improving living conditions for vulnerable refugees, IDPs and migrants, while at the same time working with host communities.
- Strengthening national and regional migration management capacities to better respond to mixed migration challenges, while advocating for migrants' rights and protection needs.
- Supporting pilot projects with diaspora organizations involved in humanitarian and development assistance.

Strategic Outlook (2015/16)

SDC will continue to increase its protection focus, while at the same time supporting innovative approaches to enhance livelihood perspectives and promote durable solutions for refugees and migrants. Enhanced synergies with the other sector interventions of its strategy (food security, health and governance) will further contribute to this overall objective. SDC will continue to be actively engaged in donor coordination fora with the objective of ensuring information and knowledge sharing, adherence to humanitarian principles and international law, and coordinated programming. Since October 2014, SDC acts as a donor representative, to the Kenya Refugee Partnership Team, which comprises of the Department of Refugee Affairs (DRA), United Nations (UN), international and national NGOs and donors. In Ethiopia, SDC is an active member of the Refugee Task Force, a coordination body chaired by the Ethiopian Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), together with the UNHCR. These fora, which are led by UNHCR, are meant for strategic discussions on how to best assist and protect refugees in Kenya and Ethiopia.

Context

The Horn of Africa (HoA) hosts over 1.5 million internally displaced people and 2.2 million refugees with additional hundreds of thousands of migrant women, men and children transiting the region every year through two main routes i.e. the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea route (to Yemen and beyond) and the Southern route (to North Africa and beyond).

As of August 2015, Ethiopia was the largest refugee hosting country in Africa with 730'000 registered refugees mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea. Kenya hosts 584'989 refugees, with the highest number (over 70%) coming from Somalia. Refugees from South Sudan and Ethiopia come second and third respectively. Dadaab camp in North Eastern Kenya is the largest refugee camp in the world. It was initially designed to host 90'000 refugees, when constructed in 1991. Today, the total population stands at around 350'000, 90% being Somali.

In the region, the main reasons to migrate include the long lasting conflicts in and around Somalia, the border disputes between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the difficult separation between Sudan and South Sudan, limited access to and sharing of natural resources and chronic and cyclic food insecurity linked to high climate variability and acute droughts in the (semi-) arid lands. Across the Horn of Africa, migrants and refugees experience poor living conditions, lack of proper healthcare, human rights abuses, political exclusion and economic marginalization. Many refugees have spent their entire lives in camps.

With limited perspectives for their futures, and in the absence of durable solutions, refugees and migrants rely heavily on the international community for protection and assistance.

SDC's main interventions:

Protection and assistance to refugees

In addition to its annual core contribution to UNHCR and WFP operations worldwide, SDC supports the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) protection and assistance operations in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia through country specific financial contributions and the secondment of Swiss experts to strengthen UNHCR's technical capacity (site planning, water/sanitation and protection). SDC also provides Swiss experts to the World Food Programme (WFP) to increase the Agency's capacities to address protection related issues in implementing its regular food distribution programmes to refugees.

Addressing the protection needs of mixed migrants

Through its partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), SDC provides displaced and conflict-affected Somalis living in informal settlements with social support and protection mechanisms. In addition, SDC supports the work of the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS), a regional knowledge hub hosted by DRC that publishes and disseminates quality information on migration flows and protection needs in the Horn of Africa with the objective to inform programs and policies.

Improving livelihood and promoting durable solutions

In 2013, SDC mandated Swisscontact, a Swiss NGO, to implement an innovative skills development programme in the Kenyan refugee camp of Kakuma and its neighbouring town to foster self-employment and increase income generation. The project provides training in basic literacy and numeracy, entrepreneurial and technical skills (waste management, masonry, agriculture) for both youth within the camp and in and around Kakuma town.

In Ethiopia, SDC started supporting an IOM-led initiative in 2014, which documents internal displacements due to conflicts and/or natural disasters. The objective of this project, which is implemented in collaboration with the Ethiopian authorities, was to bring about timely and accurate data on causes, numbers of individuals affected, locations of displacement and needs arising. This is done in order to improve the humanitarian response and to advocate for durable solutions. In addition, SDC also supported IOM to provide transitional shelters for South Sudanese refugees.

Response to emergencies

In order to respond quickly and adequately to the most urgent needs in the Horn of Africa arising from conflicts and climatic conditions, SDC supports the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operations in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Somalia), as well as the UN-coordinated emergency funds (Common Humanitarian Fund in Somalia and Humanitarian Response Fund in Ethiopia) that allow for quick, coordinated and needs based responses.

Further Information

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