



**American
Friends
Service
Committee**

**Humanitarian Response to Sudanese
Refugees and Immigrants to Ethiopia
Final Report**

November 2023

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Introduction

Since the crisis in Sudan began in April 2023, nearly 3 million people have left their homes or been displaced. Two million are internally displaced, and about 1.1 million people have crossed into neighboring countries like Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan, becoming refugees or asylum seekers.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), with work throughout the Horn of Africa through the Salama Hub, was monitoring this from the beginning. AFSC mobilized internal funding and analysis to support those entering Ethiopia.

As of October, 85,800 refugees and asylum seekers cross into Ethiopia through two entry points: Kurmuk entry point (West Ethiopia, Benishangul Gumuz region, Asosa Zone) and Metema (Amhara region, West Gondar Zone). The Metema entry point continues to receive and host refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Office in the Amhara region, close to 11,000 refugees live in the Metema and Kumer refugee camps established in June 2023. Recently, the new refugee site near the Kumer camp called Awulala was under formation.



Partners in Kumer camp

NGOs

- Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (**EOC-DICAC**)
- Action for Needy Ethiopian (**ANE**)
- International Humanitarian services (**HIS**)
- Plan international
- Save the Children International
- Medical team International
- World vision
- The Lutheran World Federation
- Mekane Eyesus Church

UN Agencies

- United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (**UNHCR**)
- International Organization for Migration (**IOM**)
- United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**)

Government

- Refugee & Returnee Service (**RRS**)



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FDRE Refugees and Returnees Service

Full-screen Snip



DICAC/RRAD

A Member of Actalliance
50+ Years of Humanitarian Service

Funded by: AFSC



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

We Stand with Refugees!



AFSC Humanitarian response Courses

1. Planning

Following the crisis in Sudan starting in April 2023, AFSC mobilized internal funds and reviewed three humanitarian needs assessments of the Ethio-Sudan border carried out by the government and humanitarian partners. AFSC learned about significant shortages of non-food Items, emergency shelter, and dignity kits for women and girls through that process. To respond to the humanitarian need, AFSC, through the Salama Hub Program in Ethiopia, set out to collect the relevant information from NGOs and UN agencies on the partners' presence and existing coordination to use our fund. Accordingly, the eligibility evaluation criteria (a checklist to understand the potential partners' mandates and humanitarian implementation history) for sub-contracting the humanitarian funds were created and carried out on the AFSC for the Salama Hub partners with a presence in the location.



2. Partner Selection

The Development & Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC) was selected as the civil society organization to implement refugee assistance funds. DICAC is the humanitarian wing of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that has supported refugees for over 50 years and manages millions of dollars yearly.

Discussions between the DICAC leadership and the AFSC in Addis Ababa were carried out in May 2023, and a memorandum of understanding and the project proposal was signed to enable the collaboration focusing on dignity kits and non-food items (NFI) for about 150 refugee woman-headed households in Kumer refugee camp.

After the three months of joint Need Analysis (data management, the selection of beneficiaries, registration, and verification of beneficiaries, NFIs & FIs gaps) between AFSC and the other Humanitarian Partners (DICAC, RRS, UNHCR) were completed, synergies and complementarity from the different actors could be determined. Special attention was to avoid duplication and respect for to the value and principles to aid effectively and efficiency.



The procurement process for the items, transportation and distribution were completed in October 2023. The distribution process was accompanied by an awareness-raising sessions by a DICAC social workers on how to use those NFIs and women and girls' dignity kits. The AFSC Addis office printed materials to increase our visibility and advocacy in the refugee and migration field. The materials shared a tagline, "We stand with refugees," and 160 T-shirts, two giant banners, and 700 stickers with AFSC, DICAC, UNHCR, and RRS logos were printed, transported to the camp, and used.

3. Distribution of Dignity kits and NFI

The dignity kits (composed of a sanitary pad, washing powder, underwear, solar torch, comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, bag, pajama, slippers, bath soap, washing soap, and towel) and NFI (composed of kitchen utensil, bed sheet, blanket, and jerrican) were distributed to about 150 women-headed refugee households. A representative from the Ethiopian government (Refugee and Returnee Service, RRS) and UNHCR attended and co-led the distribution during the distribution



Field Monitoring and Evaluation



From 31 Oct to 05 Nov 2023, AFSC staff with the DICAC team from Addis Abeba traveled 900 km (200 KM of insecure road travel) and conducted field monitoring in the Kumer camp. DICAC social workers facilitated two focus group discussions between 40 Sudanese refugee members/beneficiaries and 15 Eritrean asylum seekers living in Kumer camps. The Arabic and Tigrigna translators made the monitoring more effective and understandable. In addition, seven DICAC teams on the ground were consulted on the overall process, from signing contracts to the final distribution of aid.



Humanitarian Interventions Relevance, Effectiveness, and Efficiencies

Restore of Refugee's Dignity

The project aims to restore the dignity of refugees using the dignity kits and NFI. They will also become resilient in using those items in their households.

According to the refugees, the support given has addressed their critical needs. They reported that the kits and NFI helped restore their dignity and prepare their household food. Refugees reported increased food access. Clothing aid allowed them to move across the camp and protect their life from local climate shocks like cold and sunny weather. Before the NFI and dignity kits were given, no one delivered such assistance, but it was among the critical issues since refugees are not bringing anything from Sudan.

Refugees added that they borrow a few available materials, like washing items and cooking materials, from each other. No one is satisfied with this arrangement; few can afford it. In addition, they have clothing/dress issues at their household level, and families have dresses to move across the camp. But now, about 150 households get access to NFI and dignity kits. Refugee beneficiary Sumeya, 40, from Khartoum, mentioned she only had one dress while coming until she received more from DICAC. She was afraid to move across the camp as she was not washing it because she had no change. She thanks the AFSC/DICAC for giving her a chance to have at least two dresses; now she will confidently wash her clothes and move across the camp for different purposes.



Resilience Building

The NFI increases refugee resilience by improving the quality of camp life, such as access to washing clothes, fetching water, carrying water from sources, or cooking food. Before this aid, refugees wait for their neighbors to borrow items or nothing to access washing, fetching, and cooking. But after the NFI and dignity kits, the spirit of self-reliance flourished. Additionally, in these women-led households, their children/infants and pregnant/lactating are particularly at risk when access to cooked food and clothes and blankets are available. After this aid, those feeding and caring for children could build resilience.

According to refugees, this camp is in the remotest areas of West Gondar, and the villages are not secure, with less market access. If some have cash on hand, it is difficult to access the market due to theft, bandits, and local control. This further makes refugee families face more challenges in getting the items delivered in this aid. DICAC/AFSC alleviates enormous burdens, and focusing on female-headed households is important for NFI and dignity kits.



Restoring Hope

Moussa Idrissu, a 55-year-old man, has lived in Khartoum City, Sudan, his whole life. He came from a middle-class family and worked as a driver in Khartoum for 30 years before this. His wife, Fatouma Abdullah, 32, was a qualified veterinarian who owned a veterinary clinic in Khartoum. Fatouma talked about how scared she was about her displacement and how, throughout the war, she and their other families had to deal with unforeseen circumstances. The community was overtaken by death, a lack of services, the sound of weapons, and several other shocks. She and her two children, who are three and six years old, began heading across the border after several days. She finally reached the Ethiopian border, where the UNHCR and the Ethiopian authorities greeted her on Metema. She had spent the previous four months living in the Kumer refugee camp while having no possessions due to the urgent nature of Fatouma's and her children's migration.

Mr. Moussa finally saw his wife and two children after encountering several difficulties on the route to the Ethiopian border. Sudanese government soldiers permitted him to cross the border at El-Gadarif. The government has mandated that hotel owners in Gadafi Town refrain from owning or hosting anyone with Khartoum IDs or passports. Due to a scarcity of lodging, Mr. Ibrahim slept one night on the street while wearing a plastic mask. His passport, wealth, and other belongings are taken by the police officers, who then obey him. However, Mr. Moussa's missing wife and children occupied his thoughts.

He crossed the border between Ethiopia and Sudan into the Sudanese town of Gallabat, presented the authorities with his driver's license, and entered Ethiopia as a refugee. He then joined his spouse and their two children in Kumer Camp. Fatouma stated that her children's faces looked unwell throughout her journey and upon arriving at the camp. They have been terrified by the gun sound in Khartoum and the lack of medical care and necessities like clothing, shelter, and food. These distressed the children, leading to mental and physical symptoms. Her husband joined them when she was despondent and tense since those youngsters were quite ill. Even when families are reunited, having basic access to resources to rebuild lives and develop resilience becomes a factor. They credit that the dignity kits and NFI addressed significant gaps in their refugee existence. Moussa and Fatouma attested that the products are high-quality, expensive on the market, helpful to them, and now frequently used. They thank AFSC and partners for their generosity and timely response.



Discussion with DICAC staff

AFSC staff were pleased to learn that in conversation with seven DICAC staff, they learned that the AFSC approach is among the most convenient and helpful. The conversations involved finance, regional leadership, and implementation staff. The financial transactions and overall follow-ups are moderate, allowing them to respond rapidly. Even if purchasing the NFI and dignity kits in Gondar is challenging, the DICAC collected all items from different vendors and managed the distribution within almost two months. The AFSC support could be used before other donors like UNHCR funds were available. This increased their impact on the camp and solved refugees' gaps quickly.

The team dreams of working with AFSC more in the future, as there are more critical issues in many humanitarian and refugee areas, and future work can advance an already productive partnership. The team thanks the AFSC team in Ethiopia and AFSC's leadership for allocating funds to help these 150 households in the Kumer refugee camp.

Current Major Issues

Shortage of essential services: There is not enough food or clean water, shelters are overcrowded, not enough toilets and rain creates stagnant water, where mosquitoes breed. The camp is at risk of waterborne diseases.

Protection: security across the vicinity is challenging due to the presence of armed groups (Kimant and Fano) who are in conflict with the Amhara Regional Government, creating room for robbery within the communities.

NFI: clothes for Muslim women are among the significant gaps: most interviewed refugees reported the need for clothes, short underwears, etc.

WASH needs are very evident and need to be strengthened to enable refugees access clean water, clean toilet facilities, among other things.

NFIs and dignity kits: More are needed. Of about 11,000 people or more than 2,000 heads of households, less than 40% received support. These are mostly women-led heads of households.



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