



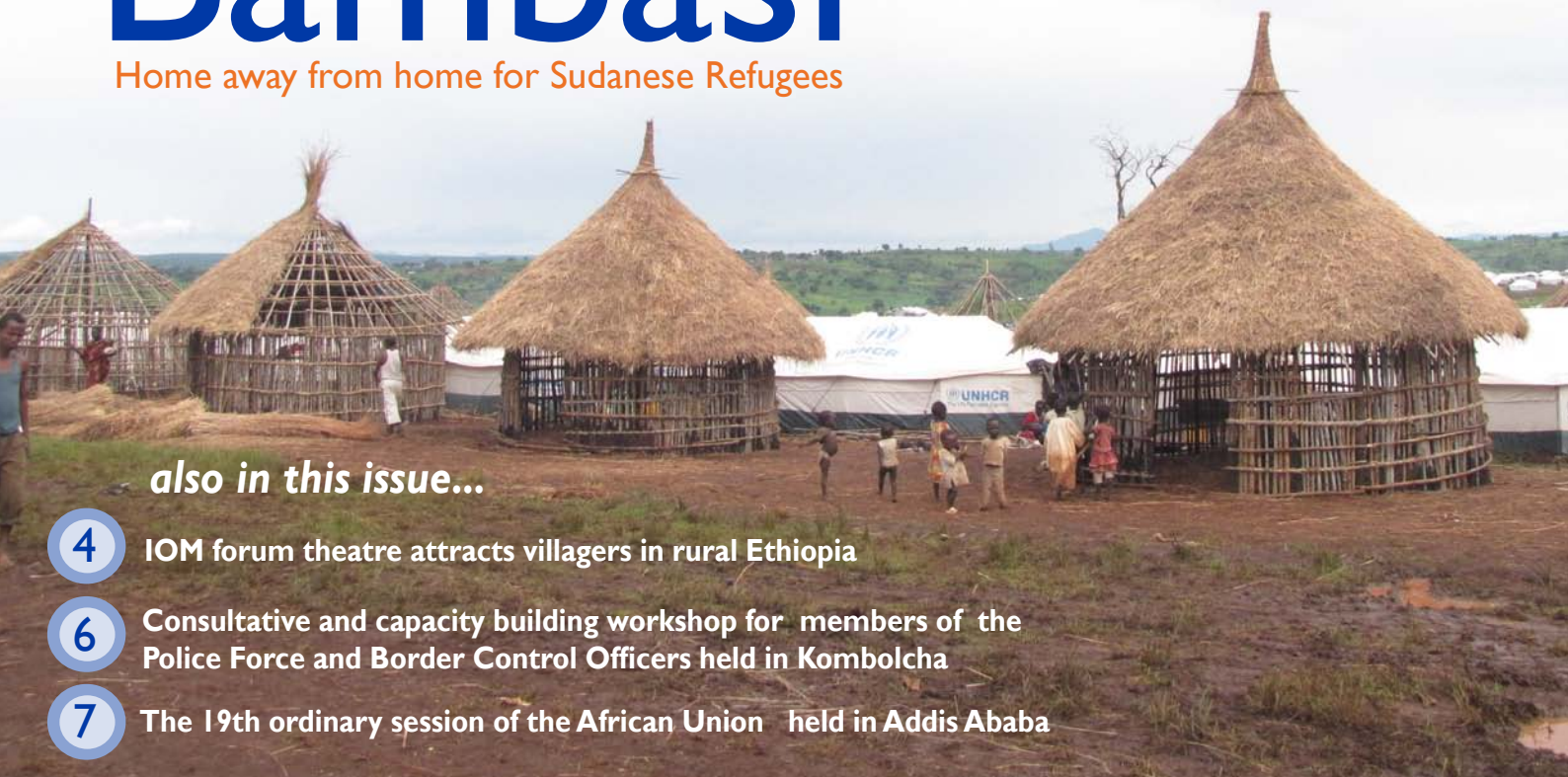
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The Migrant

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Bambasi

Home away from home for Sudanese Refugees



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Bambasi

Home away from home for Sudanese Refugees



A few kilometres away from Bambasi town in the Benishangul Gumuz region (western Ethiopia), a new settlement village of white tents is clearly visible from a distance. The village is also in clear contrast with the crisp landscape and the multicolor texture of farm lands. That village is the new refugee camp called Bambasi - named after the small nearby town.

Bambasi is the third refugee camp in the Benishangul Gumuz region opened to accommodate Sudanese refugees who have been affected by conflict. The camp began receiving refugees back in June 2012 after two existing camps - Sherkole (the oldest camp since Sudan and South Sudan

war) and Tongo - reached maximum capacity. The outbreak of conflict at the beginning of September 2011 between the Sudanese army and the Sudan People Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) displaced tens of thousands of refugees into Ethiopia and, in response, the Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners have been providing all the necessary humanitarian support. IOM on its part has been providing emergency transportation assistance to over 27,000 refugees from the different border entry points to the camps.

Near the main gate of Bambasi, some refugees have already started up their own small businesses. They are selling fruits, soap, and other essentials to their fellow refugees and also to members of the host

community. This way, they are struggling to compensate for what they have lost due to conflict and displacement, but life still remains far removed from their home lives. Inside the camp, one can observe a visible sign of humanitarian activity going on. Centres for food distribution, health services, water points, and so on were visibly quite busy. Bambasi is clearly a work in progress but it can be considered as a model refugee camp. Since the initial reception of refugees in to the camp, efforts were made to keep the environment intact. Hence, refugees had been mobilized to plant trees in different parts of the camp and the impact of refugees' settlement on the environment had been thoroughly assessed.



Further to the volley ball court where young children were playing, construction of shelters was progressing. Everyone was engaged and working against time to construct as many shelters as possible before the rainy season gets heavier. The construction of shelters has been carried out by IOM; with refugees also encouraged to get involved in the building of their own shelters. While some were fixing the bamboo structures, others were busy working on the grass roofing. After structures were completed, the process of making the walls commences. IOM shelter officer ensures that work completed for all processes meets the standard set. Once completed, the cosy tukul, which has also a small compound as a private space, will be given to one household. The owner will then be responsible for taking care of his/her own tukul and its compound.



IOM Shelter officer Tizita Jibril

Hamiza Merzuq, 70, came from a place called Al Keri in the Sudan. As the conflict intensified in her village, she had to flee into Ethiopia, travelling for days. She spent a few months in Al Damazine transit camp before she was transferred to Bambasi in June 2012. Hamiza is one of the first few beneficiaries who will be receiving new accommodation in Bambasi. Initially in Bambasi, Hamiza and her family were staying in a tent provided by UNHCR and now eagerly awaiting the completion of her shelter. Apart from some finishing work, most of the construction of Hamiza's shelter was completed. It won't be more than a week or two before Hamiza's family move into their new house. Despite Hamiza's age, she assisted the carpenters by providing bamboo sticks and the grass roofing. "This is a very nice house" says Hamiza "it is much better and nice to stay in." All day long Hamiza stays near her new house and follows its construction. In the meantime she cares for her siblings and other little children living nearby.

IOM commenced the construction of shelters in Bambasi camp at the beginning of July. A total of 815 shelter units will be constructed in Bambasi. Similarly, IOM is constructing another 1,068 shelters in Tongo refugee camp. The shelters have three different sizes: small, medium, and large and can accommodate between 1, 3 and 5 individuals respectively. Refugees are being trained on basic construction skills and are participating actively in the erection of their respective shelters. IOM will provide all construction materials and a step by step instructions to ensure quality of work. "The progress of the construction process is really encouraging" says Tizita Jibril, IOM shelter officer "we are doing good so far and hopefully, we will complete all the planned shelters on time."

Tizita is very busy in the camps touring the construction site and making sure that all identified refugees received the materials. Her job looks very demanding but Tizita never stops smiling or offering advice. "It is really fulfilling to help refugees. I feel happy to receive their gratitude everyday" she says.

Until peace and stability is restored in the Sudan's Blue Nile state, Bambasi will be home for thousands of refugees. Hamiza at her old age had been forced to leave her home because of conflict. She hopes for good things to happen to her children

and grandchildren; but before that she has to stay in her new shelter. ■

IOM is grateful to UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and UNHCR for funding the shelter Project.

Shelters for Somali Refugees



IOM has completed the construction of 50 pilot transitional shelters in Melkedida camp and all the shelters have been handed over to beneficiaries. The modality for the selection of beneficiaries is according to the vulnerability criteria set jointly by the Government's Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) and UNHCR. Refugees with specific needs - such as women, children, and the elderly at risk, those with medical conditions, single parents, unaccompanied children and persons with disabilities - were given priority.

IOM commenced the construction of the transitional shelters in Melkedida refugee camp at the beginning of August; after proper preparation work such as the construction of a workshop for pre-fabrication of shelter components, training of workers, and procurement of materials. Through out the construction process, IOM was able to maintain balance between creating employment opportunities for both the refugees and the host community.

Melkadida is the second oldest of the five camps currently hosting Somali refugees in Dollo Ado. The camp is home to more than 40,000 refugees, who have lived there for over two years.

IOM acknowledges the support of the Austrian government in this shelter project.



IOM forum theatre attracts villagers in rural Ethiopia

Mutach meaning “the last one” is a Forum Theatre production produced by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and is intended to reach out to thousands of people in rural Ethiopia where irregular migration affects the lives of many. The theatre is already capturing the attention of villagers as it clearly depicts the mere facts of the situation in their own language. IOM is currently staging the live drama in the rural villages of North Wollo Zone and the Ormo Zone of the Amhara region. These villages have been highly affected by irregular migration and many men and women left their homes and businesses in search of a better life but with a misapprehension about what they would be encountering along the way. Mutach has also taken a tour in Tigray region. The show is expected to reach more than 50,000 community members in about 55 rural villages throughout the three regional states of Ethiopia.

The theater tells the story of a father’s predicament as he considers sending his youngest daughter to work in the Middle East. His dilemma is based on the fact that he has been without any news from one of his daughters who was smuggled out of the country a year earlier. But, he is seen to be still intending to send “the last one”.

The development of the theater script was conducted in Addis Ababa by professional writers. After a content assessment was completed by IOM staff, the rest of the pre-production was carried out locally with technical support provided by zonal culture and tourism experts. Then artists from a zonal theater and drama club held rehearsals for about two weeks before the first staging. The rationale of the forum theatre was not hard to comprehend and members of the zonal theatre and drama club were observed to be really into the show. For most of the past and even the

present, many families have been torn apart and the consequences of irregular migration were very clear concepts for the performers.

All of the pre-production activities ran smoothly and according to schedule. The only remaining job was to draft a timetable and select suitable venues. It was decided that the show will be staged on market days to attract as many people as possible and also deep in the villages to get closer to the people.

On Thursday 23rd of August, the first show for Oromo Zone was staged for in Kemissie town. It was a market day and many were busy selling and buying items. An appropriate stage had been selected and the show kicked off. Soon enough, an estimated 2,000 spectators of differing age groups flocked to see the theater. Many were engrossed as the show progressed and it was interesting

to see the attention given to the acts. After the show, the audience was given the chance to reflect on the issues raised. Those who wish to speak told of their experiences and among them was one truck driver. The truck driver shared an eye witness account of what he saw along the boarder with Djibouti where most migrants underwent a perilous journey to cross into the Gulf of Aden. He had actually seen a graveyard of those who couldn't manage to proceed further into the desert. That testimony on itself was an interesting story to listen to.

The first staging of the show was a success. The next day the group moved to another small village called Chereti on a market day. The turn-out in Chereti was also encouraging. Chereti and the surrounding villages are known for being sources of irregular migration. Many have been affected by the situation and there were many emotional statements shared during the reflection session.

During its busy schedule, the show continued to reach out to thousands in the different villages. After ten shows in Oromo zone of Amhara region, the theater continued its tour in Semen Wollo zone of the Amhara region. The first show in Semen Wollo Zone took place in Sanka town market where communities from around 10 Kebeles (the lowest administrative structure) exchange their basic essentials. Unlike other towns, Sanka was not a major source area for irregular migrants. But gradually, the problem creeps into the villages and Sanka is not impervious to this.

The next stop for the show was Kobo town. Kobo is very much gripped by irregular migration. The network of smugglers and traffickers penetrated deep into the villages and members of the community were really concerned about this. The show was staged in the town hall first and then it went to the local market. Here the audience reaction was quite overwhelming. Many were able to tell personal stories and call for a concrete measure to be taken by the local authorities. From the audience reactions in Kobo; it was apparent that the extent of the problems is knocking on everyone's door. "Now men are leaving and many women and children remain without a care provider" says one spectator with disappointment. "Farm lands are abandoned and our youth are heading to the Middle East and there is a

huge labour gap created" added another member of the audience from Girana village. On and on, the audience in Kobo pointed out many other problems and the theatre really triggered a heated discussion.

The staging of Mutach was a success in Oromo zone as well. All of the planned 10 shows have been performed and attendance of spectators was more than expected. What was interesting in most of the shows was the moving reflection of the audience after the shows. "The lessons picked from this theater are that many have been affected by the problem. We have also learned that the smugglers and traffickers are networked all the way through the source to transit and destination areas" says Mengistu Tadesse IOM Programme Assistant who was coordinating the shows "it is therefore important to follow a multi- dimensional approach in implementing interventions

and change the situation" he added.

Despite the hot sun, quite a significant number of community members had the courage to attend the shows almost everywhere the show toured. They also suggested that the shows be repeated again mainly for the youth as they are keen to learn through entertainment.

Mutach will continue its tour in Oromia region, Jimma Zone, in mid October. It is expected that many people will attend the show and the success gained in Amhara region will be repeated once again in Oromia. ■

IOM acknowledges the support of United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM) and the Swiss Development Cooperation to this project.



Consultative and capacity building workshop for members of the police force and border control officers held in Kombolcha



IOM and the Federal Police of Ethiopia held a consultative and capacity building training workshop for members of the Police Force and Border Control officials on irregular migration, smuggling, and human trafficking from Ethiopia. The two day workshop was held from 18-19th September in the South Wollo zone capital, Kombolcha. The workshop also drew participants from other government ministries such as Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs (WoWYCA). Participants from other regional sector offices were also in attendance.

The consultative workshop is intended to serve as a platform whereby members of the federal and local police from border/exit locations and officials from four regional states (Amhara, Tigray, Afar and Oromia) could come together to share experiences in the area of averting the challenges of irregular migration and the trafficking of human beings as well as to identify ways in which they can collaborate on common challenges including those on law enforcement. It was also the aim of the workshop to gauge the magnitude of the problem in the respective regions so that efforts can be made to strengthen networking and collaboration.

In his opening remarks, Firdie Cheru head of the Amhara Regional State Justice Office, stated that it is important to strengthen the efforts amongst the regions to cooperatively respond to the growing challenge of irregular migration in the regions and countrywide. Deputy Commissioner General of the Federal Police, Mesfin Abebe, on his part outlined that “the network of smugglers and traffickers is affecting the lives of many in all parts of the country. They gave false hopes and empty promises to thousands of youth, men, and women in rural settings and at the end; they make enormous profits out of people’s misery.” The Deputy Commissioner also pointed out that victims of trafficking and smuggling also suffer along the way and often lose their lives due to mistreatment and very hazardous transportation systems. He therefore called up on the workshop to come up with important deliverables that can be used as input to the countrywide efforts which the Government of Ethiopia is taking against human trafficking and smuggling.

After the opening remarks, the experiences of the four regions were presented and participants discussed on them thoroughly. Then federal ministries - MoLSA, MoFA, and MoJ - also made presentations on their respective activities. From the discussions and presentations, it was apparent

that similar challenges in the areas of coordination and information sharing were common amongst the regions. It was also observed that there are gaps among law enforcing bodies to identify, prosecute, and bring those involved in human trafficking and smuggling to justice. Furthermore, community based interventions, on the prevention/reduction of irregular migration need to be further strengthened.

IOM also shared its experience in the area of immigration and border management (IBM). IOM’s presentation focused on such specific concepts as border and migration management assessments, capacity building on border and migration management, identity management, migration data management, and intelligence and risk analysis, which proved to be very relevant topics for discussion.

Finally, it was stressed that the regions need to work together to coordinate efforts to avert the challenges posed by irregular migration. They have also outlined and presented a list of activities that will be implemented as they go forward to address the issues. A similar workshop is also planned for the other regional states in the near future. ■



The 19th ordinary session of the African Union held in Addis Ababa

The 19th ordinary session of the assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union (AU) was held in Addis Ababa from July 15-16, 2012. The annual theme that AU chose for 2012 is “Boosting Intra-African Trade”. During the July summit, African Presidents and government representatives exchanged views on the development agenda of the continent at the new Conference Center of the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The main highlight of this special AU summit has been the election of the Chairperson of the Commission. Back in the January 2012 Summit, the votes of Heads of States and Governments could not determine the winner between the two candidates - outgoing Chairperson Dr. Jean Ping from Gabon and Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma from South Africa – as none of them secured the required majority to occupy the position

of Chairperson of the Commission. It was therefore decided to postpone the election to the July Summit to allow the concerned parties reach consensus through amicable means. A committee of eight Heads of States was also nominated to resolve the deadlock. Yet, Gabon and South Africa could not reach an agreement and both parties were campaigning for their respective candidates until the last stage.

At the end, after three rounds of votes, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, was finally elected as the new Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The former Deputy Chairperson of the Commission Mr. Erastus Mwencha from Kenya was also re-elected for a second term.

In her acceptance speech, the new chairperson of the Commission Dr. Dlamini Zuma promised to work with determination and ensure that the

vision of the organization is translated into reality. Becoming the first female chairperson of the commission, the newly-elect also dedicated her victory to all women on the continent.

The 19th ordinary session of Heads of States and Governments made deliberations on important issues including the Development of the African Union Strategic Planning; the report of the 3rd Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Border issues; the Humanitarian Situation in Africa; the establishment of the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD); the Report of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; the establishment of the African Public Health Emergency Fund (APHEF) to name a few. ■

Photo Stories

In July this year, IOM Director General William Lacy Swing, UNHCR High Commissioner António Guterres and Ethiopia's Deputy Director for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) Ayalew Awoke visited Bambasi refugee camp in Ethiopia's Benishangul Gumuz region. The Director General and the High Commissioner urged the international community to extend its support to thousands of Sudanese refugees affected by conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile State. Bambasi camp was opened in June 2012. It is the third camp established in the region and housed more than 12,000 Sudanese refugees.



UP on arrival in Assosa (the capital of Benishangul Gumuz region), the Director General was presented with a traditional jewel by a refugee representative.



The Traditional Zumbara horns were also there to welcome the high level delegates.



The Director General and the High Commissioner also visited the overall camp activities and had words with refugee representatives.



Mr Swing also visited the shelter construction activities of IOM in Bambasi refugee camp

Editorial

SLO Addis Communication Group
Editor: Demissew Bizuwerk

International Organization for Migration
Special Liaison Office (SLO) in Addis Ababa
P.O.Box 25283 Code 1000 Addis Ababa
Tel +251 116 611 097/98
Fax +251 116 611 101
Email: iomaddis@iom.int



The IOM Mission

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- Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management
- Advance understanding of migration issues
- Encourage social and economic development

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