



# The Migrant



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## Dollo Ado Operation

The movement of thousands of refugees to camps

The dusty road that stretches from Dollo Ado town to the refugee transit center was busy with the vehicles of humanitarian organizations which the locals must find a little unusual. They had to keep their donkey carts further to the side of the road every time the Land Cruisers passed by. After the worst drought in decades hit the Horn of Africa, the area of Dollo Ado was in the spot light. Dollo Ado is a border town between Ethiopia and Somalia with constant dust and wind. On the other side of the town was the main transit center where thousands of refugees stay temporarily and awaited their relocation to the camps.

Some 35 km away from Dollo, a new camp called Hilaweyn was set up for new arrivals. Hilaweyn was the fourth camp built for Somali refugees inside Ethiopia. Due to the considerable influx of refugees, the construction of this camp was necessary. Inside a big UNHCR warehouse, representatives from different international NGOs and UN organizations were having discussions on the relocation of thousands of refugees from the overcrowded transit center to the new camp. Responsibilities

were shared among the different humanitarian organizations and the task of transporting more than 22,000 refugees from the transit center to Hilaweyn camp rested on IOM. The meeting again continued in small groups to further detail activities.

IOM for this operation had already mobilized two IOM buses, each with a capacity to transport 60 people, and one medium sized bus. Local mini vans were contracted to effectively carryout the operation as per the schedule. Back in the IOM field office the Operation Officer, Karl Baker, gave last minute details for his team before everyone rests for the day. Then the team was divided in to two groups: the movement group and the health group.

The next day every one got up early in the morning before the sun came up. The movement team left first to UNHCR compound to fetch UNHCR staff members who will be doing the refugee registration. Soon they set up a barricade with the buses so to allow only those who have gone through the registration process. A little later, the health team comprised of two doctors

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arrived at the site and set up a little post near the exit for pre-embarkation medical checks. Every preparation went very well and according to plan.

Soon, refugees started to flock to the UNHCR's registration post to finalize their registration. Before they stepped into the transport vehicles, two IOM medical doctors examined each and every traveler with the help of a local interpreter. Those who are cleared during the medical screening directly embarked onto the buses after being given a bottle of water for the road. And those who needed special medical care were isolated and referred to nearby health center for further follow-up and medical check-ups.. Pregnant women, mothers with newly born babies, and the elderly were given a comfortable seat so as to secure their safe travel. It was very interesting to see the teams' high spirit and very humane treatment of refugees in such difficult circumstances.

Everyone was engaged and committed. Some members of the team assisted women and children to get into the buses, others loaded the refugees' luggage on a pick-up truck. That day the target was to move about one thousand refugees to Hilaweyn camp. Before each transport vehicle departed, IOM Operation Assistant, Sheiknoor Hassan, instructed the divers after quickly recording the number of people moved for statistics which will be shortly shared with UNHCR.

Although everyone was pushed to the limits, the hard work paid off. The thousand mark was indeed surpassed. More than one thousand refugees were actually screened and transported in day one.



▲ IOM doctor examining an old lady during the pre-embarkation medical check

The next day the same procedure continued. Unlike the first day, there were many sick children and women. While mid-day was approaching, Fatima Mohammed, a mother of five and on her ninth month pregnancy to her sixth child, arrived at the exit with her husband and three children. Though she has five children, she had to leave her two daughters with her mother-in-law who was unable to travel. The despair on her face clearly tells the ordeal she had been thorough. It took her a week to arrive to Dollo from her small town of Kone in Northern Somalia where drought and conflict devastated her life. She was given a seat and Dr Leul Mekonnen (IOM Doctor) started examining her. "Do you feel pain or contractions?" he asked her. "Not that much" she replied. "What about bleeding?" he asked her again. "no" she replied. Then she was given water and rest for a while before she was allowed to travel.

At the end of the queue on the medical screening, a woman who was in her mid twenties just collapsed and her mother cried for help. Dr Mekonnen again rushed to the women. A couple of other women held the young lady up and took her under a shade. When she regained consciousness the doctor gave her some fluid to drink and she was referred to MSF clinic right away. On the other end of the line, Dr Daniel Asmeraw (IOM doctor) was busy isolating cases that need referrals. He checked on a baby who looked very weak and asked the mother a couple of questions. He then referred the baby with other two very malnourished children to Dollo health center.

On the second day as well the movement went according to plan. It was yet another success to the team.

Day-in and day-out the relocation of refugees to the new camp continued. Within two months operation IOM



IOM provides safe and dignified transportation assistance to drought affected refugees in Dollo Ado. Transporting people out of the transit center and taking them to areas where they can get proper access to life-saving assistance. It is essential aspect of the humanitarian response as ensuring that people have shelter, food, water and sanitation. IOM also makes sure that refugees get proper medical assistance during their relocation

▶ IOM bus transporting refugees to Hilaweyn camp

transported more than 22,000 refugees to Hilaweyn camp. Meanwhile IOM migration health team supports Administration for Returnee and Refugee Affairs (ARRA) at the health center in Melkedida by providing the much needed technical medical assistance in emergency and under five Out-Patient Department (OPD) and In-Patient Department (IPD), handling referrals and consultations. The team also participated in a mass measles and polio vaccination and Mid Upper

Arm Circumference (MUAC) screening campaign together with other partners. "We are very grateful for the partnership we have with IOM" says Zereay, the medical director of the camp. "Having doctors here in the camps enhances the quality of our medical services. We want to build the capacity of our health workers and in this regard IOM doctors will help us a lot."

The working relationship of the IOM team

with ARRA, UNHCR and INGOs continues well. The team continues with movement operations in good coordination with agencies, organization and local officials. They still have to deal with the dusty wind and the hot sun of Dollo Ado. ■



*The continued conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) in the Blue Nile State is affecting civilians in the area and cause further displacement. Starting from early September, More than 25,000 people have left their villages and cross in to Ethiopia*

## IOM Responds to Sudanese Fleeing Violence

The continued conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N) in the Blue Nile State is affecting civilians in the area and is causing further displacement and an influx into Ethiopia. IOM is providing transportation assistance to these Sudanese refugees who are fleeing the ongoing armed conflict. Starting from early September, more than 25,000 people have left their villages and crossed into Ethiopia through entry points in Kurmuk, Geissen, Bamza, and Al Mahal.

Since fighting began in September, IOM has provided transport assistance to more than 8,500 displaced Sudanese and continues providing the service. However, as the situation deteriorates and more Sudanese arrive, additional transport assistance to the established camps will be needed.

The majority of the displaced Sudanese are currently residing in temporary settlements in Kurmuk and other areas, sharing inadequate accommodation and

meagre resources. The host communities are so far welcoming but resources will run short as long as refugees are staying for an extended period of time.

IOM is currently coordinating efforts to help the displaced Sudanese in coordination with the Ethiopian Government, Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA), UNHCR and other humanitarian partners. IOM operates 10 buses and three trucks to transport the refugees and their belongings from the border areas to Sherkole camp, a distance of 50 kilometres. As this camp will be reaching its full capacity shortly, IOM is preparing to extend transportation to a new camp at Tongo, more than 200 kilometres from the Kurmuk border crossing.

IOM is asking the donor community to provide USD 1.1 million to facilitate the continued relocation assistance which the Organization is providing to thousands of Sudanese displaced by the fighting in the Blue Nile region of Sudan.

The funds will help to maintain and increase the transport assistance which IOM is currently providing to the displaced by relocating them from border areas to established refugee camps in Western Ethiopia, where basic services and better protection can be provided.

IOM is also preparing to set up counselling facilities in the camps to provide psycho-social support to the Sudanese victims who have been traumatized by the violence they have witnessed.



**Most of the Affected in the Sudan conflict are women and Children** ▶

# The Long Trek to Survival

*Absira Ali's Story*



As the drought becomes worse in Horn of Africa, Abshira Ali started to worry about her family. She was living in Gedo, northern Somali, herding goats and cattle. She has five children, three boys and two girls and expecting another child in a month or two. Lucky enough, there were some goats and cattle left in the family belonging but that was no guarantee for their survival. Abshira's family are pastoralist who mainly depends on cattle as a means of livelihood. Drought has come in the area with full force and affected the life of Abshira's and millions more in of the Horn of Africa region. So she had to discuss the family's future with her husband.

As the days went by, things started to get worse. Some people started their journey to any place they thought would be good, and Abshira seems to have no other choice. The last resort left for her was to leave her home with all the good memories behind and seek refuge in the neighboring Ethiopia. But still, the border was far away. Let alone a pregnant women with young children, even a strong man would find it very challenging to go all the distance. Abshira understood that the longer she waited the worse it would be for herself and the young children she had. Her pregnancy was advancing and she had to avoid delivery on the road. So one day she took the unpleasant choice.

*“I was so thirsty when we walk down here. That was the only thing which I can not resist.”*

She decided to leave her village with her three young children: her two young boys and her daughter. Her husband and the rest of the children stayed behind with some lo', and ari, the cattle and goats.

Abshira took what she can carry and left her village early. With her two years old son on her back and few other belongings on her hand, she started the long trek. Young Shukri, her son, who turns nine, took the responsibility of taking care of his little sister. Though Shukri is nine, he never attended school. The only school he went to was the local Koran School where he learned religious education with his village pals.

Shukri had no idea for how long he had to walk to cross the border with his mother. She told him that there is a place on the other side of the border where they can get assistance. But every day was a just travel day. That place his mother promised was nowhere near as he would expect. He helped his mother carrying everything he can and when he felt tired he asks his mother to get some rest, then again the journey continued. Shukri understood the difficulty of all the circumstances though he is still young. Nevertheless, one thing he can not stand was the dehydration. “I was so thirsty when we walk down here” says Shukri. “That was the only thing which I can not resist” he added. His mother as much as her stock allowed, provide the kids with something to eat but mostly it was just a tea that keeps them going.

After ten excruciating days of travel Abshira, her son Shukri and the other two kids made it to the border. Then they got registered at the reception center, and rest for a while before they were transferred to the main transit center in Dollo Ado.

Abshira is currently living in the transit center and awaiting her relocation to a new camp called Hilaweyn via IOM transportation. However, she did not get the chance to stay in a tent as there were many refugees who arrived in the transit center before her and took up the already available ones. So for now she is staying in a tiny shelter which she had built with sticks, rags, and whatever she found on the ground. The stick shelter barely protects her children from the dusty wind of Dollo and Abshira has repair work to do everyday.

“It is very windy and dusty here. We need a shelter which can protect us from the wind and the sun” says Abshira. That is why she is very eager to travel to Hilaweyn camp as early as possible. IOM provides a safe and dignified transportation service to refugees in Dollo Ado in close coordination with UNHCR and the Ethiopian Government Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA).



▲ **Shukri with his younger sister at the transit centre**

Though Shukri spends some time in the Transit Center, he still didn't have a friend to play with. He just spends his day with his mother, his brother and sister. But in the future, he would like to have an education and many friends to play with.

Abshira does not know when she will be seeing her husband and her other two other children. She will certainly deliver in a refugee camp very soon. But for now she is grateful to have her three children in good health and hopes for the best to come.■



The impact of the Horn of Africa drought caused millions to flee their homes. In Ethiopia more than 122 000 Somali refugees are sheltering in four Dollo Ado complex of camps such as this one.

# National Media Training on Mixed Migration



Every year, thousands of migrants and refugees make the hazardous journey from their home through different routes in makeshift boats operated by unscrupulous smugglers. Many embark on this journey seeing better economic opportunities, flight from prosecution and human rights violations and food insecurity. Though the intention of these travelers is to find a better living condition in the destination countries, they often die during the journey while others are subjected to abuse and mistreatment.

Ethiopia is both the source and destination country for irregular migrants. The problem of irregular migration is on the rise. Many of the irregular migrants who venture to journey without proper procedures have been exposed to abuse, human rights violations, physical injury and ultimately death.

IOM works to combat human trafficking and smuggling in human beings as well as facilitating the opportunities of migration such as labor migration and diaspora engagement. In combating irregular forms of migration—trafficking and smuggling in human beings the major preventive measures include outreach and awareness creation activities. The media in this regard plays an irreplaceable role. IOM organizes special media training on the issues of mixed migration and the realities pertaining to the situation in Ethiopian.

The two day training focused on migration global outlook, conceptual clarities on mixed, irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling in human beings. It also reflected on the case of irregular migration in Ethiopia. Though most of the medial people involved in the training touched the issues

mentioned above, they lack adequate information on the different dimensions of irregular and mixed migration. The session started by elaborating on the conceptual meaning of terms like irregular migration, trafficking and smuggling in human beings and mixed migration. This was an important first step for the journalists because the Amharic terms used to define these concepts often fell short of conveying the exact meanings. The journalists therefore, in their day to day reporting have to struggle in selecting the best words and expressions. Following the definition of concepts, a situation overview of irregular migration in Ethiopia, its challenges and IOM's response was presented. During this presentation the journalists were able to gain detail information on the different migration routes that irregular migrants use from and through Ethiopia as well as the different pulling and pushing factors that cause irregular migration.

Moreover a testimony of a young girl who has been returned from Saudi Arabia was an interesting case for discussion as it gives the journalist first hand information on the arduous consequences of irregular migration. The journalists also share their experience with each other and work in groups to discuss on what should be done in the future. "I have been covering the issue of human trafficking despite the intimidation by traffickers." said one a journalist from Federal Police "today's training gave me a wider perspective on the issue of irregular migration and it is very important for my work".

Journalists both from print and broadcast as well as from federal and regional levels have attended this training. ■



## One Africa – One Voice Against Hunger

**T**he sustained dry conditions, which continued for a consecutive two rainy season have resulted in severe drought in the Horn of Africa. Southern Somalia, north and eastern Kenya and southeastern pastoralist areas of Ethiopia have been affected seriously. The drought also caused crop failure and loss of livestock especially cattle and sheep. In Somalia where both the main and secondary cropping seasons were seriously affected crop failure was significant.

The impact of the drought was also exacerbated with a spike in staple food prices, which reached record high in several countries. Hence, millions of people need emergency assistance in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. In mid-August about 12.4 million people need emergency food assistance and food security situation is predicted to remain at critical levels and even deteriorate in some areas.

Concerned about the situation, the African Union Commission organized a donor pledging conference in Addis Ababa with the aim of bringing the consciousness of African leaders by calling on them to give direct or in-kind support to the region in general and to Somalia in particular. The conference also had the objective to sensitize African leaders and the international community at large to focus on medium-to-long term crisis mitigation strategy. A steering committee, in which IOM was also a member, constituted from the African Union Commission, UN agencies and other partners discussed on the modalities of the conference meeting regularly in the African Union headquarters.

With the participation of the wider donor community, African Union member states, the private sector, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other stakeholders, the African union was able to receive a pledge of US\$ 351.7 million in cash and US\$ 28 million in kind donations. The conference not only showed the solidarity of African countries with the affected populations but also reaffirm their commitment to support this immediate humanitarian need.

Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti as well as Equatorial Guinea were represented by their head of states. High level representative from various governments and organization were also in attendance. “To our governments and people I want to say thank you very much for the sense of solidarity .... with our brothers and sisters in the Horn of Africa,” said Mr. Jean Ping, the AU commission Chairperson acknowledging the contributions made by all.

As the way forward, the African Union (AU) also set a “twin-track” approach in rebuilding livelihoods and addressing the immediate and long term needs of the vulnerable population in the Horn of Africa. In the short term, emergency food and nutrition security needs are fully met and access to all affected people is insured. In the medium and long term, strategies need to focus on addressing the technical, financial and policy context that limit the potential of the production and livelihood systems as well as achieve sustained agricultural growth and rural development. ■

# Photo Stories



Children in such difficult circumstances need special attention.



Coordinated efforts save lives. In the emergency response for the Somali refugees, inter-agency coordination meetings are regularly held to improve services



IOM nurse immunizing a child during the measles and polio vaccination campaign in Melkadida camp. After measles cases were detected in the camps, IOM and partners coordinate efforts and thousands of children receive vaccination.



IOM doctor with a refugee during pre-embarkation medical check. A few comforting words can keep the smile on the face.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Humanitarian Aid



## Editorial

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## The IOM Mission

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As the leading international organization for migration, IOM acts with partners in the international community to:

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