

KEY MESSAGES

By April 2024, more than 8,500 arrivals from Sudan were being hosted in Awlala and Kumer refugee sites in West Gondar zone, Amhara region. The population of these sites is largely composed of Sudanese nationals in search of international protection (refugees), as well as some third-country nationals, primarily from Eritrea and South Sudan (UNHCR 06/05/2024; OCHA 10/06/2024).

On 1 May, around 1,300 refugees, mainly from Sudan, left the Kumer and Awlala sites as a result of insecurity and repeated protection violations – including reports of killings, abductions, theft, and looting – occurring at the sites. The refugees also protested the sites' insufficient services, including a shortage of drinking water and food provisions, insufficient healthcare, and inadequate education services (OCHA 10/06/2024; UNHCR 06/05/2024 and 28/05/2024; Sudan Tribune 04/05/2024).

By June, these 1,300 refugees were sheltering on the side of the Gondar-Metema highway, in a forested area around 1.5km from Awlala. In this situation, the refugees have high shelter and protection needs, as they are exposed to risks associated with staying near a road in a forested area with general insecurity. To access basic services such as water, people must walk back to the refugee sites (TNH 27/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024; France 24 YouTube 22/05/2024).

At the same time, the conditions for those remaining in Kumer and Awlala remain dire, as needs are high overall and limited response capacity means that assistance is insufficient. Although there are plans to create a new refugee site, a concrete timeline and details have yet to be communicated (UNHCR 12/06/2024; VOA 07/06/2024).

Access challenges for humanitarian responders, in a context of continued conflict between the Fano militia and federal forces, further compound the overall situation, as there are frequent road closures and a tense security situation (OCHA 10/06/2024).

Information from the region is very limited, as the internet has been shut down as a result of continued insecurity and journalists have been reportedly denied access (The Guardian 12/02/2024; TNH 27/06/2024; France 24 YouTube 22/05/2024).

Map 1. refugee site locations in Western Amhara



Source: ACAPS using visual from UNHCR (20/06/2024)

+8,500

ARRIVALS FROM SUDAN
HOSTED IN KUMER AND
AWLALA SITES IN WEST
GONDAR ZONE, AMHARA

1,300

REFUGEES OUT IN THE
OPEN

High Risk

OF PROTECTION VIOLA-
TIONS

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim: this report analyses the humanitarian needs of Sudanese refugees hosted at the Kumer and Awlala refugee camps, those who left and are sheltering outside, and the factors aggravating the situation in order to support humanitarian decision-making.

Scope: this report focuses on the situation of Sudanese refugees who fled the conflict in Sudan and have taken refuge in Ethiopia's Amhara region.

Methodology: this analysis is based on a secondary data review of public and non-public sources, supplemented by interviews with humanitarian experts.

Limitations: given the access constraints, information on the humanitarian situation of refugees in Amhara is highly limited. ACAPS encourages readers to share any further information at ethiopiahub@acaps.org.

CRISIS OVERVIEW

Arrivals from Sudan and the situation in Amhara

Between April 2023 – the start of the war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) – and 25 June 2024, more than 134,400 people have crossed from Sudan into Ethiopia (IOM accessed 25/06/2024). Kurmuk (Benishangul Gumz region) and Metema (West Gondar zone, Amhara region) are the main entry points, with Metema accounting for more than 94% of arrivals and smaller numbers arriving via the Pagak and Burbiey border points in Gambela region (IOM accessed 13/06/2024; OCHA 26/04/2024; UNHCR 30/04/2024). Sudanese nationals constitute 50% of arrivals, while Ethiopian returnees and third-country nationals make up 38% and 13% respectively (IOM accessed 13/06/2024). Among Ethiopian arrivals are also people previously hosted in Sudan as refugees (UNHCR 22/08/2023). Sudanese fleeing the war in Sudan and arriving at the Metema entry point requesting international assistance are granted refugee status after registration (KII 24/06/2024 a).

Refugees are sheltered at the Awlala and Kumer refugee sites and the refugee transit/reception centre in Metema (UNHCR 30/04/2024; Radio Dabanga 26/04/2024). The Kumer refugee site was established in June 2023 and mainly hosts people from Eritrea, South Sudan, and Sudan. By the end of April 2024, the site was hosting around 6,500 people. The Awlala site was established in November 2023 and, by April 2024, was hosting more than 2,000 people, mainly from Sudan and South Sudan (UNHCR 06/05/2024; OCHA 10/06/2024).

The Amhara region has been affected by the conflict between the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and Fano militia since April 2023. Following conflict escalation, between August 2023 and early June 2024, a state of emergency was in place in Amhara, giving the Government the authority to impose curfews, restrict movements, and ban public gatherings (Reuters 02/02/2024; FDRE HRP Facebook 02/02/2024; Addis Standard 02/02/2024). By early June 2024, the state of emergency had expired and was not extended, despite continuing conflict across Amhara (APA News 07/06/2024; BBC 18/06/2024). The overall security environment in Amhara continues to be tense (Crisis24 31/05/2024). Although general insecurity in Amhara is tied to the Fano insurgency, it is unclear if security incidents in West Gondar zone are directly related or the result of limited law enforcement leading to armed individuals and groups targeting refugees.

Recent developments

Refugees staying at sites in West Gondar zone are facing insecurity due to armed groups and bandits posing security and protection risks. For example, Sudanese refugees stated that they have been experiencing insecurity for some months at the Kumer site, including killings, kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, rape, and abduction (Reuters 03/05/2024; Radio Dabanga 20/02/2024; VOA 20/06/2024). In February 2024, several girls were reportedly raped at the Kumer site (Dabanga 26/04/2024 and 20/02/2024; Sudan Tribune 04/05/2024). The most recent incident happened in mid-June at the Awlala site, where a woman was reportedly killed by the Fano militia while fetching water from a nearby well (Sudan Tribune 18/06/2024). In an isolated incident around the same time, armed groups attacked a minibus in Metema woreda, reportedly resulting in the death of one Sudanese woman refugee (VOA 19/06/2024; TNH 27/06/2024).

On 1 May, around 1,300 refugees (mainly from Sudan) left the Kumer and Awlala sites in protest over increased security concerns, protection violations, and dissatisfaction with services, including a shortage of drinking water, food provisions, and inadequate healthcare and education services (OCHA 10/06/2024; UNHCR 06/05/2024 and 28/05/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a; Sudan Tribune 04/05/2024). The protesting refugees walked toward the UNHCR headquarters in Gondar city, 170km from the sites, but were stopped by police (TNH 27/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024; France 24 YouTube 22/05/2024).

By June, the refugees were sheltering outside, along the side of the Gondar-Metema highway, in a forested areas around 1.5km from Awlala (TNH 27/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024; France 24 YouTube 22/05/2024). The situation is dire, with continuing protection risks and limited access to basic services (TNH 27/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024). Some refugees have gone back and forth between the roadside and the Awlala site to access food and water (UNHCR 28/05/2024; OCHA 10/06/2024). Government authorities are providing security for those sheltering along

the road (UNHCR 28/05/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a). But there is no information on the adequacy of this security. Protection risks remain for those travelling back and forth between the roadside and Awlala site (KII 24/06/2024 a).

Some refugees expressed a desire to return to Sudan as a group, emphasised not wanting to return to the Kumer and Awlala sites, and requested to be relocated to a safer location, with some asking to be relocated outside of Ethiopia and others accepting a relocation within Amhara region or elsewhere in Ethiopia (UNHCR 28/06/2024; KII 11/06/2024; (KII 24/06/2024 b; TNH 27/06/2024). Authorities do not allow group movement, however, only individual travel is permitted, which the refugees consider to be unsafe (TNH 27/06/2024; Ayin 29/05/3034).

As a result of security and service provision concerns, the GoE has decided to close both the Awlala and Kumer refugee sites, affecting the more than 8,500 people residing there, and have identified a new settlement site called Aftit (8km from Gendawuha, West Gondar zone). Detailed plans and timelines for the refugee relocation have yet to be disclosed (UNHCR 12/06/2024; VOA 07/06/2024). It is unclear how safe the new site will be and whether there will be sufficient basic services.

Access constraints

Access constraints also contributed to the limitedness of humanitarian action and refugee response capacity in the region (OCHA 10/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024). Insecurity-induced road closures have affected the movement of civilians and humanitarian responders across the region (ACLEDD 10/04/2024; Addis Standard 06/04/2024; USAID 19/03/2024; DW 26/06/2024). In February–March, security incidents by non-state armed groups in West Gondar led to the closure of the main highway, limiting humanitarian movement (OCHA 10/06/2024). On 24 May 2024, an armed group fired on a humanitarian convoy travelling between Gondar and Metema in the Amhara region, killing one humanitarian staff member and injuring others (UNHCR 29/05/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024; MTI 28/05/2024; Health Cluster 30/05/2024; ACLED 29/05/2024). Restrictions on humanitarian movement were imposed after this incident, but were lifted on 29 May (UNHCR 29/05/2024; UNHCR 07/06/2024).

OUTLOOK

Refugees sheltering outside the Kumer and Awlala sites are at risk of protection violations, including gender-based violence (GBV), robbery, kidnapping, violence from armed groups, and exposure to the elements and wild animals (Reuters 07/06/2024; TNH 27/06/2024).

In the absence of a ceasefire or significant reduction in violence in Sudan, more refugees are expected to cross the border seeking security in Ethiopia (UNHCR 30/04/2024). This would further strain the already limited humanitarian response in Amhara (KII 24/06/2024 b).

The continuation of conflict in Amhara will likely cause further movement restrictions (Crisis24 31/05/2024). Such restrictions will likely continue to affect the delivery of humanitarian assistance to refugees in West Gondar zone.

While, according to reports, no more refugees have left the Kumer and Awlala sites, it is possible that more will leave, particularly if there are further security incidents or people think that security or access to aid is better outside the sites.

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

The conflict in Amhara is causing access constraints. In May 2024, constraints in the Gondar area limited access to nearby cities, including Bahir Dar, Debre Tabor, and Metema (Logistics Cluster 04/06/2024). The access situation also worsened in May 2024 in North Wello, Shoa, South Gondar, and West Gondar zones as a result of armed conflict (Logistics Cluster 04/06/2024; Crisis24 31/05/2024).

Security incidents sometimes result in a temporary pause in movement and pose a risk to humanitarians (KII 24/06/2024 a). Such restrictions affect the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including access to refugee sites in West Gondar zone (OCHA 10/06/2024).

The GoE-Fano militia conflict may limit access to refugees sheltering along the roadside. When movement is restricted in the Gondar areas, it affects movement to West Gondar, limiting access to the sites. Potential insecurity by armed groups can also further affect access, as was the case in February–March 2024, when attacks and abductions by armed groups led to the closure of the main highway (Gondar-Metema) (OCHA 10/06/2024).

Potential flooding during the Kiremt rainy season (June–September) may result in more needs, as shelters could be damaged and roads blocked, limiting humanitarian movement.

INFORMATION GAPS

According to the UNHCR, 1,300 people have left the sites and are sheltering on the roadside. While higher numbers have been reported by the media, such have not been verified by humanitarian organisations (TNH 27/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024).

There is no gender, age, or disability-disaggregated data available on the refugee groups that left the Kumer and Awlala sites. It has been reported, however, that children are among those sheltering on the roadside (Reuters 07/06/2024; France 24 YouTube 22/05/2024). It is also likely that people with disabilities and the elderly face particular challenges meeting their basic needs, accessing resources, and exercising their rights, because of difficulties to access services due to not being able to move around easily.

The GoE has reportedly barred journalists from accessing the conflict-affected Amhara region, including the West Gondar zone, where refugees are residing (The Guardian 12/02/2024; TNH 27/06/2024; France 24 YouTube 22/05/2024). This lack of media access is preventing the distribution of timely, accurate, and balanced information, increasing the likelihood of the spread of mis/disinformation. The internet shut down is also reducing access to information.

There is a lack of clear, consistent information on the needs and availability of supplies at the Kumer and Awlala sites.

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OF SUDANESE REFUGEES IN AMHARA

Limited response capacity means there are large gaps in service provision for refugees (KII 24/06/2024 a). While the group sheltering on the roadside still has access to the limited-service provision at the Awlala site, around 1.5km away, the journey back and forth is laden with protection risks (KII 24/06/2024 a).

Protection

Insecurity in the Amhara region is affecting refugees at the Metema transit centre and the Awlala and Kumer sites (UNHCR 03/05/2024; Sudan Tribune 30/05/2024). Refugees hosted at the sites are exposed to protection risks from armed groups and armed individuals, including killings, armed robbery, and kidnappings for ransom, resulting in demonstrations and refugees leaving the sites (Reuters 03/05/2024; Ayin 29/05/2024; Radio Dabanga 20/02/2024 and 26/04/2024; Sudan Tribune 04/05/2024; Radio Tmazuji 12/05/2024).

Refugees sheltering outside the sites, along the roadside, are facing heightened protection risks, including GBV, attacks, and kidnappings, as they are in an area frequented by armed groups and bandits. There are reports that such refugees are experiencing incidents of beatings, harassment, and theft as they attempt to access markets or on their return to the roadside (TNH 27/06/2024). Some families may be separated, as some members left the sites and some remained, leaving those who stayed behind with reduced support (KII 24/06/2024 b). Regular travel between the roadside and refugee sites, as refugees seek access to services such as food and water, exposes people to protection risks and makes them more vulnerable to attack (UNHCR 28/05/2024; OCHA 10/06/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a). While the Government is providing security for the refugees on the roadside, the journey to/from the Awlala site is a protection concern (KII 24/06/2024 a). Refugees on the roadside are also exposed to dangers from wild animals, including hyenas, snakes, and scorpions (TNH 27/06/2024).

Many refugees have already been traumatised by the conflict-related violence they experienced in Sudan (UNHCR 31/01/2024). Attacks and insecurity at the refugee sites in Amhara are likely to aggravate their trauma, leading to an increased need for psychosocial support.

Shelter

There is a wide gap between available shelter and need across all refugee locations in Ethiopia (UNHCR 30/04/2024). Refugee sites are over capacity. For example, the Kumer site – established in June 2023 and located about 70km from the border with Sudan – has a capacity of around 6,000 people, but, by December 2023, it was hosting more than 9,000 (NRC 07/12/2023). As the Kumer site was over capacity, people were staying in congested communal shelters at the Metema border, a situation that instigated the establishment of the Awlala site (UNHCR 30/04/2024). Constructed in November 2023, the Awlala site was established to help decongest the Kumer site. By June 2024, Awlala was hosting around 2,000 refugees (OCHA 10/06/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a).

It is likely that Kiremt rains will cause damage to shelters in 2024, as the same occurred in 2023. The Kiremt rainy season (June–September) in 2023 resulted in shelter damage and the flooding of health facilities, leaving people without shelter and hindering service provision (OCHA 02/06/2023).

Refugees sheltering outside refugee sites are staying in makeshift dwellings made of branches and tarps, while others, including children, are staying in the open, exposed to weather conditions such as heat and seasonal rain (TNH 27/06/2024; Reuters 07/06/2024). A lack of adequate shelters can lead to increased incidents of GBV and health risks related to, in particular, sanitation and waterborne diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, and worm infections (UNHCR 30/04/2024).

Food and nutrition

Refugees across the county, including sites in West Gondar, received no food assistance between June–October 2023, as there was a countrywide food aid pause following reports of aid diversion (USAID 05/10/2023; WFP 09/10/2023; UNHCR 30/04/2024). During this time, refugees were assisted by the host community (KII 24/06/2024 a). The food aid pause contributed to a substantial increase in coping strategies with potentially harmful protection consequences, such as child marriage, child labour, forced marriage, and survival sex (UNHCR 30/04/2024). In 2023, the food basket provided to refugees consisted of between 60–84% of recommended dietary needs; in 2024, however, according to WFP resource allocation projections, the dietary allowance will likely fall below 60% (UNHCR 30/04/2024). While food aid resumed in October 2023, it is not adequate, as monthly food delivery lasts less than two weeks (Reuters 07/06/2024).

A nutrition screening in June 2024 in Awlala, Kumer, and the Metema transit centre revealed that of around 870 children under the age of five screened, 1% were experiencing severe acute malnutrition and 5.12% moderate acute malnutrition (UNHCR 12/06/2024).

In May, some of the refugees sheltering outside the sites went on a hunger strike, demanding evacuation to a safe country (UNHCR 28/05/2024; Migration-Control 30/05/2024; Ayin 29/05/2024; TNH 27/06/2024). By the end of June, it was still unclear whether the hunger strike was continuing. Such actions are expected to increase malnutrition rates and contribute to poor health outcomes, worsening the impact of diseases such as cholera and malaria.

WASH

Arrivals' WASH access is limited at the sites, as there is a limited water supply. By June 2024, the average safe water available per person at Kumer, Metema transit centre, and Awlala was 10.7, 10.5, and 9 litres per day respectively, well below the SPHERE standards of 15–20 litres per day (UNHCR 12/06/2024 and 30/04/2024). By October 2023, the latrine-to-user ratio at the Kumer site was 1:164, surpassing the minimum emergency standard of 1:50 (OCHA 09/10/2023). The high latrine-to-user ratio remains a major concern for disease outbreaks, further worsened by inadequate water supply and inconsistent soap distribution (UNHCR 30/04/2024). Some waterborne diseases have already been reported in the areas, including intestinal worms, non-bloody cholera, and diarrhoea, which are likely aggravated by inadequate WASH facilities.

The security situation in settlement areas is impeding the implementation of essential WASH services. At the Awlala site, the limited availability of drinking water is leading some refugees to drink from unsafe water sources (UNHCR 12/06/2024).

Refugees who left the sites and are residing on the roadside have no access to WASH facilities (UNHCR 29/05/2024). Such refugees must go to the valley to bathe and wash clothes, exposing them to protection risks such as abduction and GBV (Reuters 07/06/2024). Some are also travelling between the sites and the roadside to access basic services, as (UNHCR 28/05/2024; OCHA 10/06/2024). Because of lack of WASH facilities – such as drinking water and latrines – on the roadside exposes them to high risk of waterborne disease outbreak.

Health

Insufficient healthcare services at the Kumer and Awlala sites was a reason for the refugee protests (OCHA 10/06/2024). For example, the health unit at the Kumer site is only open part-time, and the only available medicines are painkillers and antibiotics, leaving those with further needs without access (Radio Dabanga 20/02/2024).

The lack of ambulances and delay in issuing pass permits are also challenges to healthcare provision at both the Kumer and Awlala sites (UNHCR 22/04/2024; Radio Dabanga 20/02/2024). Inadequate medical equipment is also affecting people, particularly women, as women-specific health services – such as maternal care – are affected by the lack of medical equipment at the sites (Radio Dabanga 20/02/2024 and 24/06/2024).

The diseases prevalent across the Kumer and Awlala sites and Metema transit centre include acute upper respiratory tract infections, acute febrile illness, non-bloody cholera, diarrhoea, pneumonia, intestinal worms, malaria, gastritis (dyspepsia), and fevers of unknown origin (UNHCR 07/06/2024).

There is a mobile health clinic at the Awlala site for the refugees staying by the roadside (UNHCR 06/05/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a; Ayin 29/05/2024). Considering the site's limited-service provision, the mobile health clinic's capacity to provide adequate service is unclear.

Education

Education is provided for children at both the refugee sites and nearby schools, where refugee children are integrated with host community children and learn the Ethiopian national curriculum (UNHCR 30/04/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a). Refugee teachers also teach at host community schools, where they receive incentive payment for teaching and assist with translation (UNHCR 22/03/2024; KII 24/06/2024 a). By April 2024, around 1,400 pre-primary and primary refugee children attended classes at Kumer host community school (UNHCR 12/04/2024). By March 2024, classes had not yet begun at the Awlala host community school (UNHCR 28/03/2024).

Since early May, education has been interrupted at both the Kumer and Awlala sites as a result of the refugee protests (UNHCR 12/06/2024). While discussions on when/how to restart schools are continuing between humanitarian organisations, refugee leaders, and teachers, refugee communities are against sending their children to school because of security concerns (UNHCR 12/06/2024).

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN EAST SUDAN

The war in Sudan has aggravated many of the country's pre-existing challenges, including economic and political instability, disease outbreaks, and climate emergencies (UNHCR 15/04/2024).

Humanitarian crisis in Sudan

The war in Sudan has led to severe food shortages, rising hunger levels, and malnutrition, contributing to increased hunger-related mortality across Sudan, with over 25 million people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and above levels of food insecurity (OCHA accessed 28/06/2024). The internal displacement crisis has left millions in need of healthcare, water, and sanitation services, with large populations cut off from humanitarian aid by violence and logistical challenges (OCHA accessed 20/06/2024). The war has also aggravated pre-existing weaknesses in Sudan's healthcare system, resulting in extensive damage to healthcare infrastructure. Approximately 65% of the population now lacks access to medical care and, by February 2024, between 70–80% of health facilities were non-operational as a result of continued violence (Health Cluster 03/04/2024). The overlapping crises have forced civilians to migrate in search of security, a trend that is expected to continue as conditions deteriorate further.

The war has also spread to new areas, such as Blue Nile state, which borders Ethiopia, leading to cross-border displacement. Hundreds of civilians fled to Ethiopia following a June 2023 attack in Kurmuk by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement North (Reuters 26/06/2023).

Eastern Sudan

Even before the current war, Eastern Sudan hosted significant numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers, and IDPs. This region, which includes Kassala and Gedaref states, continues to receive new arrivals while also dealing with a long-standing refugee situation. By June 2024, these states hosted over one million IDPs combined (UNHCR accessed 16/06/2024).

The humanitarian crisis in Kassala state reflects the broader struggles faced by Sudan, with widespread food insecurity, loss of livelihoods, and continued violence (MSF 25/03/2024). The rising population has led to a surge in rental prices and increased demand for housing in Kassala. Combined with the rising costs of food and non-food items and unstable living conditions, these factors are likely to compel civilians to migrate (IOM 02/02/2024). The escalation in fighting, including the RSF's seizure of Wad Madani in Aj Jazirah state, has displaced approximately 234,000 people (UNHCR 31/01/2024; MSF 16/01/2024). On 5 June, an RSF attack in which over 150 people were killed also prompted movements in search of safer areas (FIDH 06/06/2024; OCHA 05/01/2024).

Gedaref state, already hosting over 100,000 Ethiopian refugees, has seen its situation deteriorate as a result of the war and RSF takeover of neighbouring Aj Jazirah state. Gedaref faces high humanitarian needs, economic challenges, and an influx of displaced individuals from Khartoum (Sudan Tribune 25/04/2024). Most Sudanese IDPs are staying with friends and relatives, whereas non-Sudanese individuals, mainly refugees, are primarily accommodated in gathering sites or refugee camps. Many of these refugees are Ethiopian, some of whom had previously stayed in these camps prior to relocating to Khartoum for employment (NRC 02/01/2024). Because of its proximity to Ethiopia, Gedaref is a transit state; it is an affordable point of exit and has established routes for those looking to leave Sudan (IOM 02/02/2024). This will likely continue.

The harsh economic conditions, food insecurity, lack of adequate shelter, and continued violence are likely to drive further refugee movements towards Ethiopia, as people seek security and stability (NRC 02/01/2024; FIDH 06/06/2024; OCHA 05/01/2024).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Conflict in the Amhara region

The conflict between GoE and Fano militia is limiting access to refugee sites in West Gondar zone (OCHA 10/06/2024). There have been repeated attacks for some months by armed groups and bandits, resulting in violence and looting against refugees both at the sites and outside them (The Arab Weekly 04/05/2024; Sudan Tribune 30/05/2024). The refugees outside of camps are exposed to the presence of unknown armed groups and armed bandits in the area. The conflict is also contributing to overall insecurity and crime, as conflict limits the work of law enforcement institutions (DW 26/06/2024). The conflict has resulted in an internet shutdown across the Amhara region since August 2023, following the declaration of a state of emergency, which is hindering communication and affecting the needs monitoring that drives intervention (NRC 07/12/2023). This has left Sudanese refugees cut off from communication and financial support from online banking applications (TNH 27/06/2024; Ayin 29/05/2024).

Limited humanitarian assistance

Access constraints as a result of road blockages and insecurity are limiting humanitarian assistance to refugees in West Gondar, alongside limited response capacity (OCHA 10/06/2024; UNHCR 30/04/2024). In February–March 2024, security incidents involving attacks and abductions by armed groups and bandits led to the closure of the main highway (OCHA 10/06/2024). This situation may contribute to refugees resorting to coping mechanisms with potentially harmful consequences – such as survival sex, child labour, and other dangerous work – to meet their basic needs (UNHCR 23/04/2024 and 21/03/2024).

Disease outbreak

Diseases affecting refugees in West Gondar zone include acute upper respiratory tract infections, acute febrile illness, non-bloody cholera, diarrhoea, pneumonia, intestinal worms, malaria, gastritis (dyspepsia), and fevers of unknown origin (UNHCR 07/06/2024). The fact that refugees are staying out in the open, without access to WASH facilities, poses a high risk of disease spread and the outbreak of more waterborne diseases.

Kiremt rainy season

The Amhara region is prone to flooding during the Kiremt rainy season (June–September) (IGAD 10/06/2024). Access constraints such as blocked roads, shelter damage, and flooded facilities hinder service provision. In particular, healthcare provision may be affected by flooding in the coming months, as damage to shelters and the flooding of health facilities were also witnessed in 2023 (OCHA 02/06/2024; Addis Standard 03/06/3034). People out in the open are directly exposed to the Kiremt rains and colder temperatures. Kiremt rains can also aggravate waterborne illnesses and malaria. By June 2024, malaria was increasing as a result of the rains (TNH 27/06/2024).