



IOM International Organization for Migration

## HORN OF AFRICA

# HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION STAFF ARE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN PROVIDING HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES AFFECTED BY THE PREVAILING DROUGHT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA .

In Kenya the International Organization for Migration is involved in facilitating pre-departure health screening of refugees, preliminary health care and a medical referral system for all refugees. On 6 October 2011, IOM in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation carried out a Polio and Measles immunization exercise for new arrivals in Liboi, the Kenya/

Somali border town. The polio vaccine targeted children between 0-5 yrs while the measles vaccine was administered to refugees in the age bracket of 6months - 29yrs. This Exercise benefited a total of 2,083 refugees.

A cholera outbreak in the Ifo 2 East Camp in Dadaab in August 2011 saw IOM in collaboration with Kenya Red Cross and UNHCR provide medical assistance to curb the outbreak of water borne diseases in the camp. IOM's medical team, made up of four nurses, two clinical officers and one doctor shifted their operations to a hospital formerly occupied by Médecins Sans

Frontières in order to provide sufficient medical assistance to the refugees.

The health crisis caused by the drastic weather changes in the area, poor nutrition and poor living standards has seen many of the patients treated for watery diarrhoea, lower and upper respiratory tract infections, malaria, and skin infection. The medical team has also been providing Ante-natal care services and immunization for children between the ages of 0-12 months.

## IOM IN ACTION

The health care intervention involves:

- Pre-departure medical assessment is done to identify migrants who are in dire need of specific medical attention/referrals while on transit and on arrival at their destination.
- Provision of medication and required health supplements to the very needy cases.
- Deployment of a psychiatrist and an ophthalmologist who are offering specialized mental and eye care in the Melkedida and Bolkamanyo Camps
- Construction of two temporary satellite clinics and two emergency wards to aid in management of acute watery diarrhoea.
- Provision of direct health care to 6,000 refugees .
- Reach upto 45,000 refugees with key health messages to increase health seeking behavior.

In Ethiopia, IOM is supporting the Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) with technical medical support and capacity building by providing medical personnel and, emergency drugs to the camps (Melkedida and Bokolmanyo) health centers. IOM has in place two doctors, and two nurses in Melkedida, one nurse and one midwife in Bokolmanyo Camp. Besides, IOM also has two nurses for pre-embarkation Medical checks and an international nurse coordinating activities.

As of 28 December 2011, the IOM health team had performed medical consultations and assistance to a total of 7,210 refugees in Melkadida and Bokolmanyo Camps' Health Centers, assisting children under the age of five, in the out-patient and in-patient departments, handling referrals and following up on pregnant women as well as assisting deliveries.

The team also vaccinated over 2,000 refugees in a successful polio and measles campaign at the Melkadida Refugee Camp in August 2011 and provided training for health workers on Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) treatment and prevention. Currently, IOM has also deployed two visiting specialists, a Psychiatrist and an Ophthalmologist who are offering specialized mental and eye care services in Melkadida and Bokolmanyo Camps.

## New Health Project in Ethiopia

The two specialists have already attended to more than 100 cases in both camps. IOM will also be offering similar medical technical support to ARRA in Melkedida and Bokolmayo Refugee Camps in its new health project. This project builds on IOM's initial deployment of doctors and nurses in Dollo Ado to carry out pre-departure medical screenings and to facilitate referrals of vulnerable refugees as part of the large scale refugee transportation operation, and its subsequent seconding of doctors and nurses to support ARRA and immunization campaigns in the camps.

Through the construction of two temporary satellite clinics and two emergency wards for management of acute watery diarrhea as an essential preparedness measure, the project is expected to provide direct health services to 6,000 refugees in the two camps, enhance preparedness for potential epidemics and reach up to 45,000 refugees with key messages to increase health seeking behavior and awareness on key public health issues. The project will build capacity of ARRA health workers to ultimately take over the full provision of health care in the camps as the situation stabilizes.



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