European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Kenya

Introduction

Kenya hosts almost 477,000 refugees and asylum seekers who are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance for their basic needs. Due to droughts, access to enough food and water remains patchy in sections of the population. Voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees from Kenya has continued, regardless of the insecurity, drought, and forced evictions in their home country. The European Union continues its long-standing assistance to refugees in Kenya and responds to disaster-related emergencies.

What are the needs?

Persistent unpredictable weather has brought about cyclical food shortages for millions of Kenyans. The short rainy season at the end of 2018 was late and poor across most of the country. The long rains expected from March to May also started late and have been less than adequate for crop and pasture to grow. As a result, 1.5 million people across Kenya are at risk of food shortages and will need humanitarian assistance to get food.

Seven counties in the dry and pastoral parts of the country have already been declared by the Kenyan government as showing alarming signs of drought conditions.

Kenya hosts nearly half a million refugees and asylum seekers mainly from South Sudan, Somalia, and the Great Lakes region. Kenya has an encampment policy, meaning that refugees are mainly confined to camps and are almost entirely dependent on aid. Lack of funding has led to food ration cuts for many refugees.

By May 2019, more than 1,050 Somalis had been assisted to voluntarily return to Somalia. While the numbers of those willing to return has significantly dropped, 83,938 Somalis have been assisted to return home since April 2014 despite the insecurity and lack of basic services in their home country.
How are we helping?

Over the years, the European Union (EU) has maintained its humanitarian support for refugee operations in Kenya. It has also focused on building the resilience of communities in the arid northern part of Kenya and the capacity of authorities to prepare for emergencies. Since 2012, the EU has provided more than €120 million in humanitarian aid in Kenya.

In 2019, the EU is supporting humanitarian action in Kenya with €16.5 million in funding to assist refugees in Kenya.

In the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, the EU continues to support the provision of basic life-saving services such as food assistance, healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), protection, and education.

As a partial replacement to distributing food rations, the EU funds electronic food vouchers called ‘Bamba Chakula’ (‘Get your food’ in Swahili). This system has been rolled out through the popular M-PESA mobile money transfer system. It gives refugees more options as they can choose which food to buy, thus diversifying their diet while helping the local economy grow.

EU support has helped the set-up of health facilities offering comprehensive services, including in-patient wards that cater to both refugee and host communities. Clean water, sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion are also given priority in order to prevent illnesses. Efforts are made to ensure a safer environment in camps, especially for children and women who make up 79% of the population. This work is done through local committees tasked with overseeing the safety in their respective communities.

In addition, the EU contributes to the education of refugees and young people by offering learning opportunities for more than 135,000 pupils enrolled in schools in the Dadaab and Kakuma camps. A special accelerated learning programme has been devised for young people and adults whose education has been interrupted due to conflict. This programme enables students to catch up and complete the primary school curriculum in just 3 years.

At the refugee camps, the EU supports humanitarian partners that care for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and work with communities in the camps to prevent such violence from being perpetrated in the first place.