



Kobe Refugee Camp, Dollo Ado, Ethiopia

SHELTER: Living in Kobe Refugee Camp since July 2011, Amran and her six children have recently moved to a new ‘Transitional Shelter’.

It is with pride that 33 year old Amran shows the front room of her home.

“This is where I host my neighbours and other guests” she says with a wide smile on her face

But this is not just any home. For Amran and her six children live in Kobe Refugee Camp in Dollo Ado, one of five refugee camps in southern Ethiopia jointly managed by UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency - and government counterpart The Ethiopian Administration of Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), and her’s is a story shared by many of her neighbours.

“In Somalia I kept the home, and my late husband used to transport goods on his donkey cart, but then things became insecure. One night one of my neighbours was taken into the countryside and killed by Al-Shabab. When I heard this, I decided I had to leave, for the safety of my children.”

In July 2011, Amran and her six children left Somalia’s Gedo region and travelled the many miles to the Ethiopian Border where they found the safety and security not present in Somalia. After arriving, they were transferred to Kobe Refugee Camp, one of five refugee camps in the region providing food, shelter and safety for over 190,000 Somali refugees forced to flee their homes.



Amran and family outside the 'Transitional Shelter' they now call home. To the left is the metal frame of their previous UNHCR supplied emergency shelter.

“As soon as we got to the Kobe Refugee Camp I knew my life would be better. We had water, shelter, food and safety. All of the things we didn't have in Somalia”

Initially Amran and her family were living in a UNHCR emergency tent made of plastic sheeting on a metal frame.

“Our first (emergency) shelter provided us with a roof over our head but the plastic was very hot, there were many of us cramped inside and people could cut through the plastic sheeting and steal our belongings if they wanted. Sometimes, even animals would push their heads through into our home.”

But then Amran received the news she had been waiting for, when she was informed that she and her family were due to be moved into a new home - an innovative 'Transitional Shelter' made with bamboo walls, a steel roof and mud plaster - funded by UNHCR's partner The IKEA Foundation.

“I saw other families getting these new shelters, and was hoping for one for my family also. When they started building our new shelter, I was very happy.”

The new 'Transitional Shelters' not only last longer than traditional emergency shelters, they are better suited for the extreme heat and dust of the region. In addition they have also been designed and constructed by refugees and members of the host community who have undergone skills workshop training and who are paid a small wage.

“We feel safe, we feel secure and we feel like we now have a real home. We have room for the whole family, and I am now able to have visitors in my house. This is where I host my neighbours and other guests.”

Amran has now been in her new home for a number of months and whilst the house still needs to be plastered with mud, the final stage of building the house, and undertaken by the refugees themselves, she has hung up coloured clothes, and used the old plastic sheeting of the emergency tent to good use inside.

“I pray for a good life in the camp. I don't want to return to Somalia until it is safe. Here, I feel my family have a future.”

Photos: © UNHCR/ R.Nuri

Case studies written in February 2013. Data and figures correct as of March 2013. All names have been changed.

About UNHCR

For six decades, UNHCR has helped save lives, restore hope and rebuild futures. As we strive to bring protection and solutions to millions of refugees around the world, some of the world's leading corporations are helping us have maximum impact, providing an opportunity for collaborating together on initiatives that serve both their social and business interests.

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