

Aid through Confinement

UNHCR's Aid to Eritrean Refugees in Sudan, 1967-1970
A Case Study of Wad Sharife

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Abstract

Today, we increasingly witness surges of refugee camps followed by heated debates, discussions, and reports of human rights violations occurring in them and other violations and controversies. During the Global Cold War, major refugee crises erupted around the globe and presented complex challenges to the international community. The United Nations General Assembly tasked the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide international protection for refugees and find a permanent solution to the problem. Numerous refugee camps were established due to the vast refugee flow, especially in Africa.

This thesis examines UNHCR's aid to Eritrean refugees in Sudan between 1967-1970, with a focus on refugee camps. During the temporal scope of this thesis, the UNHCR's policy and practices regarding refugee camps were changing. This thesis will explore these changes and examine the organization's ability to provide adequate aid to the refugees settled in refugee camps by conducting a case study of one of the refugee camps in Sudan for Eritrean refugees, Wad Sharife.

Wad Sharife was built in 1967 to accommodate the newly arrived Eritrean refugees in Sudan, and the camp is still in operation today. Wad Sharife has been operating for almost 60 years and was once one of the largest refugee camps in the world. Yet, it is a refugee camp that is barely written about and is largely missing from the scholarly debate.

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for history, and for always sharing your endless knowledge, which for the most part is correct, even though you think the two national languages of Norway are Bokmål and Nynorsk.

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List of Abbreviations

ELF - The Eritrean Liberation Front

EPLF - Eritrean People's Liberation Front

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

ICESCR - International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross

IGO - Intergovernmental Organization

MAD - Mutual Assured Destruction

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

PCM - Protein-Calorie Malnutrition

UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN - United Nations

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

USA/US - United States of America

USSR - Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WFP - World Food Program

WHO - World Health Organization

WWII - World War Two

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Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1: Introduction.

The two superpowers of the Global Cold War, the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) sought to avoid direct conflict within their national borders in fear of a nuclear war that would devastate their nations in what came to be known as Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD). War by proxy, a war instigated by one or more major powers in which they do not get themselves involved, was used by these greater powers to maintain or shift power and became a crucial strategy in the indirect war fought between the superpowers.¹ The devastating effects of proxy wars are still visible today in the Horn of Africa, which includes the countries Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, and the Somali areas. Heightened Cold War tension led to heightened intensity in the proxy wars, changes in superpower allegiances, political disruption, famine, and a large-scale displacement of people. An immense refugee crisis erupted in the area.²

Before the vast refugee flow between the different countries within the Horn of Africa during the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, the standard practice of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was to allow refugees to settle amongst the local population, often with help from the organization through assisted-self-settlement. However, this practice was replaced in favor of establishing refugee camps, as the UNHCR found camps to provide the best means to manage the refugees and assist the process and progress of repatriation.³ Several refugee camps were established and managed by the organization in the Horn of Africa during this refugee crisis. The UNHCR defines refugee camps as:

*temporary facilities built to provide immediate protection and assistance to people who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution or violence. While camps are not established to provide permanent solutions, they offer a safe haven for refugees and meet their most basic needs such as food, water, shelter, medical treatment and other basic services during emergencies.*⁴

¹ Stone, Gregory D. (2010) *Proxy War: A Critical Examination of Superpower Indirect Conflict in Africa* Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Arts University of Manitoba.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2000). *The State of the world's refugees 2000 : fifty years of humanitarian action*. Oxford University Press, 105-110.

³ IBID.

⁴ USA for UNHCR *Refugee Camps*. Accessed 20.04.2022
URL: <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/>

While this definition sounds admirable, and refugee camps sometimes may be the best or only option, the reality is that refugee camps are neither temporary nor a safe haven for many people. Refugee camps have been known to approximate the conditions of a conflict zone, and it is too common for people in these camps to experience armed attacks, torture, arbitrary killings, and military recruitment.⁵ The environment is unnatural in these enclosed geographical areas and can leave the refugees vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation.⁶ Criticism has been directed towards the UNHCR for favoring refugee camps over other more “humane” methods of settling refugees, such as local settlement and integration. Critics have also blamed them for the human rights violation occurring in these camps, either by the UNHCR or other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) partnering with the UNHCR in refugee camps.⁷ As the definition of a refugee camp by the UNHCR is inadequate, and there is no definition in international law of the term refugee camps, Maja Janmyr’s definition will be utilized in this thesis instead. Janmyr defines a refugee camp as one whose population is either refugees or internally displaced persons and is operated with “restrictions in freedom of movement and a certain mode of governance and power.”⁸

The first officially recognized refugees from Eritrea came to Sudan during the Eritrean War of Independence in March of 1967, while Eritrea was still a province under Ethiopian rule.⁹ The UNHCR granted an emergency allocation of funds to Sudan and began its aid for the Eritrean refugees shortly after.¹⁰ The early years of the UNHCR’s assistance in Sudan encompass a fascinating time where the process of shifting its practices from assisted-self-settlement to agricultural settlement schemes and later refugee camps. When the UNHCR first sent one of their representatives to Sudan, their Director of Operations, Mr. Jamieson, to map out the refugees’ needs and state, the refugees were already situated in camps.¹¹ These refugee camps were not established nor managed by the UNHCR, and the organization’s immediate aim was to provide emergency relief to cover the basic needs of the

⁵ Janmyr, Maja, & Universitetet i Bergen Det juridiske fakultet. (2012). *Protecting civilians in refugee camps : issues of responsibility and lessons from Uganda*. University of Bergen, 4.

⁶ IBID

⁷ Johansen, Stian Øby. (2020). *Case Study: UNHCR-Administered Refugee Camps*. In *The Human Rights Accountability Mechanisms of International Organizations*, 174-176:

Janmyr, Maja. (2014). *Attributing Wrongful Conduct of Implementing Partners to unhr*. *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies*, 42-46.

⁸ Janmyr 2012, 110.

⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan to the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, 20 March 1967; Volume 2 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 9; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁰ Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Press Release 25 May 1967, *Emergency Allocation Approved for Refugees in the Sudan*; Volume 2 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 36b; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹¹ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees at Kassala, Sudan 21-24 September 1967*; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 127; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

refugees staying in the camps and to find a long-term solution of self-sufficiency that would not include encampment.¹² However, already in 1970, the UNHCR assisted Sudan for the first time in building and establishing a new refugee camp for the Eritrean refugees in Sudan.¹³ In this thesis, the focus will be on the period before the UNHCR established the first refugee camp in Sudan, the period right before refugee camps became the favored practice by the UNHCR, and investigate the success of the UNHCR's first immediate aim; to provide emergency aid to cover the needs of the refugees settled in refugee camps.

During his visit, Mr. Jamieson reported that most of the refugees had arrived at the camps with impaired physical health, and concluded that two of the most important basic needs that the UNHCR had to assist in covering were food supply and access to health services. Mr. Jamieson visited seven camps, one of which was Wad Sharife.¹⁴

1.2: Research Question and Scope of the Thesis.

This thesis addresses UNHCR's aid to Eritrean refugees in Sudan during the years between 1967-1970, which is a broad and extensive topic, and encompasses a myriad of subject matters. By its essence, this topic is multiscale and includes processes on the local, national, international, transnational, and global levels. Some of the subject matters intertwined in this topic are; global governance, UNHCR's role as an Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) and its mandate, transnational humanitarian aid, reasons for the refugee flow, and the dilemmas of resettlement or refugee camps in refugee aid. These are all substantial matters, yet imperative to the topic at hand. For this reason, all these subject matters will be briefly reviewed. Still, the focal point of this thesis will be narrowed down by focusing on one of the UNHCR's aims during its initial years in Sudan, which was to provide emergency aid to cover the needs of the refugees settled in the Sudanese refugee camps. Ensuring enough food and sufficient health services to the refugees was perceived as two of the most pressing and vital forms of emergency aid by the UNHCR, and it was these forms of aid that were most heavily discussed by the organization at the time.¹⁵ Therefore, the study will concentrate on the UNHCR's ability to ensure adequate food supply and health services.

The research question which will be examined and attempted answered in this thesis

¹² Gilbert Jaeger to Mr. Magne Reed, 7 July 1967; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 76; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹³ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 110

¹⁴ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁵ The discussion I refer to is what was mostly discussed in the UNHCR documents I accessed at the UNHCR archives. Resettlement plans was also heavily discussed, but when it came to emergency aid in the camps, the issues that was discussed the most was how to obtain and provide adequate food supply and health services to the refugees there.

is:

Was the UNHCR capable of ensuring adequate food supply and health services to the Eritrean refugees under their mandate who were settled in refugee camps in Sudan between 1967-1970?

The word “adequate” is largely subjective and could hold a myriad of meanings in this context. The subjectivity of the word has its benefits, as few health and nutrition studies were carried out on the refugee population at the refugee camps, and an objective answer to the research question would therefore be both inaccessible and erroneous. However, a palpable definition is a requisite for clarity and precision. In this thesis, the “adequacy” of the UNHCR food and medical aid will be measured in availability, quantity, and quality. In the case of food supply, the adequacy will mostly be measured through whether everyone in the camps received food, if the distribution was fair, and if the refugees received enough calories and variation in terms of nutrition through the food provision. In the case of health services, the adequacy will mostly be measured through the availability of health services. In both instances, the observed general health of the refugees will be considered.

In the three-year period in which this thesis takes place, there were several refugee camps in Sudan for Eritrean refugees. To further narrow the research question, and make an in-depth investigation of it conceivable within the word limits, a case study of only one of the refugee camps will be carried out; Wad Sharife. I have chosen to write about Wad Sharife as no extensive secondary literature, case studies, or academic discourse exists on the camp. News articles from the 80s brought problematic living situations for the refugees in Wad Sharife to light, revealing that this refugee camp should be studied, uncovered, and brought to light both within the academic fields and in general.¹⁶ Only brief mentions of the camp during its early years occurs in some articles about Eritrean refugees in Kassala, and a few slightly more extensive mentions about the camp from the 80s onwards exist, although few. The lack of knowledge about Wad Sharife about the early years of the camp and the general knowledge about the camp that is open to the public and easily accessible sparked my interest.

After introducing the topic, the research question, the methodology, and the state of the historiography and scholarly discourse on this topic, the research question will be explored through three more parts. Chapter two focuses on the historical background of the

¹⁶ Rule, Sheila. (1986). *REFUGEES IN SUDAN FIND WELCOME WEARING THIN*. The New York Times, 1986-06-09. Accessed: 12.05.2023:

May, Clifford D. (1985). *CAMPS OF THE SUDAN ARE FILLED BY AFRICA'S WARS AND WANT*. The New York Times, 1985-07-08. Accessed: 12.05.2023

refugee flow from Eritrea to Sudan during the 60s and onwards. This chapter aims to contextualize the topic, the problem facing the affected actors, and the circumstances which led to refugee settlement in Wad Sharife and the UNHCR's involvement, through a global, transnational, international, and local sphere. Chapter three concentrates on the UNHCR, the organization's history, its expanding mandate, its expansion into Africa, its changing processes, and its dilemma between integration, resettlement, or refugee camps. The case study of Wad Sharife is presented in chapter four, in which UNHCR's ability to ensure adequate food supply and health services to the refugees under their mandate will be discussed. Lastly, the conclusion of the study will be provided in chapter five.

1.3: Methodology.

This study aims to examine the adequacy of food and health aid ensured and provided by the UNHCR to Eritrean refugees in refugee camps in Sudan between 1967 and 1970. As there were several refugee camps in Sudan for Eritrean refugees in this time span, a quantitative case study of one of the camps, Wad Sharife, will be carried out to ensure a detailed account of UNHCR's aid. The primary aim of employing a case study methodology is to create generalizable knowledge and theories about the UNHCR's early aid efforts in Africa, its evolving relationship with refugee camps, and its ability to ensure sufficient aid to refugees under its mandate. By focusing on a specific case, such as the Wad Sharife camp, this study can explore the unique circumstances, challenges, and outcomes associated with food and health aid provision during the specified time frame. Utilizing a case study approach offers several benefits for this research. It enables an in-depth analysis of the specific context, processes, and outcomes related to aid provision in Wad Sharife. This depth of analysis allows for a comprehensive understanding of the complex factors that influenced the UNHCR's ability to deliver adequate aid during the specified period.

While a case study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is that the case study and its findings might not be as generalizable as intended and, potentially, might skew the results as far as being relevant concerning other refugee camps for Eritreans in Sudan, or to refugee camps in Africa and Asia during the time of the UNHCR's expansion, in general. The uniqueness of each case may limit the transferability of the findings beyond Wad Sharife. To limit this potential skew and potential lack of generalizability, some comparisons to other refugee camps in the area will be provided, as well as a comparison between the findings of the case study and the existing

research on UNHCR's aid in other refugee camps in Africa during that time period. Furthermore, research on Wad Sharife and the unique processes and outcomes from the UNHCR's aid there does provide valuable knowledge in and of itself as it is a camp with limited sources and discussions around it.

Due to this lack of secondary literature on the camp, this case study relies mostly on primary sources from the UNHCR archives in Geneva. These primary sources include organizational documents, reports, correspondence, and official records pertaining to the food and health aid provided to refugees in Sudanese camps between 1967 and 1970. The utilization of primary sources from the UNHCR archives ensures access to authentic materials directly related to the UNHCR's activities during the scope of the thesis. Primary sources offer numerous advantages for this research. They provide direct access to original documents and records produced by the UNHCR, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the information. By utilizing primary sources, this study can gain insights into the decision-making processes, policies, and practices of the UNHCR's aid regarding food supply and health services. These sources enable a comprehensive understanding of the UNHCR's strategies and actions and their impact on refugee well-being.

While primary sources are valuable, they also present certain limitations. The primary sources available in the UNHCR archives primarily consist of organizational documents, which may offer a more institutional perspective rather than reflecting the experiences of the refugees themselves. The absence of personal accounts from the refugees staying in the camp limits the ability to capture their perspectives and lived experiences. Additionally, the primary sources may be subject to biases inherent in the documents, as these documents are typically created by UNHCR staff, who might prioritize positive aspects or highlight achievements, while downplaying or omitting shortcomings or negative outcomes. This bias could influence the interpretation of the findings and limit the validity of the findings as well. Regardless of the limitations of these primary sources, they do provide accurate insight into different processes of the UNHCR and are the only viable option due to the lack of secondary literature on the camp. To minimize the likelihood of a skewed or biased interpretation of the findings, secondary literature will be included in the discussion of the findings.

1.4: State of the Art.

Regarding the case study of Wad Sharife, there are hardly any secondary sources on the refugee camp. Therefore, this case study will mainly be based on, and analyzed through, primary sources and documents from the UNHCR's archives in Geneva. However, this thesis, and the topic which it embodies, builds on existing academic discourse on refugee camps and international and transnational refugee aid, the UNHCR and its mandate, the global order, as well as the more particular discourse on Eritrean refugees in Sudan.

To contextualize the refugee crisis in the Horn of Africa within the timeframe of the thesis, the proxy wars fought during the Global Cold War and the socioeconomic situation in the region are essential. These are all widely studied themes within history, social sciences, African studies, and decolonization studies. Prior research is essential in comprehending, researching, and explaining why there was a refugee flow from the Eritrean region of Ethiopia to Sudan, how it was linked to the global political situation, and the effects of humanitarian aid on the refugee flows. The historical discourse on the Cold War and proxy wars has had a substantial shift during the last decades, which is largely due to historian Odd Arne Westad who coined the term “Global Cold War.” One of Westad’s most noteworthy works is his chapter *The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century*, which is the first chapter in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*.¹⁷ Westad has advocated for a new direction in the historical discourse in which the entangled, international, and transnational nature of the Cold War is emphasized, and the effects of the war outside the two blocs would also be recognized.¹⁸

In his thesis, *Proxy War: A Critical Examination of Superpower Indirect Conflict in Africa*, Gregory D. Stone analyzes and discusses how the superpowers used proxy wars in the Global South, and especially Africa, during the Global Cold War and its effects today.¹⁹ Stone discusses how regions in the third world prone to instability were used by the greater powers to instigate wars in an effort to shift the power dynamics without risking war within their own territories.²⁰ Stone's thesis on proxy wars in Africa aids in contextualizing the refugee flow from Ethiopia to Sudan in the global context of the Cold War. He gives a detailed account of how this type of warfare was used in Africa and its detrimental effect on the region, and how these effects led to mass refugee flows. Proxy wars were an important

¹⁷ Westad, Odd Arne. (2010). Ch. 1: “The Cold War and the International History of the Twentieth Century” in (Ed) Leffler, Melvin P. & Westad, Odd Arne *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press

¹⁸ Hilger, Andreas. (2019). *The Global Cold War and Its Legacies*. *Kritika*, 208-212

¹⁹ Stone, Gregory D. (2010) *Proxy War: A Critical Examination of Superpower Indirect Conflict in Africa* Department of Political Studies, Faculty of Arts University of Manitoba

²⁰ Stone 2010, 39-44

part of the mass flow of refugees from Ethiopia to Sudan in the 60s to the end of the Global Cold War and are therefore essential to comprehend when researching refugee movements and the significance of global international and transnational organizations such as the UNHCR.

UNHCR's aid to Sudan for Eritrean refugees and their choices of aid through repatriation, resettlement, or encampment did not occur in a vacuum. UNHCR, its history and development, its mandate, and its strengths and limitations, has been written extensively in several academic fields. Many academics tackling these issues are relevant to the topic at hand and will be referenced, but three researchers are especially important to these topics.

From a juridical and philosophical perspective, Marianne Nerland tackles in her doctorate *NGOs in refugee camps: human rights obligations and accountability*, the issue of accountability in human rights violations in refugee camps.²¹ In her doctorate, Nerland examines and debates the management and human rights obligations in refugee camps by UNHCR and other NGOs. Nerland bases her research on a case study she has conducted on the refugee camp Kakuma in Kenya. Nerland looks at the problematic relationship between UNHCR, the host state of the camp, and the NGOs UNHCR is collaborating with within the camps, and exposes the lack of accountability mechanisms in the management of refugee camps. Nerland uncovers how this is a general problem with UNHCR's management of refugee camps, and human rights violations are not taken accountable for by either of the parties responsible for the management of the camps.²² Additionally, she recommends that NGOs should be liable to international law and that an independent mechanism designed to receive complaints on allegations should be considered to be implemented in each refugee camp.²³ Nerland's doctorate is important to this thesis and the research in it, as it shows structural challenges within the management of refugee camps globally and regionally in the Horn of Africa and UNHCR's limitations. As the management of Wad Sharife was very diffused, it is essential to understand the dynamic between UNHCR, the host state, and the NGOs within the international legal sphere and the structural elements of this.

Maja Janmyr, similarly to Nerland, also uses a juridical perspective in her doctorate, *Protecting civilians in refugee camps: issues of responsibility and lessons from Uganda*.²⁴ She also analyzes the accountability and responsibility for human rights violations within

²¹ Nerland, Marianne, & Universitetet i Bergen Det juridiske fakultet. (2020). *NGOs in refugee camps : human rights obligations and accountability*. University of Bergen

²² Nerland 2020, 3-6, 17-19, 327-343

²³ Nerland 2020, 333-342

²⁴ Janmyr, Maja, & Universitetet i Bergen Det juridiske fakultet. (2012). *Protecting civilians in refugee camps : issues of responsibility and lessons from Uganda*. University of Bergen.

refugee camps. Janmyr is an outstanding expert in this field, and she has researched UNHCR and its refugee camps in several other publications. In her doctorate, Janmyr uses the Kenyan Dadaab camps in Uganda as a case study, and, similarly to Nerland, also criticizes what she refers to as a “perceived pulverization of responsibility” between UNHCR and the host state.²⁵ Janmyr focuses less on the NGOs that UNHCR collaborates with and more on UNHCR’s limitations in aiding refugees and securing their human rights in camps where the host state is unwilling or unable to. Although Janmyr’s research is placed in another time frame than this thesis, and is analyzed through a different academic discipline, it is still important to the larger topic as it provides documentation on the capability as well as the limitations of UNHCR’s aid to, and “pulverized” management of, refugee camps.

Associate professor at the University in Oslo, Stian Øby Johansen, explores the consequences UNHCR encounters from a separatist viewpoint from the United Nations (UN) in his book chapter, *Case Study: UNHCR-Administered Refugee Camps*.²⁶ In this book chapter, Johansen tackles the systemic difficulties within UNHCR and specifically how UNHCR has a separate legal personality recognized from the UN but is still part of the UN and under their rights and obligations.²⁷ This has its advantages, as UNHCR benefits from autonomy from the UN and its member states and can still enter into additional legal obligations in addition to the once from the UN. Still, the UNHCR and the UN are still very much linked as UNHCR lacks an international legal personality separate from that of the UN.²⁸ Johansen demonstrates the systemic and structural relations between UNHCR and the UN by outlining the evolution of UNHCR, its growing power, and the administration of refugee camps. What Johansen tackles in his book chapter will be of great use in comprehending UNHCR’s jurisdiction and mandate.

Regarding the more specific scale of the thesis, Eritrean refugees in Sudan, and the reasons for the refugee flow, the scholarly discourse has mostly centered on migration studies and refugee studies. Due to the fundamental interdisciplinary aspect of this study, is migration and refugee studies essential features of the historical discussion on this topic. Although the Eritrean War of Independence and the reason for the refugee flow, in this thesis, is categorized as historical background, while the experiences of Eritrean refugees while they are in Sudan are included and a vital part of the case study and the research question, are

²⁵ Janmyr 2012, 355

²⁶ Johansen, Stian Øby. (2020). *Case Study: UNHCR-Administered Refugee Camps*. In *The Human Rights Accountability Mechanisms of International Organizations*.

²⁷ Johansen 2020, 174-175

²⁸ Johansen 2020, 174-176

these two subject matters interlinked in most academic literature on this topic.

Refugee studies professor, Gaim Kibreab, is one of the leading researchers on Eritrean refugees in Sudan, and he has written several articles, as well as books and book chapters, on this topic. In his book chapter *Access to Economic and Social Rights in First Countries of Asylum and Repatriation: a Case Study of Eritrean Refugees in Sudan* in the book *Forced Displacement, Why Rights Matter*, Kibreab provides a brief overview of the Eritrean War of Independence and forced migration, as well as an in-depth discussion on Sudan's refugee policy and settlement strategies.²⁹ In this discussion, Kibreab demonstrates the changing policies in Sudan, which gradually got stricter during the 30 years of refugee flows, and its effect on the Eritrean refugees stationed there. Kibreab states in his conclusion that "Sudan's refugee policies are intended to prevent rather than facilitate the integration of refugees."³⁰

Sadia Hassanen's book *Repatriation, integration or resettlement : the dilemmas of migration among Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan*, is a well-rounded contribution to the scholarly discourse on Eritrean refugees in Sudan.³¹ Hassanen provides extensive background on UNHCR policies, Eritrea, Sudan, and Kassala, the area in which most Eritrean refugees used to live, which leads to an in-depth discussion on the solution to the refugee problem. As the title indicates, the dilemmas of repatriation, integration, or resettlement and the conflicting resolutions of the UNHCR, the Government of Sudan, and the refugees themselves, are examined. Another important contribution to the scholarly debate on this topic which will be important in this thesis, is John R. Rogge and his article *THE QALA EN NAHAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME*.³² Rogge has written extensively about the resettlement scheme by the UNHCR and Sudan, which took place during the temporal scope of this thesis.

²⁹ Kibreab, Gaim. (2008). "Access to Economic and Social Rights in First Countries of Asylum and Repatriation: a Case Study of Eritrean Refugees in Sudan." Chapter 6 in *Forced Displacement, Why Rights Matter*. Springer

³⁰ Kibreab 2008, 135

³¹ Hassanen, Sadia. (2007). *Repatriation, integration or resettlement : the dilemmas of migration among Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan*. Red Sea Press.

³² Rogge, John R. (1975). *THE QALA EN NAHAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME*. Sudan Notes and Records, 130–146.

Chapter 2: The Historical Background and Context.

The objective of contextualizing the historical background of the scope of the thesis before tackling the research question is to challenge the frequent misconception and treatment of refugee flows and settlements as an isolated incident or a self-contained process. The refugee flow of Eritreans to eastern Sudan and their settlement in Kassala and the UN-regulated refugee camp Wad Sharife did not occur in a social, political, or economic vacuum. Rather the refugee flow and settlement were affected by and a part of global, transnational, regional, and local processes of change and conflict. In an attempt to demonstrate the extent of the thesis' inherent multifaceted scope and the complexity of the combination of circumstances leading to the refugee flow and settlement of Eritreans in Eastern Sudan during the late 1960s, the historical context of Proxy wars during the global Cold War, the Eritrean Independence War and its consequences on the refugee flow, and the historical links of cross-border movements between Sudan and Eritrea in the Kassala region, will be analyzed and outlined.

2.1: Proxy Wars and the Global Cold War.

In the last decades, the scholarly discourse of the Cold War has shifted, as historians such as Odd Arne Westad, Geir Lundestad, and others advocated for a new historical direction concerning the Cold War, in which the entangled, international, and transnational nature of the war is emphasized.³³ While previously, and to a great extent still, the main historical focal point of the Cold War has been the ideological battle between the two superpowers, the US and the USSR, has the advocacy for an international and transnational perspective on the Cold War put a greater emphasis on the global aspect of the Cold War and its effect on the nations both within the two blocs, but also the nations outside the two blocs, previously known as the third world. Through a heterogeneous approach, shedding light on the entangled histories of the Cold War and positioning the Cold War along several parallel axis and processes, such as political, economic, cultural, technological, and intellectual history, Westad explicates the significance of the presumed peripheries and the inherent global aspect of the Cold War, popularizing the term "Global Cold War."³⁴ During the global ideological conflict between capitalism and communism, the superpowers competed for ideological and cultural hegemony through technological races, propaganda, espionage, arms race, and

³³ Hilger 2019, 208

³⁴ Hilger 2019, 209-212; Westad 2010, 2

nuclear weapon development, but never in direct armed conflict with one another. Still, the competition between the superpowers was vastly interconnected with regional crises in the assumed peripheries in their effort to control and influence or diminish the other's control and influence in an area.

As their arms races came to a nuclear stalemate, direct conflict with one another would lead to MAD. The superpowers effectively accepted the division of Europe between the two blocs, and their competition for control and influence moved out from the continent. The perceptions of the Cold War produced the concept of three worlds, one western capitalist, the second eastern socialist, and a third world that consisted of the rest, and it was the Third World that would become the focus of superpower competition and mark the dynamics of the Global Cold War.³⁵ Newly established independent states in Africa and Asia, became a playing field for the US and the USSR's competition for control and influence. With the decolonization of African states after WWII, Africa was seen as an essential strategic continent for the superpowers due to its natural resources, but also as a "Third World" to spread their political ideology and their ideological competition.³⁶ As the previous colonial powers no longer had the power or resources to control their previous colonies, the new superpowers of the Cold War fought for influence in the continent with such ferocity it could be described as a second scramble for Africa.

War by proxy, was used by the US and the USSR to maintain or shift power and became a crucial strategy in the indirect war fought between the superpowers.³⁷ Proxy wars were assisted or instigated by the superpowers through several methods; the most notable would be direct military intervention, such as in Vietnam, but direct military intervention by both states in the same conflict was to be avoided at all costs as then the superpowers would be in direct military conflict with one another.³⁸ If one superpower implemented direct military intervention, the other would assist through indirect and limited involvement by supplying arms to their allies, military aid, training, and/or advisors.³⁹ In most proxy wars during the Global Cold War in Africa, the superpowers intervened through indirect and limited military intervention. The Horn of Africa had a solid strategic position favored by the superpowers, which had a great interest in the area to secure access to the Red Sea, and therefore the Suez Canal, the Indian Ocean, the Nile, and controlling the Horn's strong allies

³⁵ Westad, Odd Arne. (2000). *The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms*. Diplomatic History, 561: Stone 2010, 2

³⁶ Stone 2010, 29-30 and 59

³⁷ IDEM, 1-3.

³⁸ IDEM, 20

³⁹ IDEM, 21

in the Middle East.⁴⁰ Proxy warfare was sometimes the instigation of war, yet nevertheless consistently prolonged and escalated it drastically. It devastated the whole area of the Horn, and its effects are still visible today.

From the late-1960s to the mid-1970s, the proxy wars in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan was, as Professor Lovise Aalen describes it, a “multi-level proxy model.”⁴¹ In her article *Ethiopian state support to insurgency in Southern Sudan from 1962 to 1983: local, regional and global connections*, Aalen outlines three levels of conflicts, making these proxy wars a “multi-level proxy model,” they are conflicts *locally*, both within the states and by their borders, *regionally*, by neighboring states and the Middle Eastern powers that had interests in controlling the Horn, and *globally*, the competition of the superpowers and the context of the Global Cold War.⁴² The local, regional, and global competition for dominance over the region created a complex web of interests and alliances that could change. Officially, Ethiopia and Sudan promoted a policy of non-interference, unity, and territorial integrity of states. Covertly, however, both states provided aid to secessionist movements in the other state. Ethiopia provided Southern Sudanese rebels with arms and training, and Sudan supplied Eritrean insurgents with aid.⁴³ Regionally, most of the Arabic countries in the Middle East saw Sudan as a natural ally as a fellow Muslim country, and aided and supported Sudan and the Eritrean insurgents. Israel, on the other hand, had a political interest in containing Arab influence in the Horn and was apprehensive that an independent Eritrean state might undermine this, making Ethiopia their logical ally. Israel aided the Ethiopian army in training, established communication networks between the two nations, and built two naval bases, supporting and aiding both the Ethiopian army against the Eritrean insurgents and the South Sudanese insurgents.⁴⁴ The dynamic of the Global Cold War overlapped with every level of the proxy wars, as the superpowers organized and persuaded the governments in Arabic countries in the Middle East and Israel, as well as the Sudanese and Ethiopian regimes, after their will.⁴⁵ The US aided Israel and Ethiopia, and the USSR aided Sudan and several Arabic countries in the Middle East.

Yet, these alliances and proxy relations were not stable, as all actors were driven by their own interests and concerns. During the timeframe of this paper, the alliances and proxy

⁴⁰ Aalen, Lovise. (2014). *Ethiopian state support to insurgency in Southern Sudan from 1962 to 1983: local, regional and global connections*. Journal of Eastern African Studies, 628 and 635

⁴¹ IDEM, 626

⁴² IDEM, 626-627

⁴³ IDEM, 628 and 637

⁴⁴ IDEM, 628 and 633

⁴⁵ IDEM, 635

relations were changing. The only consistency in Sudanese and Ethiopian policy remained was the official stance of unity and territorial integrity, while attempting to destabilize the other via covert support of rebel groups in each other's nations. From 1971, the US supplied Sudan, Ethiopia, and Israel with weapons, which again were used against each other, in their attempt to have influence over the larger area of the Horn.⁴⁶ After the socialist revolution in Ethiopia in 1974, Ethiopia became a proxy client of the USSR. However, the US saw Ethiopia as a significant nation to have influence and control in, not only continuing to send military aid but increasing it up until the end of their assistance in 1977.⁴⁷ Sudan became one of the US' most important clients, and Ethiopia the largest beneficiary of Soviet assistance globally.⁴⁸ Ethiopia maintained its alliance with Israel until 1978, and received weapons and military assistance from them even after their allegiance with the superpowers had shifted.⁴⁹

Comprehending the “multi-level proxy model” of warfare in the area and the violence, human rights violations, and catastrophes disturbing the area’s interconnections to the global processes of the time is vital for discerning and grasping the research question. The warfare occurring in the Horn of Africa, leading to mass refugee flows from Eritrea to Eastern Sudan, was a part of larger global processes of change and superpower competition. It is also important to illustrate the “multi-level proxy model” of warfare in the area to demonstrate that proxies were not fully puppets to the superpowers who alone orchestrated and controlled the war. While the superpowers’ involvements prolonged and intensified the violence and warfare in the area, were the proxies also active agents, who acted on their interests and ideologies and were active in the switching of allegiances.⁵⁰ The warfare was also strongly connection to the Eritrean War of Independence.

2.2: The Refugee Flow to Sudan and the Eritrean War of Independence.

The refugee flow from Eritrea to Sudan during the Eritrean War of Independence was a complex phenomenon that was driven by a range of interconnected factors, including political instability, famine, and armed conflict. Eritrea was once an Italian colony and was later annexed by Ethiopia in 1962. The annexation led to strong opposition movements and eventually a guerrilla war for independence, a war that would end up lasting three decades, forcing hundreds of thousand civilians to flee their home country.

⁴⁶ IDEM, 635-636

⁴⁷ IDEM, 635-637

⁴⁸ IDEM, 636

⁴⁹ IDEM, 634-635

⁵⁰ IDEM, 638

The main reason for the refugee flow was the armed conflict between the Eritrean nationalist movement and the Ethiopian government and the latter's brutal force against the civilian population in Eritrea. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) was formed in the early 1960s and garnered strength and support throughout the decade, and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) was formed in the early 1970s. These insurgent groups fought against the Ethiopian government for an independent Eritrea, and amongst each other for power.⁵¹ The Ethiopian government responded to the ELF's and the EPLF's insurgency with brutal force, committing war crimes against Eritrean civilians, burning down whole villages, and raping and massacring civilians.⁵² As the Ethiopian government received military aid from the US and Israel, their military was immensely strengthened, fueling and intensifying the armed conflict and enabling the Ethiopian government to repulse and counterattack the insurgency. The war led to widespread violence and displacement, with many Eritreans forced to flee their homes to escape the fighting.⁵³ The atrocities committed by the Ethiopian government further fueled the refugee crisis, as many Eritreans fled to Sudan seeking safety and protection.

Another factor that contributed to the refugee flow was economic hardship and lack of access to essential goods because of the armed conflict. Eritrea was a relatively poor region, and the Ethiopian government's policies exacerbated this poverty. In particular, the government's policy of scorched earth and their use of blockading food from the Eritrean highlands as a weapon.⁵⁴ In their efforts to disrupt the Eritrean base of food, support, and economy, the Ethiopian military poisoned wells, killed animals, and cut off the food supply to Eritrea, leading to food shortages and economic hardship.⁵⁵ By enforcing calamitous tenancy agreements and land alienation in times of drought, the Ethiopian government was largely responsible for the famine in the Eritrean area from 1972-1974. The famine was worsened by the food blockade and the refusal of the Ethiopian government to allow international food aid into the area.⁵⁶ Attorney Jean E. Zeiler defines the actions of the Ethiopian government as genocide, asserting that they intended to destroy the Eritrean

⁵¹ Fontanellaz, Adrien & Cooper, Tom. (2018) *Ethiopian-Eritrean Wars: Eritrean War of Independence*. Vol. 1. Helion & Company Limited, 19-22

⁵² Zeiler, Jean E. (1989). *Genocide Convention - intentional starvation - Ethiopian famine in the Eritrean war for independence: the applicability of the Genocide Convention to government imposed famine in Eritrea*. The Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law, 589-595;

Woldemariam, Michael. (2016). Battlefield Outcomes and Rebel Cohesion: Lessons From the Eritrean Independence War. Terrorism and Political Violence, 135-156;

Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, Visit to Eritrean Refugees, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

⁵³ Woldemariam 2016, 143

⁵⁴ De Waal, Alexander. (1991) *Evil days: Thirty years of war and famine in Ethiopia*. Vol. 3169. No. 69. Human Rights Watch, 10-11

⁵⁵ IBID

⁵⁶ IBID

population Many Eritreans were forced to flee their homes in search of work and food.⁵⁷ However, fleeing to nearby villages was not always an option as the Ethiopian government restricted movement. As a result, many Eritreans chose to flee to neighboring countries, including Sudan.

Many Eritreans chose to flee to Sudan because it was a neighboring country with a long history of political and cultural ties to Eritrea. Sudan was one of the first countries to recognize the Eritrean independence movement, and many Sudanese politicians and activists openly supported the Eritrean cause.⁵⁸ Sudan's proximity to Eritrea made it a relatively accessible destination for refugees. For many Eritreans struggling with poverty and famine who were fleeing the brutality of the Ethiopian government, fleeing to the nearest border was the only viable option. Furthermore, the Sudanese government, despite its own economic and political challenges, was willing to provide aid and protection to Eritrean refugees, with the assistance from the international community.⁵⁹ Sudan was, with the help of the UNHCR, one of the first countries to establish refugee camps for Eritreans, and the Sudanese government and the UNHCR provided food, shelter, and medical assistance to the Eritrean refugees.⁶⁰ Sudan's policy towards refugees was shaped by its own history of political instability and displacement, and solidarity with other African nations struggling for independence and self-determination.⁶¹

Despite its willingness to aid Eritrean refugees, Sudan was also reluctant to shoulder responsibility for the refugee crisis. The influx of refugees placed a significant strain on Sudan's resources and infrastructure, and the government struggled to provide basic services to refugees. As the influx of refugees increased, the refugee policies in Sudan became stricter.⁶² The refugee crisis also had a social impact, as tensions between host communities and refugees often led to unrest.⁶³ Sudan's willingness to aid Eritrean refugees was further complicated as Sudan was experiencing its own internal conflicts and economic crisis, which made it difficult for the government to provide adequate support to refugees.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Sudan's relationship with Ethiopia was a significant factor in its approach to the refugee crisis. Sudan was wary of being accused of becoming involved in Ethiopia's internal affairs

⁵⁷ Zeiler 1989, 603-606 and 612

⁵⁸ Karadawi, Ahmad. (1999) *Refugee Policy in Sudan 1967-1984*. Vol. 6. Berghahn Books, 17-19 and 30-31

⁵⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan to the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 9

⁶⁰ De Waal 1991, 44

⁶¹ Karadawi 1999, 4-6; Hassanen 2007, 4

⁶² Woldegabriel, Berhane. (1996). *Eritrean refugees in Sudan. Review of African Political Economy*, 87-92.

⁶³ Kibreab, Gaim. (2007). Why Governments Prefer Spatially Segregated Settlement Sites for Urban Refugees. *Refuge* (Toronto. English Edition), 33

⁶⁴ Karadawi 1999, 1-2

and was concerned that its support for Eritrean refugees would be seen as interference in Ethiopia's domestic affairs.⁶⁵ The Ethiopian government had already accused Sudan of supporting Eritrean insurgents and breaking their common official policy of non-interference and territorial integrity of states, which further complicated Sudan's relationship with Ethiopia.⁶⁶

The refugee flow from Eritrea to Sudan during the War of Independence was a complex phenomenon that was driven by a range of interconnected factors, but mostly due to the armed conflict. The food blockades, famine, economic hardship, and armed conflict between the ELF and the EPLF, and the Ethiopian government fueled by the “multi-level proxy model” were all significant factors which led to widespread displacement. Many Eritreans sought refuge in Sudan and most ended up in Sudan’s neighboring region to the Eritrean area, Kassala.

2.3: Kassala.

Kassala is a region in Eastern Sudan bordering Eritrea, which was an area of Ethiopia during the temporal scope of this thesis. The Kassala region encompasses Kassala town and Kassala rural district. Due to the strategic position of Kassala in the transition area between the Ethiopian hills and the Sudanese plains, there are historical links to the cross-border movements between Sudan and Eritrea in the Kassala region.⁶⁷ In her thesis, *Repatriation, integration or resettlement : the dilemmas of migration among Eritrean refugees in eastern Sudan*, Sadia Hassanen describes these historical links to cross-border movements in Kassala as “marked by interdependence and intensive economic and social interactions.”⁶⁸ Before the Eritrean War of Independence, the cross-border movement was mostly based on trade and labor migration, both seasonally and more permanently.⁶⁹ As a transition area, Kassala has a history of being a cultural contact point and trading center between Ethiopia and Sudan.⁷⁰ The nature of the post-colonial African borders was, and still is, predominantly the consequences of colonial administrators who drew lines on a map and not taking into account the natural territories of the tribes there. Although Ethiopia never was under colonial rule, its borders was still affected by this, and therefore some tribes, such as the Hadendawa and the

⁶⁵ IDEM, 37

⁶⁶ Aalen 2014, 634

⁶⁷ Hassanen 2007, 78-80;

Kok, Walter. (1989). *Self-Settled Refugees and the Socio-Economic Impact of their Presence on Kassala, Eastern Sudan*. Journal of Refugee Studies, 421

⁶⁸ Hassanen 2007, 78

⁶⁹ IDEM, 79

⁷⁰ Kok 1989, 421

Beni Amer, were located both in the Kassala area and the Eritrean area.

Due to both the nature of the border and the cultural contact point this transition area served, people from Western Eritrea and Eastern Sudan share similar histories, cultures, norms, and values.⁷¹ Throughout the 20th century and before the refugee flow, Eritreans arrived at Kassala predominantly for trading, work, and livelihood.⁷² Both the Kassala area and the Eritrean area were multi-ethnic, with several tribal groups and clans, with differences in languages and religions, and these differences and which tribe the refugee belonged to were critical to their encounter with the Sudanese people, their integration, their treatments as refugees, and their settlement and living situations.

When the refugee flow began in March of 1967, those who belonged to a tribe that was present in both Sudan and Eritrea, such as the Beni Amer, the Moslem Blin, the Maria, and the Bet juk, had fewer issues in integrating into Sudan.⁷³ These groups had the opportunity to become citizens of both nations, giving them more freedom of movement, employment, and other rights. About half of the Eritrean refugees in Kassala during the War of Independence were from the Beni Amer confederacy of tribes.⁷⁴ The Eritrean Beni Amer refugees were welcomed as brothers by the Sudanese Beni Amer, and some were even given land to cultivate.⁷⁵ However, many refugees did not experience this hospitality, and even those who did were still discriminated against by local authorities and members of other tribal communities.⁷⁶ Some ethnic groups had ties to the region through seasonal work, such as the smaller tribes of the Nara and the Baza, who, before the War of Independence, worked in the fields in the Gash Basin. When they came as refugees, many settled near the Gash Basin and nearby camps.⁷⁷ However, many refugees had no ties to Kassala or Sudan either through relatives, tribal rights, or a history of seasonal commuting and work.

The refugee flow began early in March of 1967, by the 20th of March, the total number of refugees was 10 000, and by the 25th of May, the number was more than 20 000.⁷⁸ This marks the first time Sudan asked UNHCR for aid as the Sudanese government expressed that the mass influx of refugees was beyond the financial and administrative scope of their and Ethiopia's governments, and that this problem was a threat to their national security and

⁷¹ Hassanen 2007, 82

⁷² IDEM, 78

⁷³ IDEM, 80

⁷⁴ Kok 1989, 422

⁷⁵ Hassanen 2007, 82

⁷⁶ Kok 1989, 422

⁷⁷ IDEM, 423

⁷⁸ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan to the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 9:

Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Press Release 25 May 1967, *Emergency Allocation Approved for Refugees in the Sudan*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 36b

economy.⁷⁹ The Sudanese government stated that “every effort is now being made for their [the refugees] relief” and had provided food and medical services to the refugees, while the local population also donated funds to purchase additional food.⁸⁰ However, there was still an urgent need, as the UNHCR’s Director of Operations, Mr. Jamieson, stated, “If something is not done, disaster will ensue.”⁸¹ The UNHCR granted an emergency allocation in favor of the Eritrean refugees and began their aid in Sudan in June of 1967.⁸²

From the start, the Sudanese government and the UNHCR discouraged refugees from self-settling and establishing themselves amongst the local population, and in urban areas.⁸³ The UNHCR’s primary focus during the beginning of their aid to Sudan and the Eritrean refugees there was to provide relief for those settled in the camps and to organize a permanent solution to resettle the refugees in rural areas, where they could be given land to cultivate, which was abundant in Sudan, and become economically self-sufficient gradually.⁸⁴ However, as will be elaborated further in the next chapter, the permanent solutions of agricultural settlement had issues due to the funds required, the high number of refugees, and disagreements between the UNHCR and the Sudanese government. In the thirty years of the refugee crisis, an estimated 600 000 - 700 000 Eritrean refugees fled to Sudan.⁸⁵ As the refugee flow increased, the national and local policies in Sudan toward refugees became stricter, but also varied depending on Sudan’s relationship with Ethiopia.⁸⁶ Seven years after the first Eritrean refugees settled in Kassala, the Sudanese government passed the Regulation of Asylum Act in 1974, requiring the refugees to live in camps and spatially segregated government-designated areas, and making it illegal for refugees to work outside of- and travel from their designated camp or area without a permit, as well as owning immovable property.⁸⁷ While some refugees were still self-settled, many were forced into refugee camps.

⁷⁹ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan to the Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 9

⁸⁰ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sudan to the Office of The UNHCR, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 9:
Office of The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Press Release 25 May 1967, *Emergency Allocation Approved for Refugees in the Sudan*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 36b

⁸¹ Office of The UNHCR, Press Release 25 May 1967, *Emergency Allocation Approved for Refugees in the Sudan*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 36b

⁸² W.M. Shepherd to Mr. Jamieson, 13 July 1967 - Note for the record, *Meeting with Mr. T. Jamieson, Director of Operations*, UNHCR; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 79; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

⁸³ Hassanen 2007, 82-83

⁸⁴ Hassanen 2007, 83:

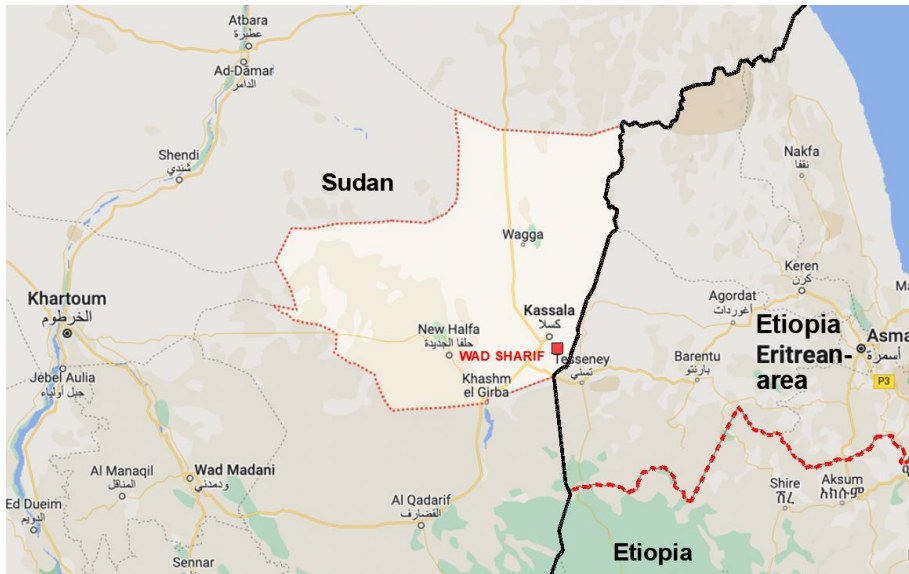
Gilbert Jaeger to Mr. Magne Reed, 7 July 1967, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 76.

⁸⁵ Kibreab 2008, 118

⁸⁶ IDEM, 119

⁸⁷ IDEM, 124-125 and 136

Most of the Eritrean refugees ended up living in camps in the Kassala area. In September 1967, there were seven refugee camps in the Kassala area, one of which was Wad Sharife.⁸⁸



Map 1: Kassala Province

Google maps, *Kassala State*, Accessed May, 8, 2023.

URL:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kassala,+Sudan/@15.6455361,35.0991421,7.54z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x1663dcfa9b9a77c1:0x72021ace9cc5101c!8m2!3d15.8058472!4d35.5657862!16zL20vMDM5dmtk?hl=en>

Personalized annotations: Adding the location of Wad Sharife, dotting the border line between Ethiopia and Eritrea, replacing the word “Eritrea” with “Ethiopia Eritrean-area,” and adding the names of the countries.

⁸⁸ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

Chapter 3: UNHCR and its Aid to Eritrean Refugees in Sudan.

In the last decades, widespread criticism has been directed towards the UNHCR for favoring refugee camps over other methods of settling refugees, and criticism has also been directed towards the organization for human rights violations occurring in these camps.⁸⁹ Although the UNHCR initially aided refugees through legal assistance and allowed them to self-settle amongst the local population in the host state, this practice had been almost completely replaced by establishing and settling refugees in camps by the 1980s, especially in Africa.⁹⁰ During the temporal scope of this thesis, 1967-1970, the process of the changing practices of the UNHCR is visible. To demonstrate these changes and contextualize the circumstances of the UNHCR's aid in the refugee camps at Kassala, the UNHCR's history, its role as an IGO, its expanding mandate, and its changing practices and relations to refugee camps during the late 60s will be explored in this chapter.

3.1: UNHCR's expansion from the late 50s.

In response to the continuing refugee problem in Europe following WWII, the United Nations General Assembly established The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on January 1, 1951. In the UNHR's original statute, the organization was bestowed two main objectives, "to provide international protection for refugees" and "to find permanent solutions to the refugee problem"⁹¹ During the initial stage of the UNHCR, the organization did not provide humanitarian relief, their main role was to provide juridical advice to refugees and advocate for international refugee law, as protecting refugees was recognized as a task for lawyers who could provide legal assistance. The UNHCR staff aided refugees by identifying them, distributing travel documents, assisting them in obtaining legal statuses provided by states, advocating for their rights, and normalizing these procedures.⁹² Although providing international protection for refugees and finding permanent solutions to the refugee problem is still the main objectives of the UNHCR today, has their mandate and powers drastically changed since its establishment. During the years of this study, 1967-1970, UNHCR's expanding mandate, changing policies and powers are developing.

The UN 1951 refugee convention was the key legal document that formed the foundation of the UNHCR's work, which it still does with the addition of the 1967 protocol.

⁸⁹ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 108

⁹⁰ IBID

⁹¹ Johansen 2020, 174

⁹² Glasman, Joel. (2017). *Seeing Like a Refugee Agency: A Short History of UNHCR Classifications in Central Africa (1961–2015)*. Journal of Refugee Studies, 341

The 1951 convention provides the internationally recognized “legal protection, rights and assistance a refugee is entitled to receive,” but it also defines who classified as a refugee and therefore was entitled to those rights and assistance.⁹³ The first article in the 1951 convention defined a refugee as a person who:

*As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.*⁹⁴

Although no geographical limitations to the classification of a person as a refugee is apparent in this definition, does the convention continue stating that the words “events occurring before 1 January 1951” should be understood as “events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951.”⁹⁵ Although the convention also states that each Contracting State could decide if they wanted to include displaced people from elsewhere in their national law, was the UNHCR was initially limited to protecting European refugees, due to the classificatio. However, as the number of refugees fleeing from the aftermath of WWII decreased by the late 1950s, the UNHCR began to look beyond Europe.

In Africa, several thousand people were displaced, but they were not considered refugees under the 1951 Convention. Therefore, during the 1960s and 1970s, the UNHCR pushed for the expansion of refugee law to include non-European refugees.⁹⁶ Yet, the UNHCR considered the refugees there to be “too numerous, dispersed and poor” for them to undertake individual assessments of refugees in these regions.⁹⁷ The UNHCR concluded that the refugees in the “third world” were different from the European refugees who needed legal assistance, therefore, the UNHCR introduced the concept of *prima facie* refugees. Historian Joël Glasman describes the concept of classifying some as *prima facie* refugees as “a way to assist refugees through ‘good offices’ without normal determination procedures—and

⁹³ UNHCR UK, *1951 refugee convention*. Accessed 13.05.2023
URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention>:
Glasman 2017, 341

⁹⁴ UNHCR, *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. Accessed 12.05.2023,
1951 convention, Article 1
URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/28185>

⁹⁵ IBID

⁹⁶ Glasman 2017, 342

⁹⁷ IDEM, 344

without providing full legal protection.”⁹⁸ In 1961, this push for expansion came to fruition as the procedure of UNHCR providing material assistance outside the confinement of the 1951 convention, was finalized in return for beneficial services and acts from the host state which sought support.⁹⁹ Shortly after this, several newly independent states in Africa asked for their support. The central African nations were among the first states to receive aid from the UNHCR as they expanded their assistance from Europe. Later, the UNHCR broadened the scope of the 1951 Refugee Convention even further, which was achieved in 1967 with a protocol that removed the restrictions on events occurring before 1951, and the geographical restriction limited to Europe.¹⁰⁰ The UNHCR’s assistance to the Horn of Africa came shortly after, in 1968 the UNHCR assisted the Sudanese government monetarily and with materials to aid the influx of refugees from the Eritrean area of Ethiopia.

The aid provided by the UNHCR was different in nature for the countries outside of Europe to what they had provided in Europe. The expansion of the refugee law created a specific category of refugees for non-Europeans, distinguishing them from European refugees. The mandate of the UNHCR was and still is “effective coordination of measures taken to deal with this problem [the refugee problem]” through collaboration with governments and non-operational.¹⁰¹ However, the UNHCR was set on assisting through material aid. This was achieved by emphasizing that the refugee agency would not be involved in the actual distribution of aid. The UNHCR's tasks involved setting standards for refugee protection and assistance, as well as planning, coordinating, supervising, and sometimes financing the practical refugee relief work carried out by host states, voluntary agencies, and specialized UN agencies.¹⁰² In the case of refugee camps in Sudan in the late 1960s, UNHCR did not perform practical tasks such as setting up and running refugee camps, which first took place after 1970, it functions as an employer for various implementing or operational partners.¹⁰³ Still, the UNHCR was very much involved in the decision-making and management of the camps, in the form of advising, funding, and making said fund as leverage, where the allocation would be dependent on the advice being taken into account.

Although the mandate of the UNHCR remains unchanged, the local UNHCR offices still exercise some, and often far-reaching, administrative function in most, if not all, refugee

⁹⁸ IDEM, 343-344

⁹⁹ IDEM, 338 and 343

¹⁰⁰ IDEM, 344

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, The mandate of the High Commissioner for Refugees and his Office. Accessed 19.05.2023, 4
URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/media/32122>

¹⁰² Hammerstad, Anne. (2014). *The rise and decline of a global security actor : UNHCR, refugee protection, and security* (First edition.). Oxford University Press, 98-99

¹⁰³ IBID

camps.¹⁰⁴ However, the lack of any official mandate over the management of refugee camps to any institutions leads to a lack of accountability mechanisms in the management of refugee camps and potential human rights violations that may occur in them. This general problem with UNHCR's management of refugee camps has been criticized by several scholars such as Marianne Nerland and Maja Janmyr, who have uncovered a "perceived pulverization of responsibility" between UNHCR and the host state, and human rights violations in camps not taken accountable for by either of the many parties responsible for the management of the camps, such as the UNHCR, the host state, and NGOs.¹⁰⁵ Thus, this is an issue dating back to the early expansion of UNCHR's role, their first assistance outside of Europe and in Africa, in the management of refugee camps, and, as we will see, in the small refugee camp Wad Sharife on the outskirts of the town Kassala in Eastern Sudan.

3.2: Camps or settlements?

The scope of this thesis circumscribes a fascinating period within the UNHCR as it encompasses the process of the organization's changing practices. The previous practice of the UNHCR was to allow refugees to settle amongst the local populations, but by the 1980s, this practice had almost completely been replaced by establishing refugee camps and, in some instances, other organized settlement schemes.¹⁰⁶ When it comes to the UNHCR's aid to the Eritrean Refugees in Sudan during the years 1967-1970, the gradual shift in practices begins to materialize. When the UNHCR first began their aid, the Eritrean refugees were already placed in camps that were neither established nor managed by the UNHCR. The focus of the UNHCR was on the immediate need to relieve the refugees in the camp and ensure and provide food and health services, and to find a long-term solution, which did not include camp settlement. However, in this instance, the UNHCR barely discussed local settlement, and their plans for the Eritrean refugees mainly centered around agricultural settlement, where new villages would be created for them to "carry out their traditional occupations."¹⁰⁷ The UNHCR's attempt to relocate the Eritrean refugees into different organized settlement projects indicates the shifting of practices within the UNHCR, but this shift is further materialized at the end of the scope of this thesis, as the UNHCR, for the first time, assisted

¹⁰⁴ Johansen 2020, 178-179

¹⁰⁵ Nerland & Universitetet i Bergen 2020;
Janmyr & Universitetet i Bergen 2012, 355

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 108

¹⁰⁷ Stanley Wright to Mr. Stockmann, 11 July 1967 - *notes on the allocation from the emergency fund for Eritrean refugees*; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 77b; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

in establishing a refugee camp in Sudan for the Eritrean refugees in 1970.¹⁰⁸

Many attempts were made to settle refugees outside of camps and in organized settlement areas both before and after the UNHCR assisted in establishing a refugee camp. When the UNHCR first began its aid in Sudan in 1967, the overall responsibility to study and find areas suitable for the refugees was given to the Government of Sudan.¹⁰⁹ At first, the Sudanese government decided to relocate the Eritrean refugees to a newly constructed dam, in Khashm-el-Girba, where a great amount of land had been irrigated, and a new Government sugar plantation was being made.¹¹⁰ The UNHCR's Director of Operations, Mr. Jamieson, had first been given the impression that the government would give them land there to cultivate but later discovered that the local authorities intended to employ them as casual labor, which Mr. Jamieson informed them that the UNHCR would not agree to that solution.¹¹¹ Shortly after, the UNHCR began to collaborate with the Sudanese government to find a solution to the resettlement.

Resettlement was essential for several reasons. First, because the UNHCR saw it as necessary that the refugees became self-sufficient in the long term. Secondly, because of the location of the refugee camps. The location was close to the frontier, the land was already inhabited, the area was prone to flooding, and the Commissioner of Kassala Province did not want the refugees in his province as their presence there affected their resources.¹¹² Thirdly, because it later became a prerequisite for other UN organizations, such as the World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to have a resettlement plan which would lead to self-sufficiency, for them to aid Sudan and the Eritrean refugees further.¹¹³ It was, therefore, important that the UNHCR and the Sudanese government would find an agreement to sign and begin a settlement plan. Regardless, the Sudanese government kept pushing for an agreement on settling the refugees in Khashm-el-Girba, claiming that it would provide the refugees with regular work. However, Mr. Jamieson

¹⁰⁸ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 110

¹⁰⁹ Stanley Wright to Mr. Stockmann, 11 July 1967 - *notes on the allocation from the emergency fund for Eritrean refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 77b

¹¹⁰ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 20 November 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Integration*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 141; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹¹¹ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan - Integration*; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 129; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹¹² Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 20 November 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Integration*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 141:

Wright to Stockmann, 11 July 1967 - *allocation from the emergency fund for Eritrean refugees*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 77b:

Gilbert Jaeger to Mr. Magne Reed, 7 July 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 76

¹¹³ Grant L. Jones - Note for the file, *Meeting with Sudanese Delegate: Sayed Mekki Hassan Abbo held on 30 October 1968*, 11 November 1968; Volume 5 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 197; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

discovered that the regular work they would provide was cotton picking, which is seasonal labor, only available between January to May, and that the Sudanese authorities had intended for the refugees to be employed for casual labor during the rest of the year.¹¹⁴ Mr. Jamieson informed the Sudanese government again that the UNHCR would not agree to those terms. The UNHCR was adamant that the settlement should be agricultural. However, the Sudanese government regarded giving any irrigated land to non-Sudanese as “politically out of the question.”¹¹⁵ The process of drawing up a refugee resettlement project was, therefore, slow. Many areas were suggested, considered, discussed, and studied, and the quality of the land and soil, its distances to the frontier, and grazing opportunities had to be taken into account.

After several proposals, the Sudanese Government and the UNHCR signed an agricultural settlement project to relocate the Eritrean refugees to Qala-en-Nahal in December 1968.¹¹⁶ The Qala-en-Nahal agricultural resettlement scheme is particularly important to evaluate the research question, as the project began during the scope of this thesis, the refugees from Wad Sharife were moved to this settlement project, and it highlights the UNHCR’s aim to find better solutions for the refugees and the host state outside of camps, as well as indicates the changing practices of the UNHCR during this time and the limitations of settlement schemes. As the Qala-en-Nahal project has not been written about in large and is missing from the scholarly debate, will the following mostly be based on one article by John R. Rogge; *THE QALA EN NAHAL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME*, with some additions from the UNHCR archive and other articles by Rogge who has written extensively about the project.

Including the aim to meet the needs of the refugees and relocate them, the Qala-en-Nahal agricultural resettlement scheme had three more objectives, for Sudan to keep the aid of the UNHCR and the WFP, to ensure rapid self-sufficiency amongst the refugees, and to utilize previously unused land into the Sudanese rural economy.¹¹⁷ For the settlement scheme in Qala-en-Nahal, the Sudanese government provided land and manpower for the execution and administration, and in return, the UNHCR provided 2,514,700 Sudanese Pounds.¹¹⁸ 103,000 feddans¹¹⁹ of land was allocated for the project, some of which was reserved for Sudanese farmers, and for the refugees six villages were created and 10 feddans were

¹¹⁴ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 20 November 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Integration*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 141

¹¹⁵ *IBID*

¹¹⁶ Rogge 1975, 136

¹¹⁷ *IBID*

¹¹⁸ *IBID*

¹¹⁹ A feddan is 1.038 acres

allocated for each family.¹²⁰ The area had fertile soil but had still not attracted any substantial settlement in the past as the area had heavy rainfall during the rainy season, but did not have permanent water sources, and biting flies were prevalent there. However, there were a few local inhabitants in the area prior to the settlement project who lived in abject poverty. The absence of permanent water halted the project, which began in June 1969, but stopped after the transfer of 9 000 refugees as there was not enough water. The project resumed in 1971. And by the end of the year, all six villages were occupied.¹²¹

As the Qala-en-Nahal settlement project was an agricultural scheme with the intent of self-sufficiency, were the refugees in the project instructed to crop-rotate five feddans of sesame and five feddans of dura, which was regarded as sufficient to provide a good subsistence of food and also generate income from the sesame. The Qala-en-Nahal settlement project was, in some regard, a success and benefited the refugees. Through the sales of their crops, and especially sesame, the refugees had a net income between LS 80 and LS 100 per annum, which was “well above the average for rural Sudan.”¹²² Many of the Eritrean refugees in Qala-en-Nahal also found additional work, either in the settlement as taxi drivers, teachers, or in the administration, or through seasonal labor in cotton picking in Khashm-el-Girba. This additional income could bring a family’s total annual income close to LS 200. The refugees, therefore, earned much more than what they would have expected to make in Eritrea through traditional work. The services the refugees had available were also greater than those most of them would have had accessible in Eritrea and greatly exceeded the services in the refugee camps. The schools were well staffed, and the Swedish Red Cross had donated a hospital, which according to Rogge, was “superior to most in rural areas.”¹²³

However, there were also many aspects of this settlement scheme worth critiquing. The refugees were not given a choice in their resettlement and were forced to participate in the project and become farmers. The refugees were also not consulted about which village they would be resettled in, but tribal and linguistic affiliation was considered, making the villages' compositions fairly ethnically and linguistically distinct, and provisions were made to facilitate relocation in villages on this basis.¹²⁴ Still, participation was not optional, and the

¹²⁰ Rogge 1975, 136:

T. El Kogali, Deputy Representative to UNHCR Headquarters, 17 August 1974, *Ethiopian refugees - new arrivals*; Volume 6 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 316; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹²¹ Rogge 1975, 140:

T. El Kogali, Deputy Representative to UNHCR Headquarters, 17 August 1974, *Ethiopian refugees - new arrivals*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 316

¹²² Rogge 1975, 143

¹²³ IDEM, 144

¹²⁴ IDEM, 140-141

refugees went through a radical shift in their lifestyle, which for many of them, was difficult to adjust to. As most of the Eritreans had been nomadic or semi-nomadic prior to their forced migration to Sudan, many had issues adjusting to the crop rotation of sesame and dura, and some were unwilling to relinquish their livestock regardless of the continuous attempts made by the administration at Qala-en-Nahal.¹²⁵ Rogge interprets this reluctance as “a desire to retain some aspects of their traditional way of life.”¹²⁶ Although the scheme drastically improved the living standard for the few traditional inhabitants in the area, the project led to conflict between the local and the refugee population in Qala-en-Nahal. The refugees were blamed for the deforestation, and the water shortages, and complaints were made “about the level of services and assistance rendered to the refugees compared to themselves.”¹²⁷ Another aspect of the project worth critiquing was the restriction of movement. Freedom of movement is one of the human rights declared in the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948.¹²⁸ However, the Qala-en-Nahal resettlement scheme, which was drafted and signed by the Sudanese government and the UNHCR, did not uphold or respect this human right. The refugees were forced to resettle at the scheme and were restricted to it and required police permits to travel outside of Qala-en-Nahal.¹²⁹ The refugees at Qala-en-Nahal were considered a “labor pool” during the agricultural off-season by the Sudanese government, and they could travel to nearby irrigation schemes during the cotton-picking season for seasonal labor there, mostly at Khashm-el-Girba, but the refugees were obliged to return to Qala-en-Nahal when their labor there was finished for the season.¹³⁰ The forced aspect of the scheme breaks another UN-established human right under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); the freedom to choose and accept work. Although the ICESCR only entered into force in January of 1976, which is after the implementation of this scheme, it was adopted in December of 1966 and should have been respected by a UN branch humanitarian organization.

Beyond the scope of this thesis, it is evident that the Qala-en-Nahal resettlement scheme or agricultural settlement schemes, in general, did not offer the long-term self-sufficiency solution to the Eritrean refugee problem in Sudan that the UNHCR had hoped for. Due to the continuous refugee flow was Qala-en-Nahal full by April of 1973, and the

¹²⁵ IDEM, 141-143

¹²⁶ IDEM, 143

¹²⁷ IDEM, 143 and 145

¹²⁸ UN, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Accessed 30.05.2023, Article 13

URL: <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf>

¹²⁹ Rogge 1975, 144

¹³⁰ IBID

UNHCR, in collaboration with the Sudanese government, began new agricultural settlement schemes.¹³¹ However, such settlement schemes had some prerequisites, such as a steady refugee population and availability of water and capital.¹³² By 1981, the UNHCR and the Sudanese government had halted all further developments of agricultural settlement schemes, as the number of refugees had become well over a quarter of a million people, and there was a lack of funds and adequate water supply.¹³³ Those already stationed at Qala-en-Nahal became neglected. The UNHCR's funds for settlement projects were limited to initial investments, and as the Qala-en-Nahal scheme was handed over to the local government's hands, little or no money was diverted to the scheme. The lack of continuous funds also led to a lack of adequate water supply, as Qala-en-Nahal was dependent on elaborate water systems, which was broken due to poor maintenance. It was clear that the settlement would be dependent on outside assistance for its survival, and the UNHCR began its financial support to Qala-en-Nahal just a few years after they had stopped.¹³⁴

The time period, 1967-1970, can therefore be seen as an in-between stage of the UNHCR's practices. In the instance of Eritrean refugees in Sudan, local settlement was not discussed. However, the UNHCR's continuous attempts at agricultural settlements, highlight their aim at the time to find other solutions to the refugee problem than refugee camps. As discussed above, the settlement schemes did not turn out to be permanent solutions for self-sufficiency, and as the number of refugees increased, the UNHCR relied more heavily on refugee camps for refugee settlement. However, the settlement project had some successes, such as a higher living standard during the initial phase, work, and better access to facilities such as schools and hospitals. However, although some human rights were better preserved at the settlement scheme, such as the right to work, other human rights were not protected there, such as freedom of movement and the right to choose employment. Furthermore, even though the UNHCR focused on the resettlement schemes, there were also refugees still settled in camps, both due to the continuous flow, but also because the land was only distributed to families. Unmarried, unaccompanied minor refugees and unaccompanied elderly refugees were not allocated any land.¹³⁵ Which begs the question: How was the aid in the camps while the UNHCR and the Sudanese government focused on resettlement?

¹³¹ Jan Høst, Acting Representative, Khartoum to UNHCR Headquarters, 21 April 1973, New arrivals - Eritreans; Volume 6 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 303; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹³² Rogge 1981, 200-204

¹³³ IDEM, 203

¹³⁴ Kibreab, Gaim. (1987). *Refugees and development in Africa : the case of Eritrea*. Red Sea Press, 267

¹³⁵ IDEM, 118-121

Chapter 4: A Case Study of Wad Sharife.

The objective of utilizing the refugee camp Wad Sharife as a case study is to explore UNHCR's aid to refugees under their mandate qualitatively and to which extent that aid was adequate, as well as opening the possibility further for a broader discussion on UNHCR's mandate and its competency to fulfill said mandate. Another objective is to promote increased knowledge about the camp, as although Wad Sharife has been operating for almost 60 years, is still operating now, and was once one of the largest refugee camps in the world, it is still barely written about and largely missing from the scholarly debate on Eritrean refugees in Sudan and refugee camps. To tackle the issue of UNHCR's aid to the refugees in Wad Sharife, a brief overview of the history and location of Wad Sharife, as well as an inquiry into who the refugees at the camp were, will be provided before delving into UNHCR's aid in the form of health services and food supply.

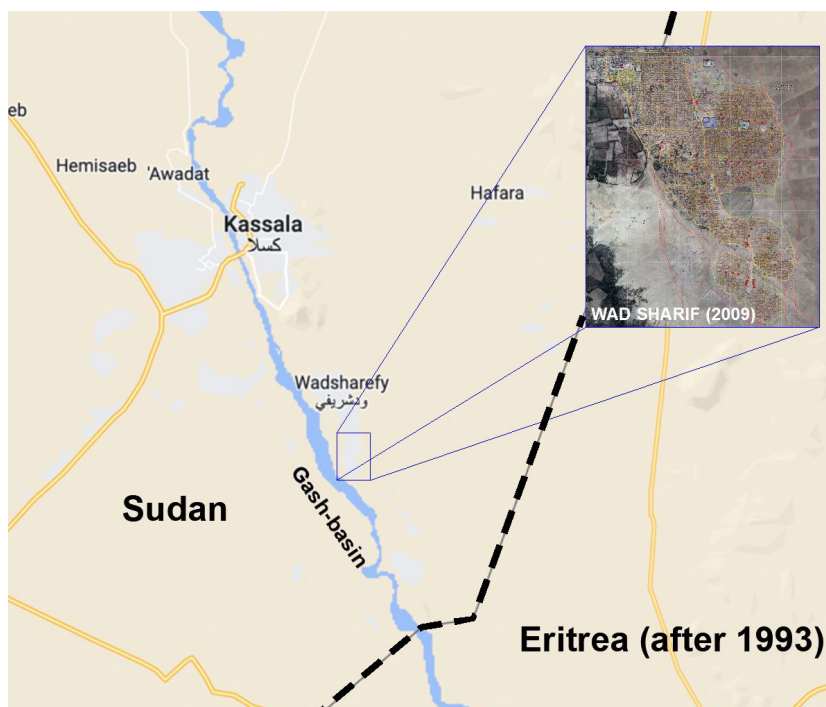
4.1: Wad Sharife.

In this section, a brief overview of the history of Wad Sharife, its location, and the dilemmas and complications related to its location and obstacles throughout its first 17 years will be outlined for contextualization and give further insight into the UNHCR's plans, processes, and obstacles in their efforts to assist the Eritrean refugees in Sudan.

The refugee camp Wad Sharife was built in 1967 to accommodate the Eritrean refugees that had just arrived in Kassala, and the camp is still in operation today. Wad Sharife is located about 15km west of the Ethiopian/Eritrean border, 10km southeast of Kassala town, and close to the Gash basin. The location of Wad Sharife raised concerns and was a topic of discussion within the UNHCR from the beginning of their assistance in Sudan. The UNHCR saw the resettlement of the refugees in Wad Sharife as highly important, both due to its proximity to the Ethiopian border for security reasons and due to its closeness to the Gash basin, which would get flooded and the area muddy during the rainy season, as well as mosquitos and flies carrying diseases are prevalent near that basin.¹³⁶ The Sudanese government also found the location of the camp objectionable as the land was habitually used by Sudanese people, and the government claimed that the land could not support the refugees as well, and both the Sudanese and Ethiopian governments objected to the proximity to the

¹³⁶ Gilbert Jaeger to Mr. Magne Reed, 7 July 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 76: Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan - Relief Measures*; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 128; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

frontier on security grounds as well.¹³⁷ However, as the resettlement projects did not come to full fruition, Wad Sharife is still located and operated in the same area.



Map 2: Wad Sharife

Google maps, Kassala, Accessed May, 8, 2023.

URL: <https://www.google.com/maps/@15.4020241,36.4546273,10.52z?hl=no>

Personalized annotations: Adding the location and a closer picture of Wad Sharif, dotting the border line between Sudan and Eritrea, and adding the name of the Gash-Basin next to it and the names of the countries.

In the almost 60 years this camp has been utilized, it has had different functions and has hosted a varying number of refugees. Still, it has always had the intended aim to assist Eritrean refugees in Kassala. During the temporal scope of this thesis, 1967-1970, Wad Sharife was first a smaller camp, built to accommodate 5000 refugees, and was a part of the biggest camp called Galassa camp.¹³⁸ By December of the same year, 1967, Wad Sharife was a part of another camp called Lafa camp.¹³⁹ Already by the end of the scope of this thesis, in 1970, Wad Sharife was no longer a part of another camp, and had grown increasingly, hosting some 23 000 refugees.¹⁴⁰ The resettlement project, Qala-en-Nahal, began in June

¹³⁷ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 17 December 1967, *Ethiopian Refugees - WFP Long-Term project*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 156; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹³⁸ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹³⁹ No named writer, 14 December 1967, *Excerpt of Report of P.C. Stanissis on his mission in Sudan from 24th November to 9th December 1967*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 155a; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁴⁰ Gerrit de Bosch Kemper, Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 18 June 1970, *Arrival of refugees from Ethiopia*; Volume 5 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 244; Fonds 11

1969, however, the operation temporarily stopped after 9 000 refugees had been transferred due to lack of water.¹⁴¹ The resettlement project began again in 1971 as there was progress in the water project in Qala-en-Nahal. In 1972 all inhabitants in Wad Sharife had been moved to Qala-en-Nahal, but as new refugees fled to Sudan, Wad Sharife was still operating.¹⁴²

However, between the years 1975 and 1981, Wad Sharife is not mentioned in the UNHCR documents, which might indicate that it was around the year 1975 the camp was shut down and not operating for a seven-year period. This meant that Wad Sharife was not operating during the time of the Ethiopian Red Terror after the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie, and the left-wing military faction had seized power, which again increased the number of refugees entering Sudan. In 1978 the number of Eritrean refugees in Sudan grew even more rapidly as the Ethiopian government received immense military aid from the USSR and launched an extensive offensive against the Eritrean opposition power.¹⁴³ By 1981, the UNHCR and the Sudanese government were in need of more temporary accommodation for the Eritrean refugees, due to the new mass influx amounting to approximately 150 new refugees each day.¹⁴⁴ In August of 1981, Wad Sharife is again mentioned as the UNHCR was preparing to establish a “permanent transit center” for 5 000 refugees.¹⁴⁵ The Sudanese government began to move refugees into Wad Sharife in August of 1982, and the population quickly reached 3 300 refugees.¹⁴⁶ However, neither the UNHCR nor the Sudanese government had foreseen the mass influx of refugees resulting from the severe drought in 1984 and 1985.¹⁴⁷ By 1985, Wad Sharife was one of the largest refugee camps in the world, hosting 128 000 Eritrean refugees.¹⁴⁸ According to the UNHCR, the UNHCR and its NGO partners “struggled to accommodate the new arrivals in the camp, and to build the necessary additional warehouses, dispensaries and feeding centers,” and describes this as “one of its greatest challenges yet.”¹⁴⁹

Although only a brief overview, the history of Wad Sharife exhibits that the notion of the UNHCR promoted and favored refugee camps as an accommodation option for refugees

Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

Rogge 1975, 136

¹⁴¹ Kogali to UNHCR Headquarters, 17 August 1974, *Ethiopian refugees - new arrivals*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 316

¹⁴² IBID

¹⁴³ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 110

¹⁴⁴ UNHCR Khartoum to UNHCR Geneva, 18 August 1981; Volume 16 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 861a; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁴⁵ IBID

¹⁴⁶ Muller UNHCR Khartoum to UNHCR Geneva, 16 June 1982; Volume 17 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 873; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹⁴⁷ Kok 1989, 434

¹⁴⁸ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 114

¹⁴⁹ UNHCR 2000, *The State of the world's refugees*, 112 and 115

in Africa during this period is not the entire truth. Resettlement and self-sufficiency were always a high priority to the UNHCR during this time. Which was also demonstrated in chapter 2.3, although the forced aspect of the resettlement schemes and the adequacy of those settlements could also be discussed, however, that is outside the scope of this thesis. The existence of Wad Sharife and the other refugee camps in Kassala was mainly due to a lack of funds, lack of competence and ability to ensure a stable agricultural settlement scheme, the immense number of refugees, and the obstacles of the host state. However, as will be discussed in the next section, the refugees at Wad Sharife were under the UNHCR's mandate, and whether the UNHCR could appropriately provide and ensure aid to them and ensure their well-being does indicate whether or not the UNHCR could fulfill its mandate.

4.2: The refugees.

This section of the thesis will explore who the refugees staying in Wad Sharife were and whether or not they were legitimate refugees under the mandate of the UNHCR. During the scope of this thesis, mainly two tribes were mentioned in the UNHCR documents. The first Eritrean refugees who resided in Wad Sharife were all part of the ethnic group the Nara people, who, during the time period of the thesis, were referred to and known as the Baria tribe.¹⁵⁰ The Nara refugees had mostly been cultivators, nomads, and traders before they had to flee their home country.¹⁵¹ Since the beginning of the 1940s, the Nara had commuted seasonally to the Gash basin, where Wad Sharife was located, to work in the orchards and fields.¹⁵² In other words, the Nara had experience in the area and the cross-border movement between the Eritrean region of Ethiopia and Kassala. However, their previous cross-border movement to the Gash basin was entirely based on livelihood motives, while in 1967, they were staying there as refugees.¹⁵³ The refugees from the Nara people arrived at Wad Sharife in a bad state and were in dire need of more food and medical attention.

In June of 1970, there was a new influx of Eritrean refugees to Sudan. At this time, the Qala-en-Nahal settlement scheme, with the objective to relocate 23 000 refugees from Wad Sharife to land to cultivate further from the border, had just begun.¹⁵⁴ Due to the new influx, a few hundred newly arrived refugees from a different tribe were accommodated at

¹⁵⁰ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁵¹ IBID

¹⁵² Kok 1989, 423

¹⁵³ Kok 1989, 423:

Hassanen 2007, 82

¹⁵⁴ Gerrit de Bosch Kemper, Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 18 June 1970, *Arrival of refugees from Ethiopia*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 244;

Rogge 1975, 136

Wad Sharife.¹⁵⁵ According to the UNHCR Deputy Representative, Jan Høst, all the newly arrived Eritrean refugees at Wad Sharife were from the Saurta tribe.¹⁵⁶ Information on the Saurta tribe is, however, difficult to find, as it is not listed as any of the Eritrean ethnic groups or tribes, nor is it mentioned anywhere else. The only other place the Saurta tribe is mentioned is once in the book *The Refugee Concept in Group Situations* by Ivor C. Jackson, where the memorandum by Deputy Representative Jan Høst is cited as a source.¹⁵⁷ This might indicate that the newly arrived refugees at Wad Sharife might have been from a different tribe than mentioned or that the tribe had another name. When the new refugees arrived at Wad Sharife in June 1970, they were in good condition already, as the Deputy Representative stated, and Wad Sharife had enough food and medicine to take care of them.¹⁵⁸ The immediate aid to these refugees that the UNHCR focused on when they arrived was the possibility of resettling them in the Qala-en-Nahal agricultural settlement scheme.¹⁵⁹

From the beginning of the UNHCR's aid in Sudan, the assistance to the Eritrean refugees was not taken well by the Ethiopian government, who claimed that the "Ethiopian persons from the Eritrean area" who remain behind in Sudan were rebels and not refugees.¹⁶⁰ The Ethiopian government saw the UNHCR's involvement in Sudan as an "uncalled for intervention in the domestic affairs of Ethiopia" and that its rendering of assistance to what they refer to as "outlaws" was a "propaganda campaign" against Ethiopia.¹⁶¹ As the UNHCR's mandate is to work on a solely humanitarian basis in their protection of refugees and is bound by international UN law only to aid those who are considered refugees under that law, it was essential to prove that the Eritrean refugees in Kassala were, in fact, genuine refugees and not members of ELF who would not be considered refugees in the meaning of the UNHCR statute.¹⁶² According to the director of the Africa & Asia Division in the UNHCR, Gilbert Jaeger, the "Ethiopian attitude was causing considerable embarrassment" to them.¹⁶³ To legitimize their aid and to open the possibility of further action by the FAO and

¹⁵⁵ Gerrit de Bosch Kemper to High Commissioner, 18 June 1970, *Arrival of refugees from Ethiopia*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 244

¹⁵⁶ IBID

¹⁵⁷ Jackson, Ivor. C. (1999). *The refugee concept in group situations* (Vol. 3). Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 170

¹⁵⁸ Jan Høst, Deputy Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 27 June 1970, *New Influx - Ethiopian Refugees*; Volume 5 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 245; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁵⁹ Kemper to High Commissioner, 18 June 1970, *Arrival of refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 244

¹⁶⁰ Imperial Ethiopian Government Ministry of Foreign Affairs to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, Switzerland, 14 September 1967; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; not numbered; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁶¹ IBID

¹⁶² J. E. R Candappa to Mr. A. Rørholt and Dr. Jahn, 11 June 1968, *Sudanese/Ethiopian Extradition Treaty*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 185; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

¹⁶³ Gilbert Jaeger - Note for the file, *Eritrean refugees in the Sudan - The Sudanese Government's request to WFP*, 6 September 1967; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 103; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

the WFP, “a mission of impartial observers” was to be carried out. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was approached and carried the mission out, but the UNHCR also carried out its own mission to look into the situation of the Eritrean refugees in Kassala. When the representative of the UNHCR, Mr. Jamieson, visited all the refugee camps in Kassala, he concluded that “the refugees appear to be genuine refugees who have fled their own country as a result of the political and military developments there.”¹⁶⁴

In Mr. Jamieson’s visit to Wad Sharife, the leaders there told him they had fled Eritrea because of the war situation there. The refugees claimed that they were not rebels and that none of them had used weapons or arms against the Ethiopian army.¹⁶⁵ According to the refugees at Wad Sharife, the Ethiopian army demanded their village to produce rebels, and if the town delivered no rebels to them, they shot the villagers. The leaders at Wad Sharife also told Mr. Jamieson that the army had “assaulted their women and also had despoiled them of their ornaments.”¹⁶⁶ According to Mr. Jamieson, the leaders at Wad Sharife had also repeated the same kind of experiences as the leaders in the main part of the Galassa camp had done. The leaders at Galassa stated that the Ethiopian army had taken a high toll on the ordinary civilian population and that many villages had been destroyed and their inhabitants killed.¹⁶⁷ They also noted that the Ethiopian government had attempted to persuade them, after their arrival in Sudan, to return to Ethiopia with promises of amnesty, but according to the leader, those who had returned had been killed by the army.¹⁶⁸

From the beginning, the legitimacy of the Eritrean refugees in Kassala was accepted by the UNHCR. However, their legitimacy was still denied by the Ethiopian government, questioned by a few Sudanese individuals and politicians, such as the Commissioner of Kassala Province, and needed further proof for other UN-based relief organizations to accept.¹⁶⁹ The ICRC’s mission was carried out shortly after Mr. Jamieson’s visit to the refugee camps in Kassala and confirmed the finding of the UNHCR, which made it possible for the WFP to grant emergency food.¹⁷⁰ Still, all aid to Eritrean refugees was not received

¹⁶⁴ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 18 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan - WFP*; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 124; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹⁶⁵ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁶⁶ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁶⁷ IBID

¹⁶⁸ IBID

¹⁶⁹ Jacques Cuénod - Note for the file, Refugees from Ethiopia in the Sudan, 27 September 1967; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 117; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees :

Chargé de Mission to HCR, 20 November 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Integration*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 141

¹⁷⁰ Gilbert Jaeger - Note for the file, *Eritrean refugees in the Sudan - The Sudanese Government’s request to WFP*, 4 September 1967; Volume 3 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 102; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

well by the Ethiopian government, who would deny their refugee status throughout the Eritrean War of Independence.¹⁷¹

The refugees at Wad Sharife, as far as the UNHCR documents reveal, were from mainly two tribes, the Nara and the Saurta. However, refugees from other tribes could also have inhabited the camp during the scope of the thesis, but not mentioned in the documents. The refugees at Wad Sharife did not consider themselves to be rebels, and the leaders at the camp stated that they had not used weapons against the Ethiopian army, yet had still experienced severe violence and killings from them, and therefore saw no other option than to flee their home. According to the UNHCR, they were legitimate refugees under their mandate.

4.3: Health services.

25th of May 1967, the UNHCR approved an emergency allocation to the Sudanese Government for the Eritrean Refugees in Sudan for US\$ 150.000.¹⁷² Four months later, the UNHCR sent one of its representatives to Sudan in order to study the situation of the Eritrean refugees. UNHCR's Director of Operations, Mr. Jamieson, traveled to all the refugee camps in Kassala, where he identified the most urgent needs of the refugees there, which he recognized to be health services and food supply.¹⁷³ Mr. Jamieson also recognized the need for more adequate housing, clothing, and education, but as the refugee camps were seen as temporary transient living situations until an eventual agricultural settlement or repatriation, and due to the refugees' general bad physical state, most of the UNHCR's aid to the Eritrean refugees was directed towards health services and food supply.¹⁷⁴

Ensuring proper health care and services for the newly arrived Eritrean refugees in Kassala, was of great importance to the UNHCR. Medical care is essential to ensure the health and well-being of refugees. Many of the refugees who arrived in Kassala were in very bad conditions, and medical aid was essential to save lives and stop diseases from spreading. The UNHCR's original plan for the immediate future when the refugees first arrived was to

Jacques Cuénod - Note for the file, *Refugees from Ethiopia in the Sudan*, 27 September 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 117

¹⁷¹ Karadawi 1999, 125

¹⁷² Office of The UNHCR, Press Release, 25 May 1967, *Emergency Allocation Approved*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 36b:

Jacques Cuénod - Note for the file, *Refugees from Ethiopia in the Sudan*, 27 September 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 117

¹⁷³ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127:

Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees in the Sudan - Relief Measures*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 128

¹⁷⁴ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127:

Chargé de Mission to HCR, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Relief Measures*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number

contribute US\$ 150 000 to provide shelter, purchase food for three months, and provide health services for the refugees.¹⁷⁵ US\$ 28 000 was planned for health services.¹⁷⁶

When the UNHCR representative Mr. Jamieson visited Wad Sharife in his fieldwork to study the situation of the Eritrean Refugees situated in Kassala, he discovered that while the other camps had medical facilities, although inadequate, or other possibilities of free medical attention, there were no medical facilities in Wad Sharife.¹⁷⁷ The refugees who were settled in Wad Sharife got vaccinated and registered at the main Galassa camp when they first arrived before they were moved to their allocated camp, but any medical attention needed after being stationed was troublesome to acquire. There was a medical facility in a nearby Sudanese village. However, the Sudanese clinic required them to pay for medical attention, which many of the refugees at Wad Sharife would not be able to do.¹⁷⁸ According to the Provincial Medical Officer in Kassala, the Eritrean refugees were carriers of onchocerciasis, an eye disease. Wad Sharife was located close to the Gash Basin and river, and according to the Provincial Medical Officer, the refugees should be settled well away from rivers, as onchocerciasis is carried by flies and mosquitoes by rivers.¹⁷⁹ However, although the refugees in Wad Sharife were to be moved elsewhere throughout the whole scope of this thesis, the camp was operating all throughout this period. There was also a high incidence of cases of tuberculosis amongst the refugee population in Kassala, which were too substantial for the Kassala hospital to accommodate.¹⁸⁰

After his visit, Mr. Jamieson and the Provincial Medical Officer recommended five new medical dressers, so that all camps would be adequately staffed, and the following medical supplies for the refugees: 500 vials of penicillin a month, 40 vials per day of streptomycin, 15 000 sulphaguanidine tablets, 15 000 sulphatia tablets, 36 000 iron tablets per day, 36 000 vitamin tablets per day, 300 000 anti-malaria pills, 1000 yards of cotton gauze, and 250 dozen bandages per month.¹⁸¹ Mr. Jamieson also suggested the possibility of introducing the League of Red Cross Societies or the Sudanese Red Crescent as operational partners in the refugee program. However, at the time, the Sudanese Commissioner preferred to keep the whole operation in Government's hands with aid from the UNHCR, but as we will see later, the League of Red Cross Societies and the Sudanese Red Crescent, does eventually

¹⁷⁵ Gilbert Jaeger to Mr. Magne Reed, 7 July 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 76

¹⁷⁶ IDEM

¹⁷⁷ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁷⁸ IBID

¹⁷⁹ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Relief Measures*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 128

¹⁸⁰ IBID

¹⁸¹ IBID

have to be asked for additional aid.¹⁸²

Utilizing visits to the refugee camps by a representative to survey and inspect the medical needs of the refugees under the UNHCR's mandate, facilitated the UNHCR to uncover the medical needs in each camp and to organize and arrange medical facilities and supplies. However, there were aspects of this method worth critiquing. As this inspection was done through mostly talking to the tribal leaders in the camps and no randomized health inspections were carried out, it could be presumed that a lot of diseases and health issues were not discovered, and this is especially likely amongst women and children as it appears from the documents that only men were deliberated. Mr. Jamieson also talked to the Provincial Medical Officer in Kassala, and, in some camps, to those who worked in the medical dressers at the camps, however, they would mostly know of the medical health of those who went to the hospital in Kassala or those who had sought medical assistance in those exact camps. The Provincial Medical Officer estimated that only a tenth of the tuberculosis cases were discovered, and there might have been more cases of different diseases and health issues that went undiscovered.¹⁸³ Another problematic aspect of this way of inspecting medical needs is that the representative seemed to be guided by personal judgements and emotions. Mr. Jamieson wrote in length about a 17-year-old boy whom he had met in the Lafa camp, whom he felt great compassion for. The boy had been leading some cattle across the countryside when he was attacked by some Ethiopian soldiers, they had cut off his entire nose and upper lip, as well as inflicted a bayonet scar on the back of his neck, and his legs were covered in scars after the attack.¹⁸⁴ The boy had pretended to be dead and was later picked up by some Sudanese workers who brought him to a hospital in Sudan.

Mr. Jamieson took great pity on the boy after talking to him and stated the following in advice to the UNHCR: "I would suggest we investigate the possibilities of having this unfortunate youth receive plastic surgery. Otherwise, his whole life will be blighted by this appalling disfigurement."¹⁸⁵ Later the UNHCR did finance and facilitated the young boy's trip to Khartoum and his reconstructive surgery. Although it cannot be argued that the young boy did not merit or was justified to receive reconstructive surgery or that it would not greatly benefit his mental and emotional health, for him, this surgery was most likely greatly imperative and crucial for his mental health. However, the UNHCR had allocated a limited budget, people did not have enough food, diseases were spreading rapidly in the camps, and

¹⁸² IBID

¹⁸³ IBID

¹⁸⁴ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁸⁵ IBID

several children had died.¹⁸⁶ As this inspection was done by one person, accompanied by two others, through visitations and dialogue, it seems as if personal feelings could dictate the amount of help one could receive, and that the allocated money was not distributed in a utilitarian method. If the inspection was conducted by more people and was supplemented with a randomized health survey and tests, a more nuanced and accurate description of the medical needs of the general population could be discovered, and the allocated funds could be distributed more utilitarian. Although it is respectable that Mr. Jamieson cared for the mental well-being of the young boy, it is likely that many in the refugee camps had mental issues after witnessing brutal killings and their villages being burned down and experiencing violence and rape, yet these issues on a population of the camp's scale were conducted or considered.

A few months later, in December of 1967, another visit to the refugee camps in Kassala was conducted. This time the UNHCR representative was P. C. Stanissis, who was accompanied by the Treasurer of the Sudanese Red Crescent. According to P. C. Stanissis, the medical dressers at the camps had a good stock of medicaments, the number of daily attendances to the medical facilities had greatly reduced, and over 25 000 refugees had been vaccinated.¹⁸⁷ These statements indicate that the aid provided by the UNHCR had improved the medical assistance provided to the refugees and improved their general health. P. C. Stanissis also claims that the refugees' state of health was "not alarming," which again indicates an improvement from the last conducted visit. However, he also states that some children suffer from malnutrition and eye disease, but follows that statement with; "this exists also among the local population, and here one has to be very careful not to give the refugees a better living than the local standards."¹⁸⁸ This statement might indicate some undermining of the refugee's health situation, but as no number of cases are mentioned, it is erroneous to contemplate. According to the Health Authorities, the most common diseases at that time were malaria, eye, skin, and chest diseases, and malnutrition, and the most severe cases were sent to the Provincial Hospital in Kassala. However, these numbers had also decreased in the last months.¹⁸⁹ The Provincial Medical and Health Officer requested again to receive the same amount of medicaments and supplies as in September for a new six months period, which might indicate that the supply that had been distributed in the months prior were

¹⁸⁶ IBID

¹⁸⁷ No named writer, 14 December 1967, *Excerpt of Report of P.C. Stanissis on his mission in Sudan from 24th November to 9th December 1967*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 155a

¹⁸⁸ IBID

¹⁸⁹ IBID

sufficient.¹⁹⁰

The most conspicuous of the second visit, was the fact that the five medical dressers that were requested and advised by Mr. Jamieson had not been constructed, and Wad Sharife was still without a medical dresser.¹⁹¹ The Provincial Medical and Health Authorities requested these five medical dressers again, and that one would be stationed at Wad Sharife. Unlike the first visit, however, it was proposed and stated that the Sudanese Red Crescent could provide the services of the five medical dressers, but that they needed the necessary funds to cover the salaries.¹⁹² After this proposition, the need for more medical dressers or medical personnel was no longer mentioned in the documents, which suggests that the Sudanese Red Crescent took over the responsibility of providing medical dressers and personnel. Another aspect that signals that the medical dresser in Wad Sharife was provided and supplied, but presumably through the Sudanese Red Crescent, is that during a study on the public nutritional health aspects of the Eritrean refugees settled in camps in the Kassala area conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the UNHCR and the WFP, it is implied that the camps are sufficiently staffed by medical personnel.¹⁹³ Also, in June 1970 it is stated that the newly arrived refugees in Wad Sharife were given medical examinations and vaccinations at the camp.¹⁹⁴

In conclusion, the UNHCR recognized the urgent need for health services among the refugee population in Kassala, and in Wad Sharife. Efforts were made to address the gaps in healthcare provision, such as recommendations to include the need for more medical personnel and facilities, money for adequate medical supplies provided, and potential collaboration with organizations like the League of Red Cross Societies or the Sudanese Red Crescent was brought up. During this three-year period, the UNHCR documents indicate some improvements in healthcare provision over time. The aid provided by the organization and the Sudanese Red Crescent led to better medical assistance for the refugees, reduced daily attendance at medical facilities, and a decrease in certain diseases. Vaccination efforts were also successful, with a significant number of refugees receiving vaccinations. However, certain limitations in the UNHCR's approach to assessing medical needs could be drawn from this. The reliance on visits and dialogue with camp leaders and medical staff might have

¹⁹⁰ IBID

¹⁹¹ IBID

¹⁹² IBID

¹⁹³ Gerrit de Bosch Kemper, Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 17 July 1969, *Refugees from Ethiopia - WHO Report*; Volume 5 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 225; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

¹⁹⁴ Jan Host, Deputy Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 27 June 1970, *New Influx - Ethiopian Refugees*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 245

resulted in underreporting of diseases and health issues, particularly among women and children. Furthermore, the personal judgments and emotions of the representatives seemed to influence the allocation of aid, potentially leading to uneven distribution.

Furthermore, was the recommendation from the UNHCR to build a medical dresser at Wad Sharife and other camps, not enough for the medical facilities to be constructed. Wad Sharife was without medical facilities during a large part of this time period, and they were not constructed before the Sudanese Red Crescent offered to provide the services of the five medical dressers. This indicates that the health services to the Eritrean refugees in Wad Sharife and other camps in Kassala did improve between 1967-1970, however late it might have been, but that the UNHCR was unable to provide it without the assistance of other NGOs. The case study of Wad Sharife highlights the UNHCR's need for effective coordination with other NGOs and local partners to ensure the refugees' access to health services. If the health services at Wad Sharife were adequate during this three-year period, is vague, and a definite answer could not be drawn from the organizational documents from the archives. However, the assumed improvement of the general health amongst the refugees might not have been predominantly due to the UNHCR's aid, as, although a large part of the emergency allocation was for health services, Wad Sharife did not have medical services until the Sudanese Red Crescent took over the responsibility of providing this aid. Still, the UNHCR did provide funds and actively advocated for medical dressers at the camps and accessible health services for the refugees, so the organization's involvement most definitely did improve the refugees' access to health services.

4.4: Food supply.

When the UNHCR's Director of Operations, Mr. Jamieson, first visited Wad Sharife in September 1967, during their study on the need and situation of the Eritrean refugees, it became clear that food aid was of the utmost importance. The refugees at Wad Sharife solely got their food from the Sudanese Government, which was a very small ration of 14lb. of Dura per month, which is about half of the FWP recommended ration.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, food distribution was only done once a month, leading many of the refugees to eat all of their ration relatively quickly and to go without any food for a while. The food situation in the camp was further worsened as in the first months of the camp, before the visit of the UNHCR, Wad Sharife had received 30% below the already small ration of food. This food

¹⁹⁵ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

crisis was exasperated even further by the lack of ration cards and proper organization of food distribution. All the food was solely given to the sheik in the camp, who distributed it to the rest of the refugees. This led to 30% of the refugees being left with no food instead of everyone getting 30% less.¹⁹⁶

Before the UNHCR implemented its aid to the Sudanese Government in relief for the Eritrean refugees, the food supply was far from adequate. While the representative of the UNHCR, Mr. Jamieson, did not conduct a full medical survey of the refugees in Wad Sharife or the other camps, through his conversations with the refugees at the camp, it was attested that while their general health was bad at arrival to the camp, the small additional food they had received had improved their health.¹⁹⁷ Yet, through Mr. Jamieson's discussion with the Provincial Medical Officer in Kassala, it was uncovered that the refugees at the camp were suffering from high rates of anemia, with about 20% of the refugees suffering from it.¹⁹⁸ With the high rate of anemia, the overall low amount of food distributed, and the unorganized way the food was distributed, it became apparent that more aid was needed to cover the food supply. To solve the issue of distributing the food, individual ration cards were to be produced and issued. However, while that minimized the issue of unfair distribution of food, it did not tackle the issue of general food deficiency. By the end of August 1967, US\$ 74 000 of the allocated US\$ 150 000 had already been spent, indicating that all the emergency allocations would be spent by the end of October 1967.¹⁹⁹ The aid ensured by the UNHCR was, in other words, simply not sufficient. To cover the food supply, which they could not do themselves, collaboration with other humanitarian organizations, again, became the only solution.

As mentioned in the chapter above, the WFP was wary of granting emergency food for the Eritrean refugees, as the Ethiopian government claimed they were not legit refugees and would not take well to the assistance of these refugees. It was important for the WFP that their assistance would not be considered politically motivated and on a purely humanitarian level.²⁰⁰ However, after the refugees were identified as "real" refugees and after the WFP had been examining "the problem from all angles, it was felt on the WFP side that aid could be provided" on the condition that the request was made by and received from the Sudanese

¹⁹⁶ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127:

Chargé de Mission to HCR, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Relief Measures*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 128

¹⁹⁷ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 19 October 1967, *Visit to Eritrean Refugees*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 127

¹⁹⁸ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 22 October 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Relief Measures*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 128

¹⁹⁹ IBID

²⁰⁰ Jacques Cuénod - Note for the file, *Refugees from Ethiopia in the Sudan*, 27 September 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 117

Government.²⁰¹ The UNHCR was in dire need of the additional aid that the WFP could provide to ensure enough food for the Eritrean refugees, as the director of the Africa & Asia Division in the UNHCR, Gilbert Jaeger, stated to the WFP in early September in 1967: “The refugees are definitely in need of food. If, for one reason or another, this food would not be forthcoming from WFP, we saw no other reasonable source of producing this food aid.”²⁰² In the same month, the WFP authorized emergency assistance in supplying food for the Eritrean refugees in Sudan from the rest of September until the end of the year.

The WFP granted 1.200 tons of durra, 120 tons of dried skimmed milk, 90 tons of canned fruit, 90 tons of vegetable oil, 120 tons of beans, and 60 tons of Sugar for this period, which is tantamount to 460 grams per day, equivalent to 2 000 calories for 25 000 people.²⁰³ While the emergency relief supplied by the WFP was intended to last until the end of the year, as it was intended that the refugees would be resettled by then and self-sufficient enough for the UNHCR to supply the food, the emergency relief was extended to February 1968. However, already by December 1967, it was apparent to the UNHCR and the Sudanese Government that self-sufficiency and resettlement would take more time, and the constant increase of refugees required more resources than the UNHCR could provide, and a further extension of the emergency allocation was requested.²⁰⁴ However, as there was no agreement signed for an agricultural resettlement plan that would lead to eventual self-sufficiency for the refugees, the WFP stated that they would not assist further until such an agreement or plan was signed.²⁰⁵

The effects of the additional emergency aid provided by the WFP in their collaboration with the UNHCR on the Eritrean refugees’ health and well-being in Wad Sharife and other camps are challenging to inspect and evaluate as no study of the refugees’ health was conducted in this period. However, from the numbers reported, it is documented that in addition to the 460 grams rationed by the WFP, the refugees received an additional 90 grams of daily ration food through funds made available by the UNHCR and the Sudanese Red Crescent, which included dried fish²⁰⁶. This signifies that during the months of aid being

²⁰¹ W.M. Shepherd to Mr. Jamieson, 13 July 1967 - Note for the record, *Meeting with Mr. T. Jamieson, Director of Operations*, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 79

²⁰² Gilbert Jaeger - Note for the file, *Eritrean refugees in the Sudan - The Sudanese Government’s request to WFP*, 4 September 1967, UNHCR Archive Series 2, Fonds 11, number 102

²⁰³ IBID

²⁰⁴ No named writer, not dated, *Meeting with Sudan Government Commissioner for Refugees*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 136; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

²⁰⁵ Grant L. Jones - Note for the file, *Meeting with Sudanese Delegate: Sayed Mekki Hassan Abbo held on 30 October 1968*, 11 November 1968, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 197

²⁰⁶ *Excerpt of Report of P.C. Stanissis on his mission in Sudan from 24th November to 9th December 1967*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 155a

provided by both the UNHCR and the WFP, as well as the Sudanese Red Crescent, the refugees received an adequate amount of food and calories a day. However, there were also some limitations to the distribution of the food supplies, as due to the urgency and hurried assemblage of food, the first distribution of food was made without ration cards.²⁰⁷ The task of receiving, handling, and organizing the distribution of WFP food supplies in these months was delegated to the Commissioner of Kassala, who would further delegate this task to his representatives.²⁰⁸ The choice to allocate the main responsibility of food distribution to the Commissioner of Kassala could be questioned as he had expressed a hostile perception of the Eritrean Refugees in Kassala, casting doubt on whether or not they were “real” refugees and he was hostile to the whole idea of political asylum. According to a representative of the UNHCR, the Commissioner of Kassala had claimed that there “was absolutely no land in Kassala Province for the refugees; every square inch [...] was [...] for Sudanese and not for aliens.”²⁰⁹ The Commissioner of Kassala had also claimed that the only reason the refugees, whom he saw as unwelcome, were in his province was solely for international relief.²¹⁰ Still, the UNHCR, in collaboration with the Sudanese Government, appointed him to manage the distribution of WFP food supplies. Yet, from what I could find, there were no complaints nor notice of any disruption regarding the distribution of food supplies. However, as there is no study on the general or nutritional health of the refugees during this period, nothing can be claimed for certain. Still, as there is no mention of complaints against the food distribution and the food supply and the daily rations of food were sufficient, it can be assumed that the aid provided by the WFP in collaboration with the UNHCR and the Sudanese Red Crescent was, in a great deal, beneficiary to the Eritrean Refugees stationed in all the camps in Kassala including Wad Sharife.

However, as mentioned above, the emergency allocation contributed by the WFP ended in February 1968, nor were they willing to supply more food until a settlement project for the Eritrean refugees had begun. This led to a “food gap” to which the UNHCR had to make adjustments in their budget for their rural settlement project to provide some funds for the purchase of food on the condition that the Sudanese Government would sign their rural

²⁰⁷ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 28 November 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - WFP*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 148; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

²⁰⁸ Chargé de Mission, Khartoum, Sudan to HCR, Geneva, 17 December 1967, *Refugees from Ethiopia - WFP Emergency Programme* - enclosed copy of *First Monthly Report Sudan Emergency*; Volume 4 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 162; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

²⁰⁹ Chargé de Mission to HCR, 20 November 1967, *Eritrean Refugees - Integration*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 141

²¹⁰ IBID

resettlement project.²¹¹ However, it can be assumed that the food supply the UNHCR could ensure without the assistance of the WFP provision was not sufficient. In July 1969, the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a study on the public nutritional health aspects of the Eritrean refugees settled in camps in the Kassala area in collaboration with the UNHCR and the WFP at the request of the Sudanese Ministries of Health and Interior.²¹² The WHO report on the nutrition status of the refugees revealed that the whole refugee population in Kassala was badly nourished, with 48.6% of the refugee population struggling with Protein-Calorie Malnutrition (PCM) and a total of 85.2% of children aged 6-9 suffering from PCM. Over half of the refugee population in the camps was anemic, and several children struggled with vitamin A deficiency.²¹³ Through the WHO report, it was uncovered that the food supply was inadequate and insufficient. While it was advised to contact ICRC for supplementary food, the WFP would again begin supplying food for the refugees, which began in December 1969.²¹⁴

Again, it is difficult to determine the nutritional and physical effect of the extra food supply had on the refugees and their well-being, as no health or nutrition study or report was conducted during the second time the WFP collaborated with the UNHCR and the Sudanese Government for the Eritrean refugees, either. However, in June 1970, 284 newly arrived refugees were accommodated at Wad Sharife, where they were registered, given medical examinations, got vaccinated, and received food and rations from the WFP stock. According to the Deputy Representative of the UNHCR, these refugees were in “excellent physical conditions.”²¹⁵ The lack of documents, discussing how to get more food, and complaints or worries about the amount of food, might also indicate that as long as the UNHCR collaborated with the WFP and other humanitarian organizations, they were able to provide and allocate an adequate amount of food to the refugees stationed at camps. On the other hand, the WHO report and several documents highlighting the difficulty of procuring enough food might indicate that the UNHCR was unable to adequately ensure enough food provision

²¹¹ Grant L. Jones - Note for the file, *Meeting with Sudanese Delegate*, 11 November 1968, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 197

²¹² Gerrit de Bosch Kemper, Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 17 July 1969, *Refugees from Ethiopia - WHO Report*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 225:

Jacques Cuénod - Note for the file - *WHO Report on Nutrition Status of Refugees in Kassala*, 29 August 1969; Volume 5 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 229; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

²¹³ Gerrit de Bosch Kemper to High Commissioner, 17 July 1969, *Refugees from Ethiopia - WHO Report*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 225

²¹⁴ Jacques Cuénod - Note for the file - *WHO Report on Nutrition Status of Refugees in Kassala*, 29 August 1969, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 229

²¹⁵ Jan Høst to High Commissioner, 27 June 1970, *New Influx - Refugees*, UNHCR Archive, Series 2, Fonds 11, number 245

for the Eritrean refugees in their mandate, whether that be due to lack of jurisdiction, competency, or funds, without further assistance from other UN-organizations or NGOs.

4.5: Case Study.

*The measures called for to address adequate conditions for protecting the right to life include, where necessary, measures designed to ensure access without delay by individuals to essential goods and services such as food, water, shelter, health care, electricity and sanitation, and other measures designed to promote and facilitate adequate general conditions*²¹⁶

*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.*²¹⁷ This is the third article in the UDHR, which the UN has determined and adamantly stated is “a right that should not be interpreted narrowly.”²¹⁸ As presented in the extract above from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the right to life includes access to essential goods such as food and health services to ensure individuals' health and well-being and to enjoy their right to life with dignity, as well as prevent threats to life from lack of adequate conditions, diseases, or malnutrition.

In this case study of Wad Sharife during the years 1967-1970, it is shown that the UNHCR recognized the urgent need for health services and food supply amongst the refugees in Kassala, and in Wad Sharife. The Eritrean refugees arrived at Wad Sharife in generally bad health, with high cases of tuberculosis, onchocerciasis, and malnutrition, and had fled from gruesome circumstances in which many of them had experienced severe violence and rape and witnessed arbitrary killings of civilians and their villages being destroyed and burned down. The government of Sudan and the local authorities in Kassala, despite their efforts, found the mass influx of refugees to be beyond their financial and administrative scope and were not able to provide enough food and services to the refugees, which was straining their economy. When the UNHCR first arrived at Wad Sharife, the refugees there received only a very small ration of 14lb. of Dura per month, 30% of the refugees had not received any food, and there were no medical facilities at the camp. The refugees' only option for medical attention was a clinic in a nearby Sudanese village, which required payment for their services,

²¹⁶ OHCHR, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Accessed 19.05.2023

URL:

<https://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2FPPrICAqhKb7yhsrdB0H115979OVGGB%2BWPAXhNI9e0rX3eJImWwe%2FGBLmVrGmT01On6KBQgqmxPNiJrLLdefuuQjN19BgOr%2FS93rKPWbCbgoJ4dRgDoh%2FXgwn>

²¹⁷ UN, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. article 3

²¹⁸ OHCHR, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*.

which many of the refugees at Wad Sharife would not be able to pay for. During the three years in which this study takes place, the refugees' access to health services and a sufficient amount of food greatly improved after the UNHCR began their aid. It is undeniable that the emergency relief provided by UNHCR, their advice, and assistance in this situation was essential in the betterment of this access and improved the refugees' ability to experience their right to life.

During the period under study, some aspect of the UNHCR's aid regarding the topic at hand was problematic. Such as their method of mapping out the needs of the refugees through relying on dialogue with the camp leaders and medical staff who were only present in some of the camps, underreporting of diseases and health issues, particularly among women and children, could have occurred. However, this could neither be proven nor disproven due to no randomized health or nutrition test being carried out at the time. Relying solely on one representative to inspect the camps and advise the organization on further action and aid, seemed to influence the allocation of aid based on personal judgments and emotions, potentially leading to uneven distribution. Furthermore, Wad Sharife did not have a medical facility until the Sudanese Red Crescent took over the responsibility of providing the medical dressers. When it came to ensuring food supply and health service, the UNHCR was reliant on other humanitarian organizations in both instances.

This reliance is not necessarily negative, as collaborations with and implementation of NGOs in refugee camps is a critical part of UNHCR's practice, and according to Janmyr, is "perceived as vital to the successful conduct of unhr's programs," and has been since the establishment of the organization.²¹⁹ The UNHCR regards NGOs as largely beneficial as they are less bureaucratic, and, therefore, more efficient and flexible as well as more cost-effective.²²⁰ 1967-1970 encompasses an important time for the UNHCR, where their mandate, power, and role is expanding and changing.²²¹ The UNHCR begin to exercise more power in refugee camps, but the UNHCR still states that "direct implementation" by them, should only occur "in exceptional circumstances."²²² Both Janmyr and Nerland have expressed criticism of the UNHCR's implementation of other NGOs in refugee camps, as no actor is liable for any potential misconduct.²²³ In the case of Wad Sharife and the other

²¹⁹ Janmyr 2014, 46

²²⁰ IDEM, 47

²²¹ Johansen 2020, 177

²²² Johansen 2020, 177:

Janmyr 2014, 47

²²³ Janmyr 2014:

Nerland 2020, 328-329

refugee camps in Kassala, the UNHCR's reliance on other actors did have a detrimental effect.

When the FWP provided food rations to the refugees at Wad Sharife and the other refugee camps in Kassala, the refugees received a sufficient amount of food daily. Their daily food ration was tantamount to 2 000 calories and had some variation, which indicates that the UNHCR, in their collaboration with the FWP, was able to provide adequate food supply to the refugees under their mandate. But, between March 1968 and December 1969, the WFP did not provide food to Eritrean refugees, leading to a food gap, and the UNHCR had to make adjustments in their budget to provide some funds for the purchase of food. However, the food supplies the UNHCR could ensure without assistance from the FWP provision was inadequate and insufficient, 48.6% of the refugee population struggled with PCM, and several children struggled with vitamin A deficiency.

In this case study, the vital role of implementing other humanitarian organizations to ensure the success of UNHCR's program and the UNHCR's reliance on this is demonstrated. Although this reliance and the essential role it played had some limitations, such as the aid gap that occurred when the implemented partner did not provide said aid and the pulverization of responsibility of whom should provide it, it also ensured noticeably improved access to health services and additional food for the refugees. However, was it *adequate* and adequate to the extent that the refugees' right to life could thoroughly be enjoyed?

In regard to health services and food supply, both provisions appear to be adequate once the Sudanese Red Crescent took over the responsibility of providing medical dressers and the WFP provided the food rations. At least, it appears to be through the UNHCR organizational documents. This could be assumed from the organizational documents due to the lack of documents discussing the absence of sufficient health services and the amount of food or a need to provide additional aid in regard to these forms of provision. The WHO report implied that the camps were sufficiently staffed by medical personnel in July 1969, and the Deputy Representative of the UNHCR states that the refugees at Wad Sharife were in "excellent physical conditions" in June 1970. However, as mentioned in the methodology section of this thesis, these organizational documents may be subject to biases, as they were created mainly by UNHCR staff, who might prioritize positive aspects or downplay negative outcomes. Although the Deputy Representative of the UNHCR states that the refugees at Wad Sharife were in "excellent physical conditions," Rogge mentioned that the refugees from Wad Sharife were intended to be used as free labor in building the infrastructure as well

as their homes in Qala-en-Nahal when they were sent there, but that their physical health was too bad.²²⁴ Furthermore, as no randomized health or nutrition inspections were carried out during the implementation of WFP and Sudanese Red Crescent aid, no objective evidence exists for the adequacy or lack thereof.

To adamantly state that the UNHCR was capable of ensuring adequate food supply and health services to the Eritrean refugees under their mandate who were settled in refugee camps in Sudan between 1967-1970 or that they were not would be a stretch and a misrepresentation of the extent of information and evidence on the topic to answer the research question justly. Still, the UNHCR was capable of ensuring medical facilities to Wad Sharife and other camps and provision of food, tantamount to 2 000 calories a day for the refugees, through its advocacy and collaboration, and implementation of other humanitarian organizations. I will therefore claim that the UNHCR was capable of ensuring *improved* food supply and health services to the Eritrean refugees under their mandate who were settled in refugee camps in Sudan between 1967-1970, *improving* the refugees' chances of enjoying their right to life.

Regarding the generalizability of the case study and the findings derived from it, it appears to encompass transferability and could contribute to a broader understanding of UNHCR's aid and assistance in refugee camps for Eritrean refugees in Sudan between 1967-1970. The primary sources from the UNHCR archives suggest similarities in the different camps in Sudan, both contextually and in regard to the organization's processes and operations. However, the generalizability of UNHCR's aid and assistance outside the scope of Eritrean refugee camps in Sudan during this time frame should be exercised with caution and has the potential to be flawed and unfounded. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the broader refugee camp context and UNHCR's aid and assistance in Sudan, the Horn of Africa, and Africa in general, the findings of this case study should be complemented with further research.

Although the refugees' chances of enjoying their right to life had improved within the camps due to the UNHCR's assistance, their right to freedom of movement was still restricted. Drawing on Janmyr's definition of a refugee camp, which includes; "restrictions in freedom of movement and a certain mode of governance and power," it can be argued that breakage of the 13th article in the UDHR, is an inherent aspect of refugee camps and the practice of establishing, managing, assisting in, or settling refugees in them.²²⁵ The

²²⁴ Rogge 1975, 140

²²⁵ Janmyr 2012, 110

emergency aid ensured and provided by the UNHCR and its implemented partners improved the general health and living standards for the refugees in Wad Sharife and the other Eritrean refugee camps in Sudan, but the inherent restrictions in freedom of movement made the camp emergency aid, and makes all assistance through refugee camps; Aid through Confinement.

Chapter 5: Conclusion.

Refugee camps have been widely criticized due to conditions within them, which can leave the refugees vulnerable, and the potential, and many instances of, human rights violations that occur in them. Much of this widespread criticism has been directed towards the UNHCR, both as it is its mandate to protect the refugees and because of their policy of establishing such camps. This thesis has studied UNHCR's aid and assistance to Eritrean refugees in camps in Sudan during the years between 1967-1970. During these years, establishing refugee camps was not the UNHCR's main practice, but the organization was moving towards it.

25th of May 1967, the UNHCR approved an emergency allocation to the Sudanese Government for the mass influx of Eritrean Refugees in their country, and the organization began their aid there shortly after. The mass influx was due to global, international, national, and local circumstances and a "multi-level proxy model," which led to widespread violence and war between the Ethiopian government and the Eritrean nationalist movement, with many Eritreans forced to flee their homes to escape the violence. The Kassala area in Eastern Sudan was, for many Eritreans, the closest and only viable option to flee to, and the area had historical links to cross-border movements between Sudanese and Eritrean people. By the time the UNHCR had approved the emergency allocation, over 20 000 Eritrean refugees had already entered Sudan. The UNHCR allocated some funds for emergency relief to the refugees settled in camps and some for resettlement schemes. The UNHCR aimed to find a permanent solution through self-sufficient agricultural settlement schemes. But in this thesis, the main focus has been on the UNHCR's aid to the refugees settled in camps and if the organization was capable of ensuring their basic needs while they focused on resettlement plans.

To tackle this issue, the research question; "Was the UNHCR capable of ensuring adequate food supply and health services to the Eritrean refugees under their mandate who were settled in refugee camps in Sudan between 1967-1970?" has been explored through the methodology of a quantitative case study of one of the refugee camps in Kassala, Wad Sharife, and was based on organizational documents from the UNHCR archives in Geneva. The findings from the case study appear to be mainly generalizable to other refugee camps in the area but might be limited in this regard to UNHCR's assistance in refugee camps outside of Sudan and beyond the time frame of this thesis.

In conclusion, the case study illustrates that the UNHCR recognized the urgent need

for health services and food supply among Eritrean refugees who initially had limited access to food and medical facilities. The refugees at Wad Sharife were in general bad health, and the local and national authorities in Sudan struggled to meet the refugees' needs. The UNHCR's aid improved access to health services and increased food supply over these three years. However, some aspects were worth critiquing, such as their method of conducting studies of the refugees' needs which could lead to potential underreporting and potential uneven distribution of aid. The UNHCR relied on collaboration with other IGOs and NGOs for assistance. The study highlights the vital role of implementing other organizations but also acknowledges the drawbacks. The UNHCR's reliance on partners led to gaps in aid provision without them, but the implementation of the Sudanese Red Crescent and the WFP as partners were essential in ensuring the provision of food and health services. However, the adequacy of these provisions, and to the extent that the refugees' right to life could fully be enjoyed, would be too vague to determine adamantly with the extent of information and evidence retrieved from the organizational documents from the UNHCR archives. The conclusion of this thesis therefore is:

The UNHCR was capable of ensuring improved food supply and health services to the Eritrean refugees under their mandate who were settled in refugee camps in Sudan between 1967-1970, improving the refugees' chances of enjoying their right to life.

Regardless of this improvement, the study also points out the inherent restriction on freedom of movement in refugee camps, making assistance through camps a form of "*Aid through Confinement.*"

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Reference: 11/2/10-100.SUD.ETH[b]

Date: 1967-1967

Location: Fonds 11/Series 2/Box 179 ARC-2/A43

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²²⁶ I follow the UNHCR archives Citation Rules in regards to the documents utilized in this thesis which has been obtained from the UNHCR archives in Geneva in both the bibliography and the footnotes. For this reason, the citation of these sources differs in some aspects from the rest.

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Jan Høst, Deputy Representative, Khartoum to High Commissioner, 27 June 1970, *New Influx - Ethiopian Refugees*; Volume 5 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 245; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Title: Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan [Volume 6 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH]

Reference: 11/2/10-100.SUD.ETH[f]

Date: 1970-1974

Location: Fonds 11/Series 2/Box 180 ARC-2/A43

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T. El Kogali, Deputy Representative to UNHCR Headquarters, 17 August 1974, *Ethiopian refugees - new arrivals*; Volume 6 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 316; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Title: Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan [Volume 16 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH]

Reference: 11/2/10-100.SUD.ETH[p]

Date: 1980-1981

Location: Fonds 11/Series 2/Box 182 ARC-2/A43

UNHCR Khartoum to UNHCR Geneva, 18 August 1981; Volume 16 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 861a; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Title: Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan [Volume 17 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH]

Reference: 11/2/10-100.SUD.ETH[q]

Date: 1981-1983

Location: Fonds 11/Series 2/Box 182 ARC-2/A43

Muller UNHCR Khartoum to UNHCR Geneva, 16 June 1982; Volume 17 - 15/SUD/ETH - 1.SUD.ETH Refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan; Series 11/2 - Classified subject files, 1971-1984; Number 873; Fonds 11 Records of the Central Registry; Archives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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Appendix:

Map 1: Kassala Province



Google maps, Kassala State, Accessed May, 8, 2023.

URL:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kassala,+Sudan/@15.6455361,35.0991421,7.54z/data=!4m6!3m5!1s0x1663dcfa9b9a77c1:0x72021ace9cc5101c!8m2!3d15.8058472!4d35.5657862!16zL20vMDM5dmtk?hl=no>

Personalized annotations: Adding the location of Wad Sharife, dotting the border line between Ethiopia and Eritrea, replacing the word “Eritrea” with “Ethiopia Eritrean-area,” and adding the names of the countries.

Personalized annotations were added to showcase the location of the refugee camp the case study is based on, and to closer resemble and contextualize the historical position and circumstances.

Map 2: Wad Sharife



Google maps, Kassala, Accessed May, 8, 2023.

URL: <https://www.google.com/maps/@15.4020241,36.4546273,10.52z?hl=no>

Personalized annotations: Adding the location and a closer picture of Wad Sharif, dotting the border line between Sudan and Eritrea, and adding the name of the Gash-Basin next to it and the names of the countries.

Personalized annotations were added to showcase the location of the refugee camp the case study is based on, and the area around.