

# Tigray Situation Update

13 August 2021



*Eritrean refugees, who fled to Addis Ababa from the destroyed Shimelba and Hitsats camps in northern Tigray, receive three-year identification documents so that they can access assistance, services, and protection. © UNHCR/Olga Sarrado.*

## Background and key developments

Military confrontations between federal and regional forces in Ethiopia's Tigray region, which borders both Sudan and Eritrea, led the Government to declare a State of Emergency on 4 November 2020, Nine months into the conflict, and despite the announcement of an official end to the law enforcement operation declared in late November, the overall security and access situation remain complex and fluid, hindering effective delivery of humanitarian assistance to the most affected populations in Central, Southern-Eastern, Eastern, North-Western and Southern Zones. On 28 June 2021, the Ethiopia National Defense Forces (ENDF) withdrew from Mekelle city, the capital of Tigray region and later announced a unilateral ceasefire. Tigray region is now under the control and administration of the new (de facto) Tigray authorities. On 13 July, a new offensive was launched two weeks after the ceasefire as Tigray forces seized Alamata, the main town in southern Tigray. The frontline has

reportedly shifted to south of Mai Tsebri and around Adi Arkay, with active conflict ongoing. Of particular concern are the two Eritrean refugee camps of Mai Aini and Adi Harush and the safety and wellbeing of refugees. While the necessity to move refugees out of harm's way as soon as possible, the humanitarian response in the region remains challenged by a lack of access to provide adequate assistance, disrupted supply chains, and limited communication services due to continuing and highly volatile situation across the region. On 30 July, the Ethiopian government suspended international aid groups Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) from working in the country for three months, amid an escalating humanitarian crisis in the country's northern regions. During his visit to Ethiopia from 29 July to 4 August, the Under Secretary General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths held meetings with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Peace to discuss the humanitarian situation in the country and the challenges aid organizations face in getting assistance to Ethiopians. During his two-day trip to Tigray, he also visited the Meywani IDP site in Mekelle. The visit was arranged by the CCCM cluster in close coordination with OCHA and the cluster partners. Martin Griffiths had two separate meetings with female and male IDPs and noted the major concerns faced by the displaced in the collective sites. The USG was alarmed by the lack of humanitarian access and the fact that not enough trucks were allowed to transport relief items and the challenges in transporting functioning communication equipment. He said that around 400,000 people are living in famine conditions in Tigray, and more than 90% of the population needs emergency food aid.

## Displacement figures

Ethiopia is home to some 150,000 registered Eritrean refugees across the country. Before the conflict erupted in the Tigray region in November 2020, UNHCR had registered 95,929 Eritrean refugees in Tigray and 54,183 in Afar with a small population of 7,800 living outside of camp settings under the Out of Camp Policy (OCP). At the outset of the crisis, UNHCR confirmed 59,759 refugees as the baseline for the refugee population known to be in Tigray.

According to [OCHA Situation Report](#), the conflict in Tigray has displaced estimated 2.1 million people in Tigray region.

## Operational response

### Refugee response



#### POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

##### Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps

- On 30 July, UNHCR and partner staff were able to access the Mai Tsebri camps from Shire following clearance by local authorities. The last time UNHCR had access to the camps was on 13 July.
- The general food distribution for July started on 5 August. As of 10 August, a total of 8,362 individuals had received their food ration in Mai Aini and 3,778 individuals (1,442 families) in Adi Harush had collected their monthly rations so far.

- The security situation in Debark, Amhara region, is assessed as calm. UNHCR and partners are currently being mobilized to provide much needed water and health services, as plans for relocation to the new camp are underway.
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted as part of the rapid protection assessments in both camps to gather information on the situation on the ground after weeks of absence from the camps due to the escalation of the Tigray conflict into the area. The FGDs were carried out with refugee representatives and two randomly selected refugee groups in Adi Harush (15 male, 10 female) and Mai Aini (12 male and 10 female) with the aim to help initiate the process of organizing a detailed survey. While the duration of the survey is not yet determined, UNHCR Protection team is currently reviewing the methodology for the survey.
- As of 9 August, a total of 126 refugees and asylum-seekers have been relocated to the temporary accommodation site in Dabat, Amhara region, with 14 new arrivals and 4 new-borns recorded in the past week. UNHCR requested ARRA, the national Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs, to facilitate documentation of asylum-seekers and new-borns.

### Addis Ababa

- Eritrean refugees who have relocated from closed Hitsats and Shimelba Camps in northern Tigray that had been destroyed in January 2021 are being verified by ARRA and UNHCR. Total of 11,355 refugees (53%) from those camps have been identified and 8,899 refugees are still unaccounted for. Women, children at-risk and single parents comprise the majority among the persons with specific needs in this group. . 95% of those who were verified have requested Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP) documents.

Since 4 August, UNHCR has started a documentation exercise for Eritrean refugees who self-relocated to Addis Ababa from the former Shimelba and Hitsats camps, at the Organisation for Women in Self Employment (WISE) office. The first phase will process 5,121 identified individuals (3,138 households). Out of this group, 3,996 individuals aged 14 years and above will be issued with refugee identification documents. By 7 August, 831 individuals (532 households) have received a new refugee ID, and 61 individuals (46 households) have been issued with a new proof of registration. Overall, 514 individuals have been identified with at least one specific need. Partnership with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE) ensured that 520 refugee household representatives could open bank accounts to facilitate transfer of cash assistance from UNHCR.

### Alemwach refugee camp

- UNHCR, ARRA and partners have completed Stage I of the implementation of activities in all seven sites in Dabat for the new Alemwach refugee camp, in Amhara region. UNHCR and partners are working on mobilizing resources to prioritize activities in Alemwach site. The construction of 60 hangers with adequate sanitation facilities is planned to accommodate an expected 20,000 refugees to be relocated from Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps, when the security situation allows.
- UNHCR is consolidating plans of partners, IHS and ANE, for site development to facilitate monitoring of ongoing works and completion timelines. Meanwhile, Stage II site preparation works have started to improve 8 hectares of land, as well as access roads, which will facilitate construction of hangers, rub halls and sanitation facilities.

## Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) response



### PROTECTION

- At the request of the regional authorities, UNHCR and Protection Cluster partners have begun with the planning for the enrolment of IDPs in support to the Regional Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BOLSA).
- The UNHCR IDP Protection and Solutions Strategy for Tigray has been finalized, including key components of IDP returns and advocacy plans on protection. As Cluster lead, UNHCR will enhance external protection reporting and maintain a strong focus and advocacy, with local authorities, for the needs of persons of concern - to ramp up programmes to combat gender-based violence and enhance child protection services, protection mainstreaming and pursue security/civilian and humanitarian character of IDP sites.
- UNHCR established 40 protection desks in IDP sites in Shire (18) and Mekelle (22). IDPs receive information on protection, including relocation to established IDP sites. UNHCR, through its partners, has identified 5,000 persons with specific needs. Some 4,000 vulnerable children including unaccompanied children, children-headed households, children with chronic illnesses and others have been identified and are currently being assisted.
- Partners in the area of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are training social workers and health service providers from hospitals and other health facilities across Tigray in addressing gender-based violence in emergencies (GBViE). Dignity kits are being distributed, and a safe house and four safe spaces have been set up in IDP sites for women and girls.
- Messages on Emergency Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) in Tigray have been prepared by UNHCR, UNMAS and UNICEF, and the Protection Cluster is organizing training sessions with IDPs.



### SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)

- UNHCR has installed tents in 8 IDP sites in Shire to serve as offices for IDP representatives nominated by the communities to support CCCM activities in the sites.
- All 12 UNHCR trucks that had been sent from Addis Ababa, via Semera, with an WFP convoy, have reached Mekelle. The trucks were carrying Core Relief Items (CRIs) for around 7,750 Households. UNHCR Addis Ababa Office is working to dispatch additional CRIs to the region. Procurement of 50,000 additional kits for distribution to 250,000 individuals is underway.
- 5,000 household kits for 28,000 refugees have been dispatched from Addis Ababa to Dabat. Additional 15,750 CRI kits (for 78,750 individuals) are currently being distributed to IDPs.
- UNHCR is prepositioning CRI's for 10,000 Households in various locations through Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). The distribution will be done after assessment through UNHCR partners or joint assessment with RRM in different locations in Mekelle and Shire areas.

## Issues and Operational challenges

- While movement within Tigray is unimpeded, as of the second week of August, the access from Afar region to Tigray, via the road from Semera, the capital of Afar, remains restricted for security reasons. This prevents delivery of food stocks, fuel, communication equipment and other humanitarian goods to Tigray. On 10 August, nine UNHCR staff reached Mekelle on an UNHAS flight, while a flight scheduled for 12 August was cancelled.
- The limitations of telecommunication is a major operational challenge. There is no phone network and only limited VSATs are operational in the Tigray region. With city power being unavailable in Mekelle for the past few days, UNHCR office is running on a generator with a break during lunchtime. UNHCR provides internet access to UN agencies, NGOs (partners and non-partners) at its offices. Scarcity of fuel and cash continues to impact effective provision of many humanitarian services. UNHCR and other agencies will not be able to operate imminently and efficiently if additional supplies are not delivered.

## Ethiopia Emergency Situation Funding Update

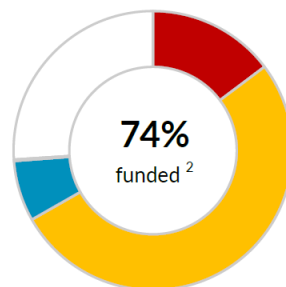
(As of 27 July 2021)

On 10 August, UNHCR appealed for US\$ 164.5 million to assist 96,000 Eritrean refugees and 650,000 internally displaced people in Ethiopia's Tigray region and up to 120,000 Ethiopian refugees in eastern Sudan. Some US\$101.3 million, or 61% of the Appeal, will help provide essential aid such as shelter, domestic items and protection, including support for survivors of gender-based violence, inside Tigray. The overall appeal is currently 74% funded. UNHCR Ethiopia would like to express its – gratitude, for the funding received for its Ethiopia operation, to all donors, particularly the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), EU ECHO, Japan, Norway, and the United States of America, alongside situation level funding from Finland, France, Luxembourg, and from Private donors.



**\$99.0 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2021 <sup>1</sup>



FUNDING UPDATE | 2021

**ETHIOPIA  
EMERGENCY**

as of 27 July 2021

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

**CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>3</sup> | USD**

	■ Unearmarked	■ Softly earmarked	■ Earmarked	■ Tightly earmarked	Total
United States of America	-	-	19,130,000	-	19,130,000
European Union	-	-	-	3,789,384	3,789,384
Finland	-	2,389,486	-	-	2,389,486
Norway	-	-	1,219,066	-	1,219,066
Japan	-	-	-	1,100,000	1,100,000
UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe	-	866,882	-	-	866,882
United Kingdom	-	-	810,811	-	810,811
Italy	-	-	-	586,166	586,166
CERF	-	-	-	500,000	500,000
Education Cannot Wait	-	-	-	500,000	500,000
Médecins Sans Frontières	-	-	-	365,625	365,625
France	-	351,700	-	-	351,700
Novo Nordisk Foundation	-	327,004	-	-	327,004
United Kingdom for UNHCR	-	315,472	-	-	315,472
Luxembourg	-	305,998	-	-	305,998
Australia for UNHCR	-	248,720	-	-	248,720
Private donors Canada	-	185,054	-	-	185,054
Latter-day Saints Charities	-	-	-	172,200	172,200
UNHCR Insamlingsstiftelse	-	149,459	-	-	149,459
Liechtenstein	-	110,375	-	-	110,375
Private donors USA	-	100,000	-	-	100,000
Other private donors	-	287,745	-	-	287,745
<b>Sub-total</b>	-	<b>5,637,896</b>	<b>21,159,877</b>	<b>7,013,376</b>	<b>33,811,149</b>
Indicative allocation of funds and adjustments <sup>6</sup>	135,103	1,337,827	30,364,666	7,576,919	39,414,515
<b>Total</b>	<b>135,103</b>	<b>6,975,723</b>	<b>51,524,543</b>	<b>14,590,294</b>	<b>73,225,664</b>

Methodology: Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritised activities. This funding update includes an indicative allocation of funds so as to accurately represent the resources available for the situation. The contributions earmarked for the Ethiopia Emergency shown above are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions listed below. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking. Adjustments relate to programme support costs and carry-over.

**■ OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>4</sup> | USD**

United States of America 169.5 million | Private donors Australia 6 million | Canada 5.8 million | Sweden 3.5 million | Denmark 2.9 million | Switzerland 2 million

IGAD | Ireland | Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors

**■ UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>5</sup> | USD**

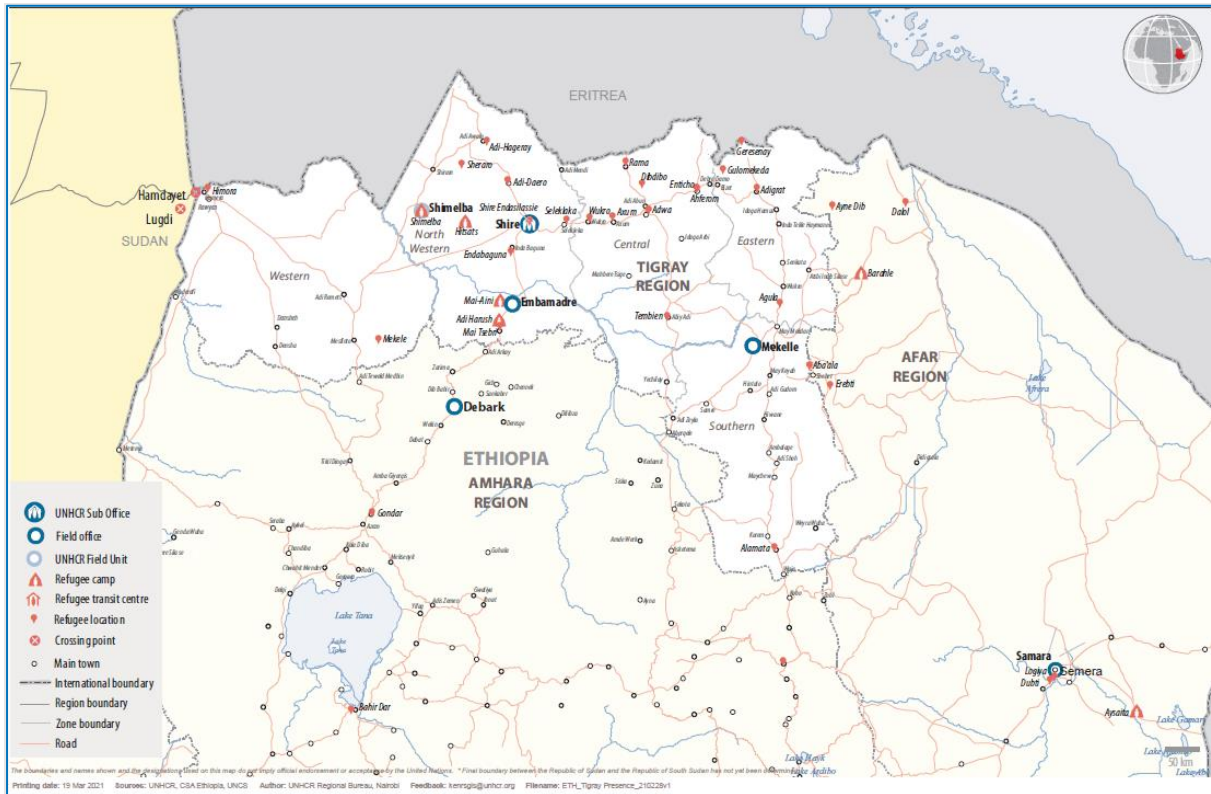
Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Private donors Spain 42.6 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 26 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 21.5 million | France 20 million | Private donors Japan 17.6 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million | Private donors Sweden 10.6 million | Private donors Italy 10.4 million

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | South Africa | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

**Notes:**

- The financial requirements of the Ethiopia Emergency include requirements in Ethiopia and Sudan.
- The percentage funded (74%) and total funding amount (\$73,225,664) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$25,765,892 representing 26% of the financial requirements.
- Contributions to the Ethiopia Emergency are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.
- Due to their earmarking at a related region, sub-region, country or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for the Ethiopia Emergency. Where a donor has contributed \$2 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.
- Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contributed \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.
- Includes an adjustment for generous contributions from Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom that were received and acknowledged in 2020, but that can be used in 2021, thereby increasing the funds available to the Ethiopia Emergency Situation in 2021.

# Ethiopia operation: UNHCR presence in Tigray



In Tigray region, UNHCR has Sub-Offices in Shire and Mekelle, where the Agency is scaling up its presence to meet the current protection and humanitarian needs of refugees and IDPs. UNHCR has utilized its operational hub in Debarke, Amhara, and significant operational presence in Mai Tsebri to support the services in Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps. On 9 August, UNHCR opened eight Field Units led by team leaders and partners in Mekelle, Abi-Adi, Adigrat, Maychew, Shire Sheraro, Axum and, remotely due to security concerns, in Dansha. Moreover, UNHCR has consolidated its leadership for operational response and protection cluster. Currently, UNHCR has 120 staff operational in Tigray and additional 9 dedicated staff for the Tigray response working remotely until travel arrangements are concluded; additional 10 staff are on standby to be deployed as soon as visas are secured.

## CONTACTS

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## LINKS

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