

NORTHERN ETHIOPIA EMERGENCY SITUATION

10 November 2022

ETHIOPIA

Recent developments

On 2 November, the Ethiopian government and the TPLF agreed to a cessation of hostilities; a key outcome of the African Union led peace talks in South Africa. On 7 November, the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) began discussions in Nairobi to work out the disarmament plan and other implementation details of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. The discussions will also look into how the Agreement will be monitored as well as the resumption of humanitarian aid, access, and basic services in Ethiopia. On 10 November, media reports emerged stating the extension of the peace talks in Nairobi until Thursday 11 November. While discussions were ongoing in Nairobi, the security situation remained calm in UNHCR operating areas in the three regions of northern Ethiopia (Tigray, Amhara and Afar). No security incident has been reported since 4 November.

Several members of the Emergency Directors Group are on mission in Ethiopia and visited Dabat in the Amhara region on 9 November. The mission is led by OCHA's Director of Operations and Advocacy and includes UNHCR's Director of Emergency, Security and Supply Division and several international NGOs. The Emergency Directors visited the Shimelaku site in Dabat hosting 2,220 IDPs from Tigray region and held focus group discussions with Eritrean refugees. The delegation also visited Alemwach site. The objective of the mission was to review what additional internal measures can be undertaken to rapidly and more substantially scale-up the international humanitarian response across northern Ethiopia in support of the Government of Ethiopia.

UNHCR response

On 27 October, the general food distribution in Alemwach settlement, Amhara, was finalized for the months of September and October. A total of 10,421 refugees received food rations.

On 1 November, UNHCR and the Refugee and Returnee Service (RRS) jointly facilitated the first relocation of refugees to Amhara from the Mai Tsebri camps in Tigray (Adi Harush and Mai Aini) since the start of the conflict in November 2020. As of 10 November, 4,055 out of 6,000 refugees remaining in the two camps had been relocated to Alemwach settlement. Health screening of the relocated refugees is being carried out by partner Medical Teams International (MTI).

UNHCR continued to support the Government-led voluntary returns of IDPs in Amhara. As of 9 November, all 8,500 IDPs in Jara site had returned to their homes, including some 3,430 who were provided with transportation, with others moving by their own means.

From 28 October to 1 November, UNHCR Protection and CCCM Cluster teams in Afar, jointly with OCHA, and other Clusters conducted a Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) in Barhale and Abala woredas. The aim was to identify key priority needs of IDPs to inform strategic response planning. UNHCR carried out key informant interviews with woreda authorities and focus group discussions with displaced persons at three informal IDP settlements in Berhale and Abala areas. There are urgent and critical needs to be addressed in a number of sectors including Food/Nutrition, CRIs, WASH, Health, and Livelihood.

Also, in Afar, UNHCR and other partners are supporting RRS and the regional authorities to identify and relocate Eritrean refugees who had been secondarily displaced due to the conflict, to Serdo, Semera, Logya and other locations in the region. Some 26,000 Eritrean refugees were registered in different locations in Afar prior to the conflict. The first convoy departed from Semera and Logya on 8 November to Barahle with 72 Eritrean refugees. A second convoy transported 244 refugees on 10 November. UNHCR and partner Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) were part of the convoys to monitor persons with specific needs, as well as RRS, local authorities and IOM. The relocation will continue until 18 November as several convoys are planned to move refugees either to Barahle or Serdo, depending on their destination of choice. Before the fighting resumed in August, RRS had registered over 2,000 refugees from Serdo and surrounding host communities who indicated a desire to relocate.

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