

NORTHERN ETHIOPIA EMERGENCY SITUATION

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ETHIOPIA

Recent developments

Core relief items were dispatched to Tigray. Three UNHCR trucks carrying medicines, shelter kits, clothes and soaps that left Addis Ababa for Tigray (via Semera) arrived in Mekelle on 19 November, the first convoy since August 2022. In addition, Core Relief Items (CRI) for 50,000 families were dispatched from Addis Ababa to Tigray. On 22 November, four additional UNHCR trucks carrying shelter kits, soap and clothes arrived in Shire having entered Tigray through the Gondar (Amhara) – Mai Tsebri (Tigray) route. As this report was going to publish, another thirteen UNHCR trucks with medicine, kitchen sets, soap, clothes, jerry cans and mosquito nets are enroute to Tigray; seven for Mekelle and six for Shire.

This came following the signing of the “The Declaration of the Senior Commanders on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Agreement for Lasting Peace Through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities,” on 12 November. The agreement includes four elements, including the Permanent Cessation of Hostilities, Disarmament of Tigray Armed Combatants, Protection of Civilians and Delivery of Humanitarian Aid.

The situation in Tigray remains calm as humanitarian agencies begin to gain access to some of the areas that had been inaccessible for the past three months.

On 17 November, UNHCR teams in Shire conducted joint assessment missions with other agencies to Sheraro and Mai Tsebri. The team were briefed on the dire situation on the ground and the urgent need for food, water, medicines, and core relief items. UNHCR and partners are organizing the resumption of activities in these areas.

On 16 November, fifteen WFP trucks carrying food aid entered Tigray through Gondar in Amhara for the first time since June 2021. WFP also dispatched the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) as a test flight with no passengers on board which landed in Shire.

UNHCR was also able to relocate the rest of the Eritrean refugees from Mai Ani and Adi Harush camps in Tigray to Alemwach refugee settlement in Amhara; a total of 7,080 individuals were transferred. The Alemwach site now hosts 22,286 refugees. Shelter, core relief items and food have been provided for all refugees.

On 23 November, the Chief Executive Officer of Ethiopian Airlines Group announced that “preparation is underway to resume regular flights to Tigray Region”, which will play an “important role in facilitating delivery of humanitarian aid”. He mentioned that Mekelle and Shire airports are in good condition to resume flights.

UNHCR response

During the reporting period, UNHCR’s together with UNDSS and other agencies, undertook an assessment mission in Mekelle operating areas, including Maichew, Abi Adi and Adigrat. Preliminary results of the mission show that the areas are accessible and UNHCR Field Offices have not been vandalised or looted. According to the mission report, there are 158,000 IDPs who have not received any assistance from the humanitarian community. UNHCR is mobilizing resources and partners to respond to IDPs in these areas. Registration is ongoing in Mekelle by the city administration, and they have reportedly registered 300,670 new IDPs in the seven sub-cities of Mekelle.

On 18-19 November, in Shire, UNHCR conducted a joint mission to Sheraro with government officials from Ministry of Water Resources and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to understand the humanitarian situation in two IDP sites. The mission observed that IDPs are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Some facilities like water tanks, solar streetlights were found damaged and or looted. A joint mission was also conducted to Mai Tsebri with partners Medical Teams International (MTI), IRC and government officials from Ministry of Water Resources. The team visited IDP sites, refugee camps as well as UNHCR offices. The UNHCR offices were found ransacked with some items looted and damaged.

On 21 November, in Mekelle, as part of a joint Assessment and Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) mission to Adigrat, UNHCR distributed core relief items to 300 new IDP households and 500 most vulnerable urban refugees and asylum seekers. While some 300 women and girls also received Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) kits, the Adigrat One Stop Center received 200 full dignity kits for GBV cases.

The return of IDPs from Kulichmeda IDP site is completed with 3,691 IDPs assisted by UNHCR to return to Adi Arkay, Zarima, Dima, Telemt and Mai Tsebri. A residual population of 250 IDPs are left in the sites who are originally from Sheraro in Tigray and not willing to return yet. Some essential services such as water and health are no longer available in the site. UNHCR teams are working with partners and the authorities to ensure these residual population continues to receive assistance and protection until a solution is found for them. The zonal Disaster Risk Management Offices (DRMO) officials indicated that a rapid assessment was carried out in Adi Arkay and Mai Tsebri woredas. The results showed that most amenities such as schools, water systems and health facilities are not functional as they were destroyed during the conflict. In the two assessed woredas, there are 180 destroyed shelters and 123 partially damaged shelters. There is need to consider recovery and solutions interventions in the return areas such as agriculture and livelihood support.

In **Amhara**, medical and nutrition screening of relocated refugees continue with Medical Teams International (MTI) as well as mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and medical referrals. A total of 3,743 refugees living in Alemwach have been medically screened and 496 were given treatment in recent weeks. Some 505 children were screened for acute malnutrition wherein 39 were found moderately and severely malnourished. Some 29 women screened were also found moderately malnourished. Six medical cases have been referred to Gondar.

On 12 November, UNHCR, through the Refugee Returnee Service (RRS), donated 362 cartons of medicines to the Dabat Health Centre and the Primary Hospital. It is the second batch of medications and medical supplies donated to these hospitals.

In **Afar**, the relocation is ongoing for Eritrean refugees requesting to go back to Barahle. UNHCR together with RRS have relocated more than 630 people from Semera and Logiya to Barahle thus far. UNHCR provided cash assistance to all the refugees and IOM distributed high energy biscuits and diapers.

On 16 November, the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator (DHC) visited Serdo refugee site together with RRS, partners Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) and Development and Interchurch AID Commission (DICAC). On the site, he acknowledged the progress made as 317 weather friendly shelters have been constructed and 203 additional ones will be constructed by the end of the year.

The Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Commission Office (DRMFSC) requested UNHCR's support to return the IDPs living in Agatina IDP site and other locations to their areas of origin including Konneba, Barhale and Abala. UNHCR Mekelle and Semera teams are jointly working on a return plan.

UNHCR donated eight air conditioners to Afar Regional Bureau of Health. The AC equipment will be installed in the warehouse of the Regional Health Bureau where essential drugs and medical items are stored prior to distribution to host communities, refugees, and internally displaced persons.

Contacts:

Joyce Wayua Munyao-Mbithi, Senior Donor Relations Officer, Regional Bureau for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes, Nairobi - munyao@unhcr.org ;

Kabami Kalumiya, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for the East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes, Nairobi - kalumiya@unhcr.org