

Tigray Situation Update

3rd June 2021



UNHCR and partners distributed aid such as blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets, buckets and soap to internally displaced persons in the town of Axum in Tigray on 20 May, 2021. © UNHCR/Lana Chouhfeh.

Background and key developments

On 4 November 2020, 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. Since then, and despite the announcement of an official end to the law enforcement operation in late November, [large areas of Ethiopia's Tigray regions are still affected by armed clashes and insecurity](#), leading to further forced displacement of the population – particularly in Western Tigray.

OCHA reports that while there are some improvements on humanitarian access in Tigray, the situation remains fluid and unpredictable. Blockades by military forces have in late May severely impeded access in rural areas, where humanitarian needs are most severe. In addition, armed hostilities continue in North-Western, Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Zones, while the humanitarian needs are soaring.

Displacement figures

Ethiopia is home to **182,853** Eritrean refugees across the country, equal to 22% of the total refugee population in Ethiopia of 814,535. Before the conflict erupted in the Tigray region in November 2020, UNHCR had registered 96,223 Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region, sheltered in four refugee camps in the western part of the region: Mai Aini (21,682), Adi Harush (32,167), Shimelba (8,702) and Hitsats (25,248). As of 30 May 2021, there are 87,420 refugees in Tigray region.

According to the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA) and the Early Warning Response (EWR) regional directorate of the National Disaster and Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), the conflict in Tigray has displaced **some estimated 1.7 million people**.

Operational response

Refugee response



POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps

- The relocation of Eritrean refugees from Shire to the southern camps of Mai Aini and Adi Harush resumed during the week of 15 May. Refugees are provided with transport at least twice a week. As of 31 May, a total of 8,359 refugees (4,173 households) have been relocated to the two camps.
- New arrivals in the refugee camps are provided with emergency shelter, core relief items and food upon arrival in the camps. However, most of the refugees, recently being relocated, are joining relatives who are already living in the two camps and are therefore not provided with shelter. Additionally, refugees have access to essential services which have been re-established in Tigray, including primary schools which have re-opened in the refugee camps.

Addis Ababa

- The identification exercise of refugees from Hitsats and Shimelba resumed 20 May, after a two-week's temporary suspension due to COVID-19 measures. By 28 May, a total of 3,428 individuals (1,955 households) had been identified. Of those identified, the majority express the intention to have temporary residence in Addis Ababa, while others either request to be safely returned to the camps or to be supported in obtaining an "Out of camp"-policy (OCP) document that require self-reliance. Women, children and single parents remain the main population group at risk.



PROTECTION

- UNHCR together with ARRA (Ethiopia's Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs) and partners continue to provide protection services including psychosocial counselling and individual case management to refugees in the Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps.



EDUCATION

- UNHCR and partners, including ARRA and IRC, together with refugee representatives and leaders from the Kunama ethnic group are exploring solutions to address the learning needs of children from this community. UNHCR is working with partners to advocate for a system and curriculum that allows for the children to attend school, removing barriers related to differences in languages and curriculum.



FOOD SECURITY

- General food distribution for the month of May is completed in Mai Aini camp, reaching 13,010 refugees, while distribution is still ongoing in Adi Harush.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) response



POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

- BoLSA estimates more than 1.7 million people have been displaced by the conflict situation in Tigray. According to UNHCR's information, displaced persons and families continue to arrive and seek safety in the already existing sites hosting internally displaced persons in Shire, Mekelle and other locations.

**PROTECTION**

- Following the arrests of a number of internally displaced persons in Tsehaye and Adi Wenfito sites in Shire on 25 May by soldiers, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator [issued a statement](#), condemning the arbitrary arrests and urging all parties to protect the civilian population. Following the incident, and as leader of the Protection Cluster, UNHCR is engaging with partners and advocating with local and regional authorities, to emphasize the protection of civilian and humanitarian spaces and to ensure the human rights and due process of persons being detained.
- UNHCR and partners have conducted a survey amongst internally displaced persons in Shire (276 participants). 70% expressed feeling unsafe in the sites, where they are sheltered, due to presence of armed intruders in the camp. The survey also showed that only 60% of the IDPs are in possession of a national ID.
- UNHCR has produced and put up banners with the text “No Guns / Civilian and Humanitarian Site” (in English, Amharic and Tigrinya languages) in all 15 IDP sites within Shire, and additional banners will be put up in locations and cities where IDPs are reported to be residing
- Displaced women of reproductive age in the town of Adwa and in three sites in Axum benefitted from the distribution of 1,015 dignity kits through Mums for Mums program set up by the GBV partners. A new initiative to raise public awareness on GBV-services as well as mental health and psychosocial support was initiated through radio broadcasts in the region.
- The Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, is working to identify unaccompanied and separated children, conducting family tracing, and facilitating recreational activities for children at child-friendly spaces as well as providing psychosocial support for both children and adults.
- Elections of representatives for the internally displaced communities were concluded on 21 May in all 15 sites across Shire town. This is part of the step-up efforts to improve and strengthen community structures among the displaced communities. UNHCR is supporting the newly elected representatives with capacity building to facilitate them in their new roles and responsibility.

**SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRI)**

- In Shire, UNHCR together with partner NRC have completed construction of 250 emergency shelters in the new Five Angels site. A total of 460 shelters (93%) of the initial

target of 500 emergency shelters have been completed by different partners. Following advocacy by UNHCR and others, the government has approved an extension to the Five Angels site which will increase the capacity to accommodate an additional 3,000 families.

- In Mekelle, a total of 2,000 (85%) emergency shelters out of the planned 3,300 shelters in, have been completed in the new Sabacare site, which is planned to host 19,000 internally displaced persons. The construction of latrines/showers and water reservoir tanks are planned to be completed by mid-June. Together with partner ANE, UNHCR is also constructing two community centers and installing solar lights. In preparation for the relocation process, UNHCR and Partners facilitated a visit to the site by the community representatives.
- By end-May 2021, UNHCR and partners have distributed CRIs to more than 9,000 IDP households in Tigray, thus reaching approximately 37,000 individuals in locations such as Shire, Axum, Adi Daero and Adwa. More distributions will follow.



FOOD SECURITY

- Reports by OCHA indicate that more than 20,000 metric tons of food for the first round of assistance for 2021 have been distributed, reaching 1.2 million people across Tigray. Food security partners include the National Disasters Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), the Joint Emergency Operation Program (JEOP) funded by USAID and implemented by NGOs, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

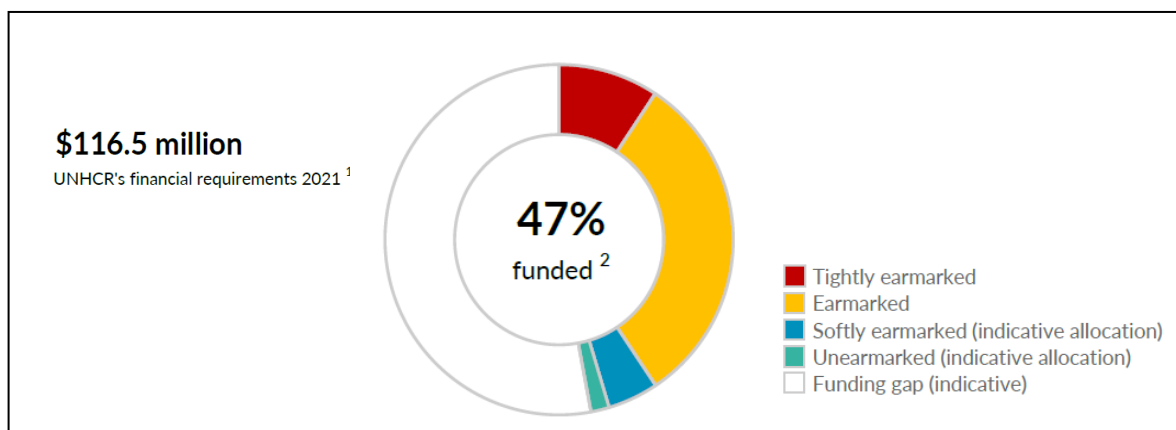
Issues and Operational challenges

- Humanitarian access in the Tigray region is intermittent and unpredictable, with many of the rural areas inaccessible and several urban locations not reachable for several weeks at a time. Armed conflict and arbitrary denial of access by armed forces remains the main access impediment.
- More than six months into the conflict, many rural areas and several urban locations in Tigray remain cut-off from communications and electricity, impacting e.g. access to health services and water supply.

Ethiopia Emergency Situation Funding Update

(As of 1st June 2021)

The UNHCR Regional Appeal for the Ethiopia Emergency Situation (Tigray) highlights the needs of approximately \$116.5 million for Ethiopia and Sudan. The overall appeal is currently 47% funded. UNHCR Ethiopia would like to express its thanks to funding received for Ethiopia specifically from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), ECHO, Japan, Norway, and the United States of America (USA), alongside situation level funding from Finland, France, Luxembourg, and private donors.



CONTRIBUTIONS³ | USD

	■ Unearmarked	■ Softly earmarked	■ Earmarked	■ Tightly earmarked	Total
United States of America	-	-	19,130,000	-	19,130,000
European Union	-	-	-	3,688,984	3,688,984
Finland	-	2,389,486	-	-	2,389,486
Norway	-	-	1,167,815	-	1,167,815
Japan	-	-	-	1,100,000	1,100,000
UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe	-	866,882	-	-	866,882
United Kingdom	-	-	810,811	-	810,811
Italy	-	-	-	586,166	586,166
Education Cannot Wait	-	-	-	500,000	500,000
France	-	351,700	-	-	351,700
Novo Nordisk Foundation	-	327,004	-	-	327,004
Luxembourg	-	305,998	-	-	305,998
Latter-day Saints Charities	-	-	-	172,200	172,200
Australia for UNHCR	-	157,658	-	-	157,658
Liechtenstein	-	110,375	-	-	110,375
Private donors USA	-	100,000	-	-	100,000
Other private donors	-	237,463	-	-	237,463
Sub-total	-	4,846,566	21,108,626	6,047,351	32,002,543
Indicative allocation of funds and adjustments ⁶	1,986,254	646,307	15,386,687	4,795,094	22,814,344
Total	1,986,254	5,492,874	36,495,313	10,842,445	54,816,886

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 CONTRIBUTIONS⁴ | USD

United States of America 42.2 million | **Canada** 8.7 million | **Private donors Australia** 3.7 million | **Sweden** 3.5 million | **Denmark** 2.9 million | **Switzerland** 2 million

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

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS⁵ | USD

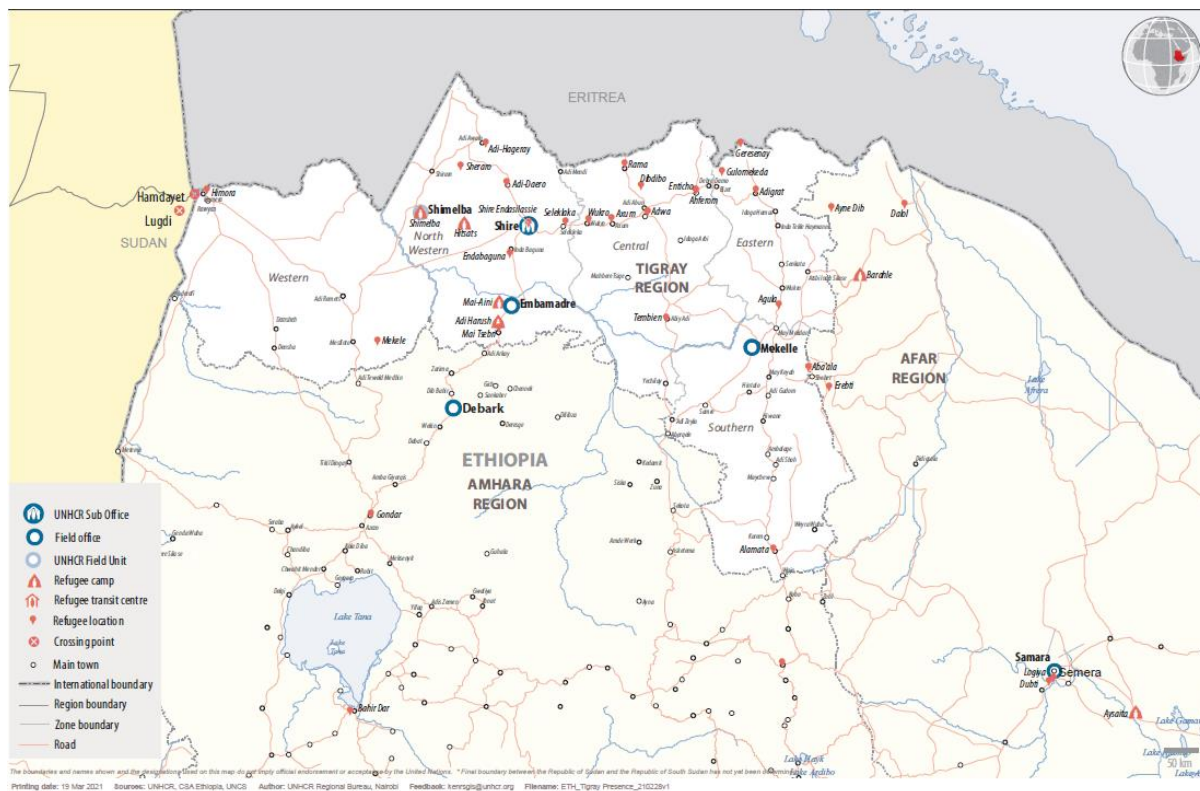
Norway 80 million | **Sweden** 66.9 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **Private donors Spain** 28.3 million | **Germany** 26 million | **France** 20 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 14.3 million | **Ireland** 12.5 million | **Belgium** 11.9 million | **Private donors Japan** 10.9 million

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

Notes:

- The financial requirements of the Ethiopia Emergency include requirements in Ethiopia and Sudan.
- The percentage funded (47%) and total funding amount (\$54,816,886) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$61,640,827 representing 53% 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.

Ethiopia operation: UNHCR presence in Tigray



In Tigray region, UNHCR has a Sub-Office in Shire as well as a Field Office in Mekelle, where the Agency is scaling up its presence to meet the current protection and humanitarian needs of refugees and IDPs. Furthermore, UNHCR has recently set up a temporary operational hub in Debarke and an operational presence in Mai Tsebri to support the re-establishment of services in Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps and to build up capacity to contribute to efforts to assist IDPs in Tigray and Amhara regions.

Since the announcement of the Ethiopian Government of a [transition from the previous clearance mechanism for international aid workers to a flexible notification system](#) by email to the Ministry of Peace, UNHCR has been able to deploy additional staff to Tigray region to support the scale up of the response and currently counts more than 90 staff in the region.

CONTACTS

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LINKS

- [Ethiopia Data Portal](#)
- [Ethiopia Situation – Tigray Emergency Situational Page](#)
- [Facebook, Twitter](#)