FACTSHEET
MARCH 2022

NORTHERN ETHIOPIA SITUATION

A full-scale humanitarian and protection crisis continues to unfold in and around Ethiopia's Tigray, Amhara and Afar Regions since armed conflict broke out in early November 2020**.**

Over **1.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, returnees, and affected populations** benefitted from UNHCR and partners' protection services since January 2022, in Northern Ethiopia.

While ensuring **access to basic services**, UNHCR provided **142,886** displaced individuals with core relief items (CRIs) in Afar, Amhara and Tigray Regions since January 2022.

Statistics Figures Sources & Dates

- **Refugee & asylum seeker figures, Source UNHCR, 31 March 2022**
- **IDP & returnee figures: DTM Ethiopia National Displacement Report - https://tinyurl.com/2p89czzs**

POPULATION OF CONCERN (AS OF 31 MARCH 2022)

REFUGEES & Asylum Seekers	
Region	***Number***
Tigray	*34,676*
Amhara	*3,500*
Afar	*59,245*
Total	***97,421***

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS	
Region	***Number***
Tigray	*1,814,284*
Amhara	*542,300*
Afar	*336,582*
Total	***2,612,353***

Key Figures in March 2022

- UNHCR supported the voluntary return of **11,998 IDPs** to their areas of origin in safety and dignity.
- **253,270** IDPs reached during UNHCR protection interventions and response.
- **120,860** IDPs, returnees, and affected populations received CRIs and **12,587 displaced persons** received solar lamps in Amhara and Tigray Regions.

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff: 200

113 National Staff

87 International Staff

Offices:

2 Sub-Offices (SOs): Mekelle and Shire (Tigray)

3 Field Offices (FOs): Embamadrie (Tigray), Gondar/Debark (Amhara) and Samara (Afar)

9 Field Units (FUs): Abi Adi, Adigrat, Maychew, Sheraro and Axum (Tigray), Debre Berhan, Bahir Dar and Dessie (Amhara) and Aysaita (Afar)

UNHCR Representative discussed with IDP returnees at Gereb Tsodo site, Mekelle ©UNHCR/D.

CONTEXT

The humanitarian situation across Northern Ethiopia is deeply concerning, with **2.6 million IDPs[1], over 240,000 returnees and 97,421 refugees & asylum-seekers** in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray Regions. Over 17 months into the conflict, the overall security situation remains complex and fluid, hindering effective delivery of lifesaving assistance to the most affected populations. Humanitarian needs have risen dramatically, with over **9.4 million people in urgent need of food and other aid[2]**.

The security situation along the Tigrayan borders with Amhara and Afar continued to deteriorate, creating population movements. In Afar, the refugee camp of Barhale was reportedly attacked and destroyed. In Amhara, the local authorities and humanitarian partners continue to receive, support, and relocate thousands of IDPs from the Oromia and Tigrayan crisis. In Tigray, the de facto blockage coupled with limited access of commodities such as fuel, cash, medicines, and telecommunication services continue to hinder humanitarian service deliveries. The crisis has also exacerbated protection concerns, such as gender-based violence (GBV) and imposed undue burden to vulnerable populations, forcing them to rely on negative coping mechanisms to survive.

Hope is mounting following the humanitarian truce precursor to peace, declared by the Federal Government and Tigray authorities, in March. Meanwhile, UNHCR and partners are on the ground, providing protection and assistance to refugees, IDPs, and affected populations.

Protection activities and Response

Protection by Presence

UNHCR continues to scale up its presence in Afar, Amhara and Tigray Regions. Protection by presence has been ensured by UNHCR effective presence and staffing in the **15 offices** across the Northern Regions, including two sub-offices, three field offices and nine field units including one recently set up in Dessie, Amhara region. However, as conflict persists, many areas remain out of reach for our teams, hindering access to those in desperate need.

Protection interventions:

Refugees

- **Refugee verification:** Using biometric verification the Ethiopian Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) and UNHCR, continue to verify refugees who have fled from the camps to other locations due to conflict, including **3,026** refugees who fled from Barahle (Afar), **3,500-7,000 refugees** who hfled from Mai Aini and Adi Harush (Tigray) to Alemwach (Amhara).

- UNHCR airlifted **6.3 metric** tons of medications and supplies to meet the dire medical needs of refugees, IDPs, and host communities in Tigray. The medicines were delivered to the refugee health centers of Mai Ani and Adi Harush sites, the Shire hospital and St. Mary Hopital in the host community of Axum. The stocks were used to replenish medications out of the hospital's stock for four months. CRI distribution was equally started in the Mai Ani and Adi Harush camps targeting **7,541 individuals**. Planning for the the second food distribution has also started in Mai-Aini and Adi Arush and will take place in late April.

- UNHCR also **provides life-saving assistance** in refugee camps in Aysaita, Alemwach (Amhara), and Mai Ani and Adi Harush (Tigray), including food, sanitation, water, CRIs, shelter and health services. On 7 March, **the first relocation of refugees** who fled Barahle took place at the new refugee site in **Serdo**, located 40 km outside of Samara. As emergency response, 692 family tents and a water trucking system were established, while looking for

[1] *Sources: DTM Ethiopia National Displacement Report - https://tinyurl.com/2p89czzs*

[2] *OCHA: Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update. Northern Ethiopia - Humanitarian Update | Situation Reports (unocha.org)*

more sustainable solutions. On 22 March, UNHCR set up a reception center providing protection counselling services for refugees and asylum seekers in the Mekelle Coordination Office in Tigray. As of 31 March, **24 persons** (16 refugees and 8 asylum seekers) visited the service. The main issues raised were the lack of food, the absence of registration and identity documentation and their request for food assistance, cash for medical expenses, house rent, and support to move to other areas.

IDPs

- In March, to foster an effective and targeted response in Afar, Amhara and Tigray Regions, UNHCR reached over **253,270 IDPs with various protection services,** including protection monitoring and assessment, awareness-raising, capacity building, prevention, and response to GBV, material assistance, identification of persons with specific needs, child protection, psychosocial support, counselling, and legal assistance. Nearly 1.1 million IDPs, refugees and affected populations have benefitted from UNHCR interventions in 2022.

- UNHCR, together with Government counterparts, partners and other humanitarian agencies conducted **joint multisectoral assessment reaching 456,000 IDPs** in Adigrat, and 18 sites in Shire (Tigray), North Wollo, South Wollo, North Shewa, Wag Himra zones (Amhara) and Guya, Afdera, Semera IDP site and Industrial Park (Afar) to foster an effective and targeted response in Tigray, Amhara, and Afar Regions.

- Protection Desks set up in **52 IDP sites** in Afar (3), Amhara (8) and Tigray (41) Regions provide information and counselling, case management for health concerns, psychosocial and legal support. In March, over **11,900 IDPs received return counselling** in Tigray, including 2,446 in the 21 Protection Desks in Mekelle.
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- UNHCR supported **IDP relocation activities** ongoing in Agatina and Guya sites in Afar. In Amhara, 17,000 IDPs were relocated from Kobo to Jara, 6,103 from Sunflower to Woynshet Paper Factory site, 3000 from Sekota to Weleh and over 14,200 IDPs to Sabacare 4 in Mekelle, Tigray.

- In March, **114 Government officials, community leaders, partners and UNHCR staff received capacity building training.** In Amhara, 23 government officials in South Wello were trained on CCCM, and 49 government frontline health care providers in Delanta Woreda received capacity building in child protection (CP), GBV, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), and mental health psychosocial services. In Tigray, capacity-building was provided to 25 social workers in PSEA and protection monitoring tool. In Afar, UNHCR trained 17 social workers on PSEA and how to run protection desks. To date, UNHCR has trained 352 Government officials, partners, and healthcare providers.

- **Over 10,100 persons** were reached through the **awareness-raising and sensitization** sessions in Mekelle (Tigray) and Debre Birhan (Amhara). These sensitizations were conducted through community outreach and door-to-door visits on topics including peaceful coexistence, prevention, and response to GBV and gender equality.

Gender-Based Violence Prevention, Risk Mitigation and Response

Prevention (Community Participation): To commemorate the International Women's Day on 8 March, UNHCR and its partners engaged over 3,000 refugees, IDPs and host community men, women, boys, and girls with participation of government officials on Gender Equality today for a sustainable tomorrow in Tigray, Afar, and Amhara Regions. Activities were conducted through coffee ceremonies, focus group discussions, drama, and songs. The event also acknowledged the effort of female championing to end harmful cultural practices of Female Genital Mutilation and best performing girls in school from Kerabura Primary School, Asayta in Afar.

Risk Mitigation: The prioritized needs for GBV risk mitigation measures were enhanced through coordination and capacity building sessions with key sectors of protection (CP, GBV, monitoring, legal), WASH, livelihoods, health, and CBI. This includes provision of dignified WASH facilities (bathroom and toilet) in Kutaber (South Wollo), for women and girls. Distribution of menstrual

hygiene kits to 1,794 women and girls of reproductive age were conducted in Shire. In Dessie, Amhara, 2-days training session on mainstreaming GBV risk mitigation were conducted to 30 people (15F:15M) with the objective of establishing a common understanding of responsibilities as well as develop skills required in GBV across sectors.

Capacity Building: In South Wollo, Amhara, UNHCR facilitated capacity building training on GBV in emergencies, mainstreaming and PSEA for 79 (44F:35M) in Amhara. In Tigray, training on GBV and PSEA was conducted to 30 (6F:24M) in Shire. The aim of the trainings is to enhance the capacity of partner staff on GBV and enable them with skills to practically implement activities efficiently and effectively.

Material Assistance

Material assistance is part of the protection interventions. It is also provided as a response to needs expressed during need assessments, protection, return counseling and case management. It is also provided in response to shelter and CRIs needs and GBV response.

In March, **142,886** people benefited from material assistance provided by UNHCR and partners including CRIs, emergency shelters, dignity kits, and solar lamps. Hence, in 2022, UNHCR provided material assistance to **458,377** IDPs, returnees and the most vulnerable affected communities.

Out of 458,377 IDPs who received material assistance**, 232,806 individuals** have benefitted from varied CRI assistance in the first quarter of 2022 (120,863 IDPs in Afar, 69,271 in Amhara and 42,672 in Tigray).

9,430 IDPs benefitted from communal shelters in Semera in Afar (300), emergency shelters in Jara, Weleh and Woynshet Paper Factory in Ahmara (7,050) and Sebacare in Tigray (630) totalling 15,140 since January 2022. In addition, 15,137 IDPs have been equipped with solar lamps in 2022, including 12,537 IDPs in March.

Nutrition and Food Assistance

Nutrition and food assistance remain a critical issue, especially in Tigray. Food distribution was done in the Mai Ani and Adi Harush camps in February and efforts are ongoing to secure food assistance for some **25,000 refugees** in both camps. Access remains a huge hindrance. In Amhara, UNHCR provided hot meal to over 3,500 refugees in Dabat. In Afar, WFP distributed a monthly ration to 25,897 refugees in Aysaita camp while GOAL distributed two hot meals per day to more than 2,000 refugees accommodated at the Serdo site.

Durable solutions – Voluntary Returns

The Protection and Return Desks provide information to IDPs willing to return to their areas of origin, and referral to available services. In March, UNHCR and the local authorities in Mekelle and Shire facilitated the voluntary return of **11,998 individuals** to North-Western, Central and Eastern zones in Tigray. UNCHR supported the returns with cash for transportation and CRIs. Since December 2021, UNHCR supported the voluntary returns of **26,774** individuals in Amhara and Tigray Regions (11,535 in Shire and 3,079 in Mekelle).

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

UNHCR and partners managed 72 sites and collective centers (57 in Tigray, 14 in Amhara, 1 in Afar) hosting an estimated **312,000** IDPs. The reduction in the number of IDPs is due to the IDP headcounts activity, which was conducted in March in ten major camps across the Tigray, the voluntary return of over 26,000 IDPs, as well as spontaneous returns to their areas of origin. In

addition, as co-lead of the CCCM Cluster, UNHCR supported the community-led site maintenance activities, capacity building for Government officials, partners, and persons of concerns.

In Amhara, 23 government officials in South Wello were trained on CCCM and IDP committees set up in Chinese factory and Woinshet Paper factory IDPs collective centers to support in site management.

Coordination

UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster, co-leads Camp Coordination Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster and contributes to Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) Cluster in all three regions (Afar, Amhara and Tigray). In March, the three Clusters - CCCM/Shelter/Protection Clusters - conducted 27 joint multi-sectoral assessments (21 in Tigray, 2 in Amhara and 4 in Afar) in IDP sites to guide interventions. The results of these assessments indicated that food, shelter, health, MHPSS, CRIs, WASH and sanitation materials were urgent priority needs.

Working with partners

UNHCR works closely with a wide range of partners to respond to the most pressing needs of the displaced persons, refugees and affected populations in camps and host communities in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions including **government entities** – Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS), Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO) Disaster Prevention Food Security Program Coordination Office (DPFSPCO), Regional Emergency Coordination Center (ARECC) and Bureaux of Social Affairs (BOWCSA/BOWSA BOLWSA), **7 United Nations agencies**: OCHA, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, WHO, WFP and FAO, **14 International and National Non-Governmental Organization (I/NGO) partners**: Action Africa Help (AAH); Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA); Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE), Association of Ethiopian Educated in Germany (AEEG); Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Service Commission (EECMY); Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Developement and Inter Church Aid Commission (DICAC); Development Expertise Center (DEC) African Humanitarian Aid & Development Agency (AHADA); International Medical Corps (IMC); GOAL Ethiopia (GOAL), and World Vision (WVI), Rehabilitation and Development Organization (RaDO), and Organization for Social Services and Health Development (OSSHD).

Funding updates

Of **$205.4 million** in financial requirements for the Ethiopia Emergency in 2022, UNHCR received only **31.2 million USD** (15 percent) as of 31 March 2022, with a funding gap reaching USD 174.2 million.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR operation in Ethiopia, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

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