

NORTHERN ETHIOPIA EMERGENCY SITUATION

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ETHIOPIA

Recent developments

The security situation in northern Ethiopia is becoming more complex following the resumption of hostilities on 24 August between the Ethiopia National Defence Forces (ENDF) forces and Tigrayan Forces (TF). Intensive clashes have since continued at the towns along the borders between the Tigray region and the Amhara and Afar regions.

Three aerial attacks were reported in Mekelle and Shire on 13 September. The first drone strike was reported on the outskirts of Endabaguna town, situated 22 km south of Shire, according to aid agencies operating in the area. One air strike hit Mekelle University business campus in Adi-Haki and a second one hit Dimtsi Weyane (DW) TV station located about 300 meters from Planet hotel, where UNHCR staff are accommodated. All staff are safe and accounted for.

On 11 September, the Tigray regional government [announced](#) that it is “ready to participate in a robust peace process under the auspices of the African Union and is ready to abide by an immediate and mutually agreed cessation of hostilities in order to create a conducive atmosphere.” The statement also added that it “expects a credible AU-led process to also include mutually acceptable mediators; international observers who will help the parties build mutual trust, instill confidence in the peace process, and support and oversee the implementation of commitments; and international experts to provide necessary guidance and advice on the integrity of the peace process.” The Tigray government has also set up a negotiation team to be deployed without delay and to represent the regional authorities in future negotiations.

In a statement issued on 11 September, the UN Secretary General [said](#) he “welcomes the announcement by the Regional Government of Tigray of its readiness to abide by an immediate cessation of hostilities and to peacefully resolve the conflict in northern Ethiopia.” In addition, he said that he is encouraged by the stated willingness of the Regional Government of Tigray to participate in a robust peace process under the auspices of the African Union (AU).” The SG also “calls on the parties to seize this opportunity for peace and to take steps to end the violence definitively and opt for dialogue. He encourages the parties to engage actively with the AU-led process in good faith and without delay and to create conducive conditions for the talks to take place.”

On 14 September, the [Ethiopian government said](#) it is “committed” to the AU-led peace process aimed at ending the near two-year conflict in the north, its first public comment after the Tigrayan authorities said they were ready to negotiate. The Foreign Affairs ministry quoted Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Demeke Mekonnen as saying at a meeting with an EU envoy, “The Ethiopian government is committed to the AU-led peace process and expressed hope that the EU would support efforts to end the conflict peacefully.”

The lack of fuel is seriously hindering humanitarian agencies from delivering some emergency items. UN agencies are working on the details of the fuel needs for advocacy purposes.

UNHCR response

In **Tigray**, the situation in the two refugee camps of Mai Aini and Adi Harush remains calm. Authorities in Shire have advised humanitarian agencies to suspend all movements from and to Mai Tsebri town and the two camps due to the worsening security situation in the area. UNHCR staff based in Field Office Embamadrie (responsible for the two Mai Tsebri camps – Mai Aini and Adi Harush) have been relocated to Shire but continue to monitor the situation remotely and to receive direct reports from our partners that are still present in the camps.

UNHCR and partners are continuing with IDP response activities wherever possible and have completed the maintenance of 120 emergency shelters out of the 159 planned in Sebacare IDP site in Mekelle while 30 family tents have been pitched in Quiha site to support IDPs displaced from Afar. The IDP return exercise from Mekelle

to various locations in the central zone that started on 20 August has resumed after it was interrupted. In the last week, UNHCR, partners and the local authorities have facilitated the voluntary return of 361 households comprising 689 individuals from Mekelle to their areas of origin. IDP returnees were provided with cash assistance for transportation, core relief items (CRIs), and dignity kits were distributed to 238 women and girls.

In **Amhara**, on 7 September, a joint assessment mission – WFP, UNHCR, IOM, OHCHR, UNDSS and OCHA – was conducted in four new collective IDP sites in Mersa in North Wollo. The priority needs identified were shelter, food, CRIs, family tracing, GBV, and dignity kits. UNHCR will undertake protection monitoring activities, GBV and legal protection services, distribution of CRIs and construction of emergency shelter as well as CCCM activities for the newly displaced populations.

UNHCR plans to distribute CRIs to 2,000 households and dignity kits to 2,300 girls and women in the Mersa collective sites. However, transporting these items has been met with resistance from truck drivers concerned about commandeering of their trucks by the military.

In **Afar**, registration of newborns is ongoing in both Aysaita and Serdo refugee camps, despite challenges such as unstable internet connection and registration books for the issuance of birth certificates. Also, the construction of the weather-friendly shelters in Serdo has resumed after months of interruption due to funding shortfalls.

SUDAN

The resumption of fighting between the ENDF and TF on 24 August prompted a review of emergency preparedness measures for a potential influx in Gedaref and Kassala states. All three UNHCR office locations in Eastern Sudan (Gedaref, Blue Nile, Kasala) have reports of new arrivals, though the numbers are not yet significant.

Emergency preparedness measures such as border monitoring and the repositioning of emergency relief items remain in place to ensure readiness to receive additional numbers. On 3 September, UNHCR and the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) visited Al Asera border entry point located in Al Qureisha locality and met with local authorities to discuss the situation at the border and identify potential locations for setting up a reception centre. The establishment of a reception centre in Al Asera was agreed upon; UNHCR will set up basic shelters. Another mission will be conducted to determine the location of a transit centre in Al Qureisha locality.

Efforts are underway to create additional space for new arrivals in Tunaydbah and Um Rakuba. On 11 September, UNHCR and partners began the assessment of vacant plots in Tunaydbah to determine the capacity for accommodating new arrivals. In Um Rakuba, COR has committed to demarcate new plots in Zone 4 to accommodate an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 new arrivals.

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