



**INTER-AGENCY  
REFUGEE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN  
ETHIOPIA: ERITREAN REFUGEES IN TIGRAY**

November 2020 - January 2021

INCLUDED IN THE UPDATED HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN FOR NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

**FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH**

Ethiopia, Tigray region. Eritrean refugee woman in Adi Harush camp receiving her October WFP food distribution from ARRA and UNHCR. © UNHCR/Awash Ameha

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# PLANNED RESPONSE NOVEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021

**80,000**

PROJECTED REFUGEE  
POPULATION

**US\$ 18 M**

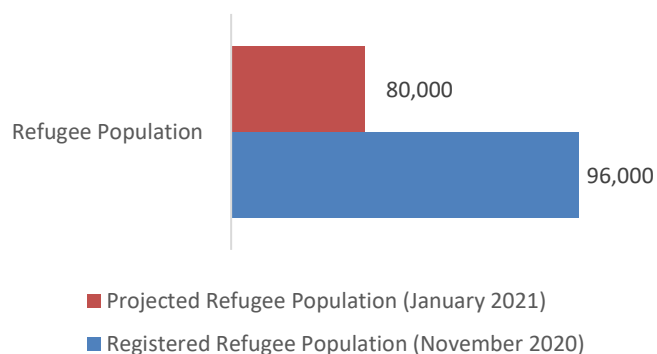
REQUIREMENTS

**7**

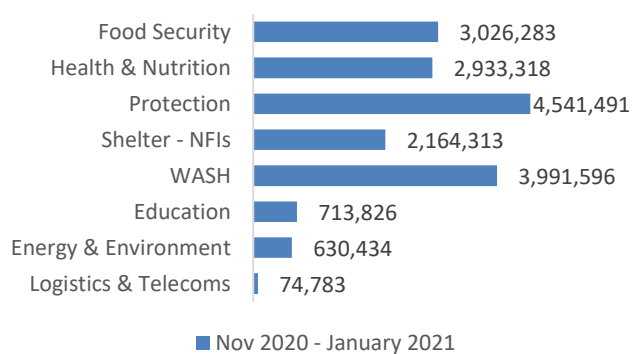
PARTNERS INVOLVED



## Refugee Population Trends



## Requirements by Sector | In millions \$



**Context**

## Situation Overview

Tension between the Federal Government and Tigray's ruling party (TPLF) has been escalating in recent years. This escalation eventually led to armed conflict from 4 November 2020, rapidly impacting the four Eritrean refugee camps in North-Western Tigray zone and the city of Shire over the past weeks and continued moving to the eastern and northern areas of Tigray. Fighting in different parts of the region, including in the area of Mekelle, is still being reported as this response plan is being drafted.

The continued lack of access to Tigray risks severely impacting the entire population in the region. The lack of access to food, fuel and other essential supplies is creating a complex humanitarian situation with extreme suffering and life-threatening impacts. Displacement of people is ongoing, mainly at the border areas with the Amhara and Afar regions, as well as Sudan and Eritrea.

UNHCR and partners have been advocating with federal authorities in Ethiopia for urgent access to Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region who are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance and services. As of end October 2020, there were nearly 150,000 registered Eritrean refugees in Tigray and Afar regions, with around 96,000 in the Tigray region alone. The Government hosts refugees in six camps in the two regions: Adi Harush, Hitsats, Mai-Aini and Shimelba in Tigray, and Aysaita and Barhale in Afar. In addition, many Eritrean refugees reside outside of camps including those who benefited from the Government's Out of Camp Policy (OCP), mostly in Addis Ababa, as well as in several settlement areas throughout Afar.

Since the change in the Government's asylum policy for Eritreans in January 2020, the region has been hosting a large number of Eritrean asylum-seekers who were denied access to asylum and remain undocumented/unregistered. While some have reportedly moved to Addis Ababa, others were living with their relatives in the refugee camps or host communities. Within the Tigray and Afar regions, the refugee population has traditionally shared linguistic, religious and cultural ties with the host population. The region had long welcomed refugees prior to the conflict, and despite some challenges related to competition for resources, there was an established pattern of social cohesion.

While this plan aims at responding to the needs of Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region, it is important to highlight the steadily growing number of internally displaced people (IDPs) due to conflict inside Tigray as well as to other regions of Ethiopia. The on-going situation in Tigray has already displaced people within the region and across the regional borders into Amhara and Afar, while nearly 50,000 are already displaced across the borders to Sudan. The updated UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Northern Ethiopia estimates that 2.3 million people might be affected by the conflict, out of whom, 1.3 million would be additional people in need.

### Challenges in the response

Due to insecurity, partners relocated most of their staff out of the North West zone of the Tigray region. Humanitarian access is severely hampered. The blockage of air and road access to the region, as well as the regional communication black-out has significantly affected humanitarian operations and the possibility to undertake a real time assessment of humanitarian needs. The likelihood of internal and external displacements is reportedly high whereas monitoring remains a challenge. Further, the disruption in the distribution of humanitarian supplies is contributing to the worsening of the humanitarian context, as it prevents timely and adequate assistance to vulnerable communities in the region.

Under these conditions, UN security risk assessment and road assessment teams have been mobilized and expect to be able to access western Tigray in the next few days. Partners stand ready to resume their full humanitarian activities in the Tigray region as soon as the situation allows; among them WFP is prepared to use its fleet trucks to resume food deliveries to the camps. Partners have requested updates from the Government on the situation in Tigray as it continues to develop,



Ethiopia, Tigray Region. Energy, particularly for cooking, has been a longstanding challenge in the refugee camps in Tigray. Eritrean refugees residing in Shimelba camp would typically trek far out into the wilderness in search of firewood. This caused friction with the host community over the impact on the environment and scarcity of resources, and also placed women and children at particular risk of assault and abuse. © UNHCR/Edward Leposky



especially on the conditions in and around the refugee camps and the readiness for distributions of food and core relief items (CRIs).

On 2 December, the United Nations signed an Agreement with the Federal Government of Ethiopia to enable assistance to those in need in Government controlled areas in Tigray and bordering Afar and Amhara regions with an overall coordination framework. The agreement includes use of telecommunications equipment for UN agencies and humanitarian partners, timely clearance and approval processes, assessments and implementation of activities. While this represents a positive move, at the time of writing this plan the actual details and modalities of application for access and distribution still need to be worked out. This response plan can only be realized once unfettered access to refugee populations is possible and security conditions allow for a safe operating space for humanitarian workers.

## Inter-agency Response


This **Inter-agency Refugee Emergency Response Plan (RRP)** for the Eritrean Refugees in Tigray outlines the multi-agency comprehensive response strategy and financial requirements of seven partners supporting Ethiopian authorities to provide protection and assistance to 80,000 Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and protection services within the next three months. Of this group, an estimated 50,000 may remain in or close to the camps, 15,000 may leave the camps to seek safety, and 15,000 may attempt to relocate to Addis Ababa. Considering the volatile situation, it is of paramount importance to allow flexibility to adjust the delivery of services and protection depending on where the Eritrean refugees are located. With increasing reports of Eritrean refugees arriving in Addis through Gondar, UNHCR is working






together with the Administration for Refugee & Returnee Affairs (ARRA) to establish a protocol for verification and assistance to these refugees, whether still in camps, on the move (Gondar) or in Addis.

UNHCR together with partners will also need to keep the services running in camps and if camps are consolidated, there are considerable additional needs that would affect the whole population. This plan is also targeting some 24,000 members of the affected local population and host communities for assistance through the inter-agency response mechanism.

The RRP is fully in line with the objectives and is included in the Updated UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Northern Ethiopia which is prepared by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). The response plan outlines the priority interventions, as well as the key emergency response strategies, intended results and activities, within the emergency period from November 2020 to January 2021. The plan will be revised as needed and complemented with further activities necessary to scale up the inter-agency response, depending on developments in the context and needs.

## Beneficiary Population

	Current population as of November 2020	Projected population as of January 2021
<b>Assisted Refugee Population</b>		
Eritrean Refugees in Tigray	96,000	80,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>96,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>
<b>Assisted Host Population</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,000</b>	<b>24,000</b>

Disaggregated Data		% of projected refugee population (based on profile of current refugee population)		
Women and Girls	Men and Boys	Children (0-18)	Elderly (+60)	Persons with Disability
				
44%	54%	34%	2%	2%

## Needs Analysis

Among the critical needs are mitigating the effects of armed conflict through the provision of protection services including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) response and prevention, access to basic and domestic items, and provision of reception facilities. In camps and other locations, there is a need for a multi-sectoral response including health, WASH, emergency shelter and infrastructure as well as key protection interventions such as SGBV mitigation and response and access to reception facilities, with special attention to individuals at heightened protection risk,



including young children, women and the elderly, persons with specific needs and persons with disabilities.

Transportation and relocation assistance, including with pre-travel screening, might be required for a targeted 5,000 protection related population, among whom persons with specific needs, to ensure access to life-saving services in refugee camps or other designated accommodation, including food, CRIs, WASH, and healthcare.

Women and girls are at higher risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse during humanitarian emergencies. The risks in Ethiopia were already on the rise due to the economic downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant restrictions on movement, which caused a rise in reported intimate partner violence. At least 520 survivors of sexual violence will seek care in the Tigray region, based on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) calculator for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) which is developed by the Inter-Agency Working Group for Reproductive Health in Crisis (IAWG). In the targeted population of refugees and members of host communities, some 26,000 women of reproductive age, 12,480 adolescent girls and 2,357 currently pregnant women are in need of life-saving SRH information and services. In the next three months, 118 currently pregnant women will experience complications of pregnancy and may need C-sections to deliver safely (MISP Calculator).

As refugees do not have access to income, basic humanitarian assistance has to be provided without further delay, including food for about 51,000 refugees who have been receiving monthly food and cash assistance in the four camps of the region. High-energy biscuits must be made available to provide immediate life-saving response for new arrivals at entry points until they are

Ethiopia, Tigray region. Eritrean refugees exercising social distancing awaiting the July WFP food distribution conducted by ARRA and UNHCR in Shimelba camp. © UNHCR/Edward Leposky



relocated to the camps for more regular assistance; joint assessments could be undertaken while registered refugees are receiving the necessary assistance.

Food supplies in the local markets are limited and prices are increasing. The presence of refugees can further aggravate the problem due to competing needs to get food. Given the likelihood of the situation remaining volatile for a period of time, it is critical that all services promote and build on community structures in the camps, as well as on the host communities, in the spirit of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the whole-of society approach.

Response efforts in all sectors should prioritize, utilize and strengthen such structures, promoting women's participation, Age Gender and Diversity (AGD) principles and participation of minority groups, persons with disabilities and those with other specific needs.

## Response Strategy and Priorities

### Response Objectives

In the complex Ethiopian context, Country RRP partners will undertake a multi-faceted response that ensures access to territory and asylum, protection from effects of armed conflict, humanitarian assistance and opportunities for durable solutions and self-reliance. The focus will be on the following strategic objectives:

**Strategic Objective (1): Preserve access to the territory in order to seek asylum, including registration and status determination and registration of Eritrean asylum-seekers in Tigray**, and enjoy protection, promote the full enjoyment of rights, and maintain the civilian character of asylum;

**Strategic Objective (2): Enable access to essential services according to minimum international standards and ensure protection systems are strengthened** and refugees and asylum seekers are able to enjoy their full rights, specifically in regard to safety and security from conflict, child protection and protection from SGBV and access to life-saving health services. In urban areas a cash support system may be considered;

**Strategic Objective (3): Promote community empowerment and self-reliance, strengthening the community structures** in each camp or urban areas, which include associations of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, older persons, children, minority groups, persons with chronic medical conditions.

**Strategic Objective (4): Support host community systems to enhance peaceful co-existence and social cohesion** between host communities and refugees which may have been impacted on as a result of the conflict. These efforts will be even more necessary given the current situation and the likelihood that the capacity of some local authorities and public services may be negatively affected by the conflict and would thus need support of the international community.

### Emergency Priorities

In the context of the current emergency situation in the Tigray region, accountabilities towards refugees and asylum-seekers in Tigray include, as priorities, the physical safety and security of refugees and asylum-seekers, the continuation of life-saving protection and basic services to refugees and maintaining access to territory and asylum procedure for asylum-seekers.

The refugee response in Tigray is targeting multi-sectoral needs including protection, health and nutrition, food, emergency Shelter/CRIs, emergency education and WASH. UNHCR and partners





are also targeting the affected local population and host communities for assistance through the inter-agency response mechanism.

For camp-based refugees, assistance will be provided through the already established mechanisms and the facilities in place; high energy biscuits can be provided at entry points until the new arrivals are relocated to the camps; additional needs will be jointly assessed. Children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women must be provided with supplementary nutritious food commodities. When the situation allows, school meals would need to be provided for refugee children attending schools and partnerships need to be strengthened with active non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide assistance to unaccompanied minors. Food preferences of Eritrean refugees will be considered in the provision of assistance. Timely assistance to refugees would ease unnecessary competition for food in the local markets, however, this will not be enough to address all the potential challenges for host communities.

Partners will also provide transport and pre-travel health screening assistance for targeted protection related transports, from Tigray to other regions in Ethiopia. This assistance will ensure their safe and secure transportation and access to life-saving services. An effective feedback mechanism is in place to ensure beneficiaries receive adequate and timely information on distance of travel, access to assistance, to receive and address complaints, and to identify areas of needed



improvement. To ensure their safety and dignity, experienced medical and operations staff are deployed in Assosa, Dollo Ado, Gambella, and Shire regions.

## Host Communities in the Refugee Response

In refugee-hosting areas, and mainly where camps are located, refugees and local populations are facing increasing challenges especially during emergencies and are equally in need of humanitarian assistance and support for access to quality services. In practice, some of the host community members are benefiting from services offered by partners in the camps. Primary health care services are provided to refugees and surrounding host communities, in particular in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Partners make efforts to continue to promote sustainable access to safe and adequate water for refugees and host communities and ensure access to adequate sanitation services. The community management of WASH infrastructures and services remains a priority. Among the most vulnerable of the host and refugee populations, women and girls are receiving assistance and support to prevent gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, with a higher risk during humanitarian emergencies.

IDP assistance will be provided through the Ethiopia Humanitarian Preparedness Plan which has been prepared by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). However, during the current emergency host communities and individuals in refugee-hosting areas will benefit from humanitarian assistance according to specific sectoral targeting criteria and to the extent that security conditions and resources permit. Together with refugees, host community members will be assisted following an assessment by inter-agency partners of the situation on the ground, which will also inform the refugee response.

## Planned Response Activities

Sector	Response Activities
<b>Food Security</b>	<p>ZOA: Provision of lifesaving emergency [cash for] food and the modality will be decided based on the result of Market Assessment.</p> <p>WFP: Provision of relief food for the entire refugee population, which is then distributed by the Agency of Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA); WFP only has enough food in Ethiopia to cover the needs of the 51,000 camp-based refugees until January; if additional food stocks cannot be delivered to the camps, WFP will experience a pipeline break on its refugee operation in Tigray as early as February 2021; WFP will purchase food from its Global Commodity Management Facility once funding is made available or indicated.</p>
<b>Health &amp; Nutrition</b>	<p>UNICEF: Procurement of essential medicines (EDK/IEHK/CTC); Training of health workers for the delivery of emergency health services and infection prevention; mobile H&amp;N services with operational support; procurement and distribution of essential nutrition supplies (RUTFs and HEBs).</p> <p>UNFPA: Support the provision and access to SRH services as outlined in the Minimum Initial Service Package for RH in Emergencies (MISP) for 80,000</p>

refugee and 24,000 host population women and girls, including those living with disability.

UNFPA: Support COVID-19 prevention and response in the affected areas with a focus on protection of health care workers and those providing essential SRH and GBV services.

UNHCR: Drugs/medical supplies, continuation of ART/TB treatments, emergency primary healthcare.

## Protection

UNICEF: Procurement of urgent supplies and scaling up response on CP/GBV for Tigray refugees

IRC: GBV Protection: provision of 5,000 dignity kits for most vulnerable women and girls, and doubling of the number of social workers for GBV case management for a period of 3 months.

UNFPA: Establish Women and Girl-Friendly Safe Spaces; procure and distribute dignity kits to vulnerable women and girls, including those living with disability.

UNFPA: Facilitate and strengthen Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and PFA capacity of front-line workers in order to provide life-saving services to survivors of GBV.

UNFPA: Support the prevention, mitigation and response to GBV for 80,000 refugee and 24,000 host population women, girls and other vulnerable groups.

ZOA: Distribution of dignity kit to girls and women.

ZOA: Rounds of awareness-raising [or community dialogue] on child protection and prevention of GBV while collaborating with government bureaus and organizations on the ground.

ZOA: Production and distribution of IEC material in local language with a message promoting protection and provide information on the referral pathways.

IOM: Pre-departure and transport assistance for vulnerable households to safety or other location including tests for COVID-19, pre-embarkation checks, organization of transportation from point of departure to point of destination – and possibly passage through a way-station, as needed;

UNHCR: Protection Monitoring, Counselling,

UNHCR: SGBV prevention and response, SGBV mainstreaming.

UNHCR: Assistance to unaccompanied and separated children, strengthening family-based care arrangements.

UNHCR: Maintaining the civilian character in camps and host communities, Advocacy for access to territory.

<p><b>Shelter &amp; CRIs</b></p>	<p>ZOA: Provision of safe, appropriate, and critical life-saving Emergency Shelter kits.</p> <p>UNHCR: Construction of 5000 emergency shelters for 5,000 families; construction of ten transit / collection centres each 15 x 4 meters with 5 rooms partition inside.</p> <p>UNHCR: Procurement and distribution of 5,000 sets of core relief items (each set comprising 2 kitchen sets, 3 blankets, two 10L jerry cans, 3 mosquito nets, 3 sleeping mats and one 15L bucket) for 5000 households (average family size of 5); Multi-purpose cash assistance for estimated 2000 households.</p>
<p><b>WASH</b></p>	<p>UNICEF: Procurement of lifesaving CRIs and scaling up response for Tigray refugees including services in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.</p> <p>IRC: repairs and reinstatement of water supply and 400 emergency latrines, 4 waste pits.</p> <p>ZOA: Construction of emergency latrines.</p> <p>ZOA: Construction of hand washing facilities.</p> <p>ZOA: Distribution of WASH CRIs.</p> <p>ZOA: Hygiene education and campaign.</p> <p>UNHCR: Water trucking for three months for estimated 15,000 refugees (that may leave camps and stay in other parts of Tigray)</p> <p>UNHCR: Construction of 200 communal latrines; sanitation awareness campaigns</p>
<p><b>Education</b></p>	<p>UNICEF: Procurement and distribution of essential WASH items: procurement and distribution of facemasks, thermometers, hand sanitizers and soaps to refugee primary schools, in addition to establishing temporary learning spaces for refugees affected by the conflict</p>
<p><b>Energy &amp; Environment</b></p>	<p>UNHCR: Domestic fuel for 5000 households for three months</p>
<p><b>Logistics &amp; Telecoms</b></p>	<p>UNHCR: Internal transportation (Addis to the field) of core relief items and shelter materials</p> <p>WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is offering logistics assistance to partners. WFP and the Logistics Cluster for the IDP response have produced a Concept of Operations to describe how the response should be implemented for the</p>



Tigray crisis through several corridors in Amhara and Afar. It is a 'living document' that will be updated continuously, in line with the fast-evolving situation.

The Logistics Cluster has proposed forward logistics bases close to the entry points to Tigray to consolidate partners' cargo and providing assembly points for trucks to coordinate clearance in-and-out of the region to help increase the security, efficiency and speed of operations.

Common storage can be made available to increase capacities in key strategic locations or extended delivery points in order to shorten the distances towards forward logistics bases and assembly points for trucks.

A logistics assessment at border entry points will be organized jointly with partners and will help inform the final locations in terms of proximity to borders and other infrastructure required to support operations.

The Logistics Cluster may consider utilizing diverse delivery routes from Amhara and Afar. The corridor from Sudan may be considered as a last resort in the event of overland challenges. Critical transport routes will be assessed, and alternatives identified to mitigate potential access challenges and allow for the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian items.



Ethiopia, Tigray region. Prior to the recent conflict, Shimelba camp provided a safe environment for over 8,000 Eritrean refugees, including in 30 shelters built by UNHCR and NRC for vulnerable families. © UNHCR/Edward Leposky

## Partnership and Coordination

Ethiopia has well-established refugee response and coordination processes in place, based on the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), which are anchored in a solid framework of refugee law and procedure. An Interagency Refugee Coordination Group composed of the heads of agencies, and other senior staff supporting the national refugee response meets on a regular basis to discuss strategic and inter-sector operational issues. Active sector working groups include Protection, Health, Education, WASH, Shelter, Energy and the Environment, together with a Child Protection/SGBV sub-working group. The Humanitarian Country Team also forms part of the broader consultation forum on the overall refugee response, together with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) working groups that relate to refugees.

Within the Tigray Region strong coordination mechanisms had existed prior to the crisis. With the support of partners, UNHCR and the ARRA. will lead and strengthen the existing inter-agency structures and re-establish camp-based coordination mechanisms to ensure an effective coordinated response and service delivery to refugees and asylum-seekers. This coordination platform will be consistent with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and compatible with the cluster coordination mechanisms and other existing government coordination structures in the region. Through regular consultations, UNHCR will collaborate and pool resources with other humanitarian agencies and government authorities to advance the protection and assistance of persons of concern.

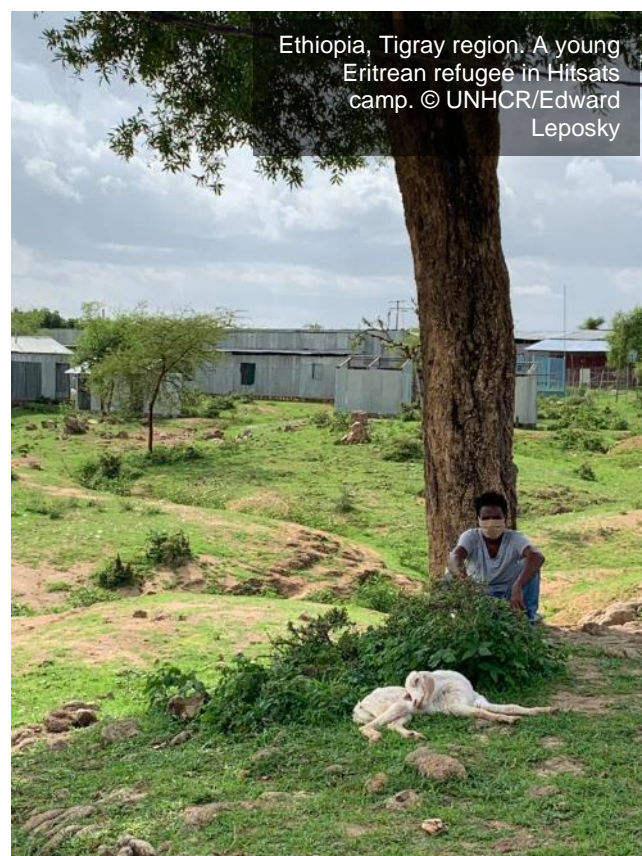
Specifically, this inter-agency refugee emergency response plan (RRP) for the Eritrean refugees in Tigray brings together seven humanitarian partners and engagement with other partners of the humanitarian community will be further expanded.

### Partners in the Emergency Response

<b>IRC</b>	International Rescue Committee
<b>UN-IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>UN-UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UN-UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UN-UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UN-WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>ZOA</b>	ZOA Relief & Recovery Organization



Partnership & Coordination



Ethiopia, Tigray region. A young Eritrean refugee in Hitsats camp. © UNHCR/Edward Leposky

## Financial Requirements Summary

Partners are appealing for **\$18 million** to cover the initial emergency response. A comprehensive appeal with revised requirements for 2021 will be released in January 2021.

### By Sector

Sector	Total
Food Security	3,026,283
Health & Nutrition	2,933,318
Protection	4,541,491
Shelter & CRIs	2,164,313
WASH	3,991,596
Education	713,826
Energy & Environment	630,434
Logistics & Telecoms	74,783
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,076,044</b>

### By Organization & Sector

Organization	Food Security	Health & Nutrition	Protection	Shelter & CRIs	WASH	Education	Energy & Environment	Logistics & Telecoms	Total
IRC			150,000		422,000				572,000
UN-IOM			990,000						990,000
UN-UNFPA		1,773,535	1,004,030						2,777,565
UN-UNHCR	434,104	809,783	1,146,613	1,495,669	608,614		630,434	74,783	5,200,000
UN-UNICEF		350,000	1,060,786	300,000	2,791,867	713,826			5,216,479
UN-WFP	2,320,000								2,320,000
ZOA	272,179		190,062	368,644	169,115				1,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,026,283</b>	<b>2,933,318</b>	<b>4,541,491</b>	<b>2,164,313</b>	<b>3,991,596</b>	<b>713,826</b>	<b>630,434</b>	<b>74,783</b>	<b>18,076,044</b>



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