

# Tigray Situation Update

15<sup>th</sup> April 2021



*UNHCR distributes core relief items such as sleeping mats, blankets, soap and plastic buckets to newly relocated refugees in Adi Harush camp in Tigray. © UNHCR/Hanna Qassis.*

## 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 region are still affected by armed clashes and insecurity](#), leading to further forced displacement of population – particularly in Western Tigray.

While humanitarian partners' access to Tigray has improved since the replacement of the previous "clearance process" for the deployment of international aid workers at the Federal level with a flexible "notification" system, access to large areas continues to be impeded by insecurity. This continues to limit the humanitarian response, particularly in rural hard-to-reach areas. Despite this volatile security situation and as stressed by the [UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi](#), efforts "must be

accelerated, as large numbers of displaced people keep arriving in urban areas – 352,000 in Shire town alone – and thousands of Eritrean refugees are still dispersed.” Many refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities have endured more than five months with extremely limited – or no – assistance, resulting in a significant escalation in humanitarian needs.

## Displacement figures

Ethiopia is home to **178,980** Eritrean refugees across the country, equal to 22% of the total refugee population in Ethiopia of 801,349. Before the conflict erupted in the Tigray region in November 2020, UNHCR had registered 96,223 Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region, sheltered mainly 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).

There were also 8,424 Eritrean refugees residing in the Tigray region benefitting from the Government’s Out of Camp Policy, allowing refugees to live in communities. The remaining Eritrean refugees outside Tigray lived predominately in the Afar region (approximately 51,800) and in the capital Addis Ababa (approximately 30,722).

According to BoLSA (Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs) and the Early Warning Response (EWR) regional directorate from NDRMC, the conflict in Tigray has displaced **some estimated 735,000 persons (IDPs)**, a number likely to rise as the situation is dynamic and new IDP arrivals are being registered. At the same time, as of 10<sup>th</sup> April **62,383 refugees have sought safety in Eastern Sudan** from Ethiopia.

## Operational response

### Refugee response



#### POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

#### Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps

- Since the official announcement of the closure of Shimelba and Hitsats refugee camps by Ethiopia’s Government in late January, a relocation process started from Shire to Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps for refugees who had fled Shimelba and Hitsats. As of 9<sup>st</sup> April, 7,932 have relocated to Adi Harush (3,633) and Mai Aini (4,299) camps, formally or spontaneously.

#### Mekelle

- A total of 330 refugees (163 households) have been verified in Mekelle as of 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2021.

#### Adigrat

- In Adigrat, 204 refugees (97 households) have been verified as of 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, and an additional 180 refugees (53 households) still need to be verified. However, the number of registered refugees in Adigrat could be much higher as many refugees are reportedly hiding

for fear of their safety. Furthermore, UNHCR has identified 1,302 individuals in Adigrat who are newly arriving Eritrean refugees.

### **Addis Ababa**

- On 9 March, a joint ARRA and UNHCR team started an identification exercise of Shimelba and Hitsats refugees who self-relocated to Addis Ababa. The purpose is both to establish the total number of refugees from the two camps, currently in Addis Ababa, to assess their intentions and to do quick protection screenings. Messaging and info on the exercise have been disseminated via networks and contacts to the refugee communities, both in English and Tigrinya. Cumulatively, 2,546 refugees (1,388 households) have been verified as of 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The three main specific needs identified are women at risk, unaccompanied and separated children, and single parents.

### **Afar region**

- 50 refugees and asylum-seekers from the Tigray camps are now living in Aysaita camp and Logiya town in Afar region. These refugees have been immediately referred to ARRA and the partners for support, including psychosocial counselling and health services. ARRA has provided them with NFIs and food rations.



## **PROTECTION**

### **Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps**

- In Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps, protection and other critical services are gradually resuming. UNHCR's individual reception, counselling and registration services have reopened, while registration teams are working with ARRA in order to update records (deaths, marriages, and births), providing documents to those who may have lost them during the conflict, and putting in place the Global Distribution Tool to be used for food distribution. Despite the attempt to scale up, practical staffing and logistical constraints place a strain on service delivery.

### **Mekelle**

- UNHCR is providing protection counselling to the displaced refugees and new arrivals.

### **Addis Ababa**

- Due to COVID-19 related issues, the identification exercise of refugees from Hitsats and Shimelba camps in Addis Ababa was temporarily suspended from 8<sup>th</sup> until 15<sup>th</sup> April. As of 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1,388 households representing 2,546 individuals have been identified. The quick intention survey incorporated in the exercise shows that 2,345 refugees representing 92% of the total identified population expressed the need to have temporary residence in Addis Ababa, 143 refugees (6%) requested to return safely to the camps in Tigray, and 58 refugees (2%) expressed the need to have "Out of Camp"-permits. The top three specific needs remain Women at risk, Unaccompanied or separated children, and single parents.

- As COVID-19 has temporarily suspended physical activities at the Refugee Reception Centre in Addis Ababa, UNHCR has set up a new Protection Helpline and an online portal, aiming to serve inquiries from refugees and asylum seekers in Addis Ababa, with respect to protection, resettlement, access to asylum and refugee status determination. The helpline numbers have been disseminated to the communities and partners in Addis Ababa and are shared continuously on social media.
- Norway has started remote resettlement interviews and will be interviewing cases submitted under the first selection mission of 2021. The exercise will last for two months.



### **SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)**

- All newly relocated refugees received Core Relief Items (CRIs) upon arrival to Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps.
- Due to the pressing need to build transitional shelters, UNHCR is undertaking an assessment for potential space, identifying the emergency hangars that are not fit for purpose in order to dismantle them and construct transitional shelters.
- A new camp site in the Amhara region has been identified by the Government and is expected to have capacity for up to 20,000 individuals.



### **FOOD SECURITY**

- The joint WFP/UNHCR/ARRA general food distribution of March rations for Eritrean refugees was completed in Mai Aini (22-26 March) and Adi Harush camps (22-27 March) camps.



### **EDUCATION**

- In Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps, UNHCR started moving refugees from the communal sites to emergency shelters in a bid to resume classes. The primary school in Adi Harush camp has already been emptied and classes have resumed. Refugees staying in other schools (a high school and an elementary school) and the three Early Childhood Care and Development centers (ECCDs) will be gradually moved to emergency shelters in the following weeks.

## **IDP response**



### **POPULATION DISPLACEMENT**

#### **Shire**

- There are around 352,000 IDPs sheltered in 14 sites and within the host communities in Shire, according to local authorities.

#### **Mai Tsebri**

- In Mai Tsebri, according to local authorities, there are some 25,000 IDPs, including 8,500 individuals living in a communal IDP site, while the rest are living with the host community.

### **Shiraro**

- Local authorities have reported the presence of some 95,000 Ethiopians who are internally displaced within Shiraro's administrative area. To date, the vast majority of internally displaced people (IDPs) are living within the host community, and some 30,000 are living in five settlements. In Shimelba camp, the joint OCHA-UNHCR mission that visited the camp on 18<sup>th</sup> March found over 2,000 IDPs and vulnerable host community members who had sought sanctuary in Shimelba camp. All of the displaced people in Shiraro and Shimelba are in dire need of urgent life-saving assistance, including food, shelter, health care, water and sanitation.

### **Mekelle**

- More than 30,000 IDPs live in 15 informal sites across the city (mostly schools), while an estimated 52,000 IDPs live in the host community.

### **Afar region**

- According to the regional Emergency Coordination Centre, a total of 51,941 individuals from Tigray region are displaced in eight woredas of the Afar Region. These IDPs are facing different protection issues including loss of livelihood and lack of food security.



## **PROTECTION**

- In Shire, UNHCR's partner NRC, as part of its intervention in childcare arrangements (kinship and foster care), started to distribute cash support to IDP families. NRC is providing cash to families, offering different care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children at IDP centres. So far, a total of 900 families have received cash support with each family receiving an average of 500 Birr. Using CERF funding, NRC is targeting the cash support to reach a total of 3,000 families at three IDP sites: Axum University's Shire Campus, Shire High School and Embadanso Primary School.
- In Shire, UNHCR co-chairs the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Network, together with IRC. A training of trainers (ToT) is to be undertaken.
- In Mekelle, protection staff have undertaken protection monitoring in the new IDP sites. UNHCR is also conducting regular protection desk and protection counselling at the IDP sites in order to listen to the protection concerns from IDPs.
- In Afar region, UNHCR has signed a partnership with EECMY (Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus) to participate in the IDPs' humanitarian response in the region. Based on the project agreement, EECMY is currently recruiting social workers from the community in four woredas and started a discussion on coordination and project implementation of the project at the regional level. An assessment is planned to be conducted soon on protection monitoring



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

- In Mai Tsebri, 919 families (4,011 individuals) received CRIs between the 23 and 25 March.
- In Mekelle, UNHCR provided CRIs to 1,000 families through its partner IHS.
- In Shire, 2,000 families have been provided with CRIs through UNHCR's partner IHS.
- In Mekelle, a new IDP site with capacity for hosting 10,000 persons has been identified and it is expected that 7,000-8,000 IDPs can be relocated before the start of rains in June. BoLSA (the Government's Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs) has approached UNHCR for support in identifying vulnerable individuals and families for priority to be relocated to the new site in Mekelle
- In Afar region, NRC, IOM, APDA, ANE provided 4,800 NFIs and emergency shelter at different IDP sites in March.



### FOOD SECURITY

- In Afar region, 2,900 quantal of food were provided to the IDPs by the regional and national disaster management commission in the 8 woredas hosting this population during the months of March. In addition, Ethiopian Red Cross, DEC, Friendship Support Association provided food and food supply for 1, 870 households.

## Issues and Challenges

### Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps

- A new location to build transitional shelters remains a critical gap requiring urgent solution. Existing emergency shelters will only address the needs of refugees for a short period and under the current dry conditions.

### Shire

- Additional sites are urgently needed in order to initiate the process of relocation and provision of adequate shelter and WASH facilities prior to the start of the rainy season.

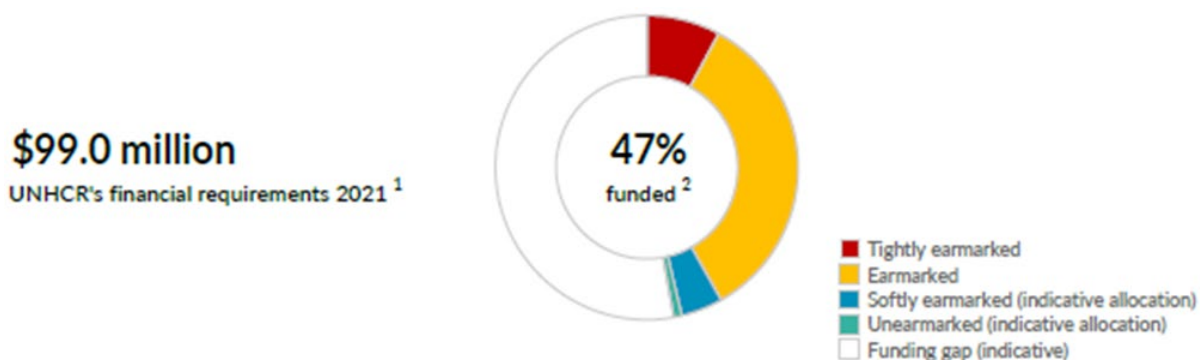
### Mekelle

- IDPs cite insecurity, lack of food, and inadequate shelter as their main challenges; lack of clean water and inadequate latrine facilities are also extremely problematic (and expected to become more so once the rains begin).

# Ethiopia Emergency Situation Funding Update

(as of 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021)

The [UNHCR Regional Appeal for the Ethiopia Emergency Situation \(Tigray\)](#) covers the period January to June 2021 and highlights the needs of approximately \$99 million for Ethiopia and Sudan. Ethiopia's needs within the appeal amount to \$49.7 million (\$32.3 million for refugee response and \$17.4 million for IDP response\*. 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, the Government of Japan and the United States of America, alongside situation level funding from Finland, Luxembourg and Private Donors.



*\*These needs will also be reflected in the larger Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 and Country Refugee Response Plan 2021*

**CONTRIBUTIONS <sup>3</sup> | USD**

	■ Unearmarked	■ Softly earmarked	■ Earmarked	■ Tightly earmarked	Total
United States of America	-	-	19,130,000	-	19,130,000
European Union	-	-	-	2,799,989	2,799,989
Finland	-	2,389,486	-	-	2,389,486
UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe	-	866,882	-	-	866,882
United Kingdom	-	-	810,811	-	810,811
Novo Nordisk Foundation	-	327,004	-	-	327,004
Luxembourg	-	305,998	-	-	305,998
Latter-day Saints Charities	-	-	-	172,200	172,200
Other private donors	-	182,000	-	-	182,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	-	<b>4,071,370</b>	<b>19,940,811</b>	<b>2,972,189</b>	<b>26,984,370</b>
Indicative allocation of funds and adjustments <sup>6</sup>	728,022	360,772	13,888,022	4,832,359	19,809,175
<b>Total</b>	<b>728,022</b>	<b>4,432,142</b>	<b>33,828,833</b>	<b>7,804,548</b>	<b>46,793,546</b>

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 CONTRIBUTIONS <sup>4</sup> | USD**

United States of America 42.2 million | Sweden 3.5 million | Denmark 2.9 million | Canada 2.9 million | Switzerland 2 million

Education Cannot Wait | IGAD | Ireland | Netherlands | Private donors

**■ UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS <sup>5</sup> | USD**

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Germany 22.1 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Spain 13.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | 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 (\$46,793,546) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$52,198,010 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.
- Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contributed \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.
- Includes an adjustment for generous contributions from Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom that were received and acknowledged in 2020, but that can be used in 2021, thereby increasing the funds available to the Ethiopia Emergency Situation in 2021.



## 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.

Following 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 some 20 international staff to Tigray region to support the scale up of the response and currently counts more than 80 staff in the region.

### CONTACTS

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### LINKS

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