



# Ethiopia Tigray Emergency

## Immediate regional needs (November - December 2020)

### Figures at a glance



**43,000+**

TOTAL NEW ARRIVALS FROM ETHIOPIA

**2-3,000**

NEW ARRIVALS AVERAGE PER DAY

**L2 emergency**

DECLARED IN ETHIOPIA AND SUDAN

**\$8.9 million**

TOTAL REQUIREMENTS (Djibouti \$1.4 million; Ethiopia \$1.5; and Sudan \$6 million)

Since armed conflict broke out in early November 2020, a full-scale humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Tens of thousands of people have fled ongoing fighting to seek safety elsewhere within the country or into neighbouring Sudan.

As of 25 November, 43,293 Ethiopian asylum-seekers have crossed into East Sudan, mostly from the Tigray region, at an average pace of 2-3,000 people a day. Inside Tigray, services for over 96,000 Eritrean refugees hosted mainly in four camps have been seriously disrupted following the declaration of a six-month State of Emergency. Conditions inside Tigray, where there are now as well an estimated 100,000 IDPs, are becoming more difficult by the day, with power outages and food and fuel supplies becoming extremely scarce. The situation is rapidly evolving, and priority needs and strategies to deliver assistance depend largely on the security situation and logistical challenges, as well as on risk management and coordination with UNHCR partners and stakeholders.

UNHCR is appealing for \$8.9 million to cover its initial emergency response. A comprehensive regional appeal with revised requirements for 2021 will be released in December/January 2021.

*Above: Ethiopian refugees, fleeing clashes in the country's northern Tigray region, cross the border into Hamdayet, Sudan, over the Tekeze river. © UNHCR/Hazim Elhag*

## Ethiopian new arrivals trends into (East) Sudan | as of 25 November 2020

### Total new arrivals from Ethiopia<sup>1</sup>



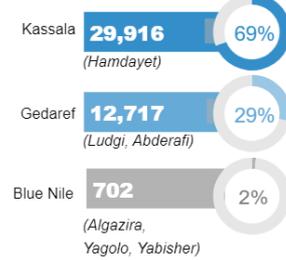
**43,293**  
Individuals

<sup>1</sup> Since 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2020.

### Daily Arrival Trends



### Per State



Arrivals average per day <sup>2</sup> (since 10<sup>th</sup> Nov)

**2,696**

<sup>2</sup> Arrivals average since beginning of Nov 2,279

Beginning of November 2020, UNHCR has recorded an influx of asylum seekers at border entry points in East Sudan from Ethiopia, after military confrontations in the Tigray region in northern Ethiopia.

UNHCR's teams at the border areas of the eastern Sudanese states of Kassala and Gedaref are working with the Sudanese Commissioner of Refugees (CoR), local authorities and partners to monitor and respond to the situation, as well mobilizing resources to provide life-saving assistance services to the new arrivals. Inter-agency coordination and contingency response planning is well underway.

### Estimated Demographic Data<sup>3</sup>



45% Children (0 - 17 yrs)



51% Adults (18-59 yrs)



4% Elderly (+60 yrs)

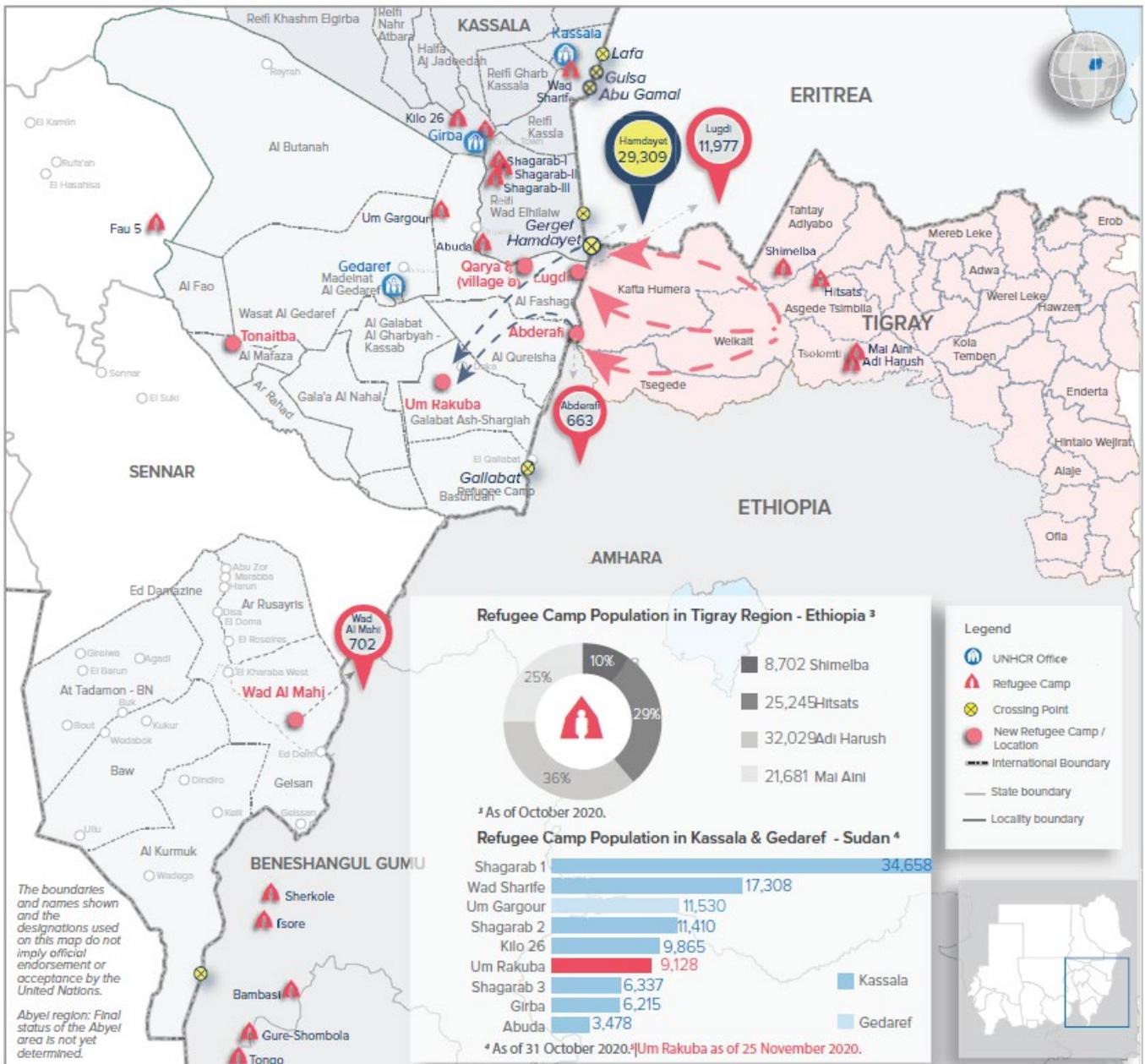


43% Female



57% Male

<sup>3</sup> The estimated demographic data is based on convey movement lists captured by authorities at Hamdayet border-point (for 7000 Ind).



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Abyei region: Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

## UNHCR's response to date

In **Sudan**, UNHCR is working with authorities and multiple partners to provide life-saving assistance to the thousands of Ethiopian women, children and men arriving in search of refuge. UNHCR and partners have full access to the border, which has remained open for refugees fleeing. UNHCR and the Sudanese Commissioner for Refugees (COR) are screening and registering new arrivals, and temporarily sheltering them in transit centres located near the border entry points. Water and meals are being provided, as well as health screening, including for COVID-19.

Protection teams are identifying persons at heightened risk and referring them to specialized services including pregnant women, persons with disabilities, unaccompanied children and older persons. Counselling is available for survivors of gender-based violence.

UNHCR and authorities are setting up a new refugee camp at Um Rakuba, 80 km from the border, to which over 9,000 people have been relocated so far. Additional sites are urgently needed and currently being identified. Reports suggest that new arrivals will continue, requiring significant additional resources to address these growing needs.

In **Ethiopia** UNHCR along with sister UN agencies have called on all parties to respect the safety and security of all civilians in Tigray and is ramping up to provide life-saving protection and assistance to support the thousands forced to flee. UNHCR, in partnership with the Government's Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), UN agencies and NGO partners, is preparing to resume protection and humanitarian assistance for the over 96,000 Eritrean refugees hosted in Tigray, as soon as access to the region and persons of concern is secured. The Office has pre-positioned core relief items, including blankets, jerry cans and sleeping mats for the

existing refugee population, some of which may also be used to respond to the growing number of IDPs inside Tigray. Additional items are being airlifted to Ethiopia in preparation for the anticipated humanitarian response operation.

Scenario planning and preparation for potential refugee movements into other neighbouring countries is ongoing, with UNHCR advocating borders remain open. A regional contingency plan is being updated and UNHCR country operations in **Djibouti** and **Eritrea** are stepping up emergency relief preparedness as the situation evolves.



*A child is screened at a transit center in Hamdayet border crossing near Sudan, after the family fled ongoing clashes in Ethiopia's Tigray region.*

© UNHCR/Ariane Maxiandeau

## Urgent needs



### Protection and registration

**Sudan:** At Hamdayet transit center, insufficient equipment and appropriate structures, poor connectivity and lack of energy sources is making basic and timely registration a difficult undertaking. The construction of a registration site and additional registration equipment is urgently required. In parallel, registration facilities are being established at Um Rakuba to ensure adequate and tailored assistance to the newly-arrived refugees. However, this site is some 366 km from the Hamdayet border crossing, and lacks adequate infrastructure of all types.

**Ethiopia:** UNHCR anticipates providing protection services to an estimated 25,000 Eritrean refugees hosted in the Tigray region who may have been displaced or otherwise particularly affected by the ongoing conflict, as well as to some 50,000 IDPs during the first phase of the emergency between November and December. Protection support will include reception services, screening and documentation of affected refugees and IDPs, support to unaccompanied and separated children, assistance to persons at heightened risk,

and gender-based violence response and counselling services.

**Djibouti:** Asylum-seekers will be transferred from transit centres close to the border to the existing refugee villages of Ali Addeh, Holl Holl and Ara Oussa. There are no recent arrivals reported in Djibouti, however UNHCR and partners are working with the government to prepare for 5,000-10,000 asylum-seekers from Ethiopia. Ethiopians fleeing from the conflict in Tigray will be granted prima facie refugee status as agreed by the Government, while other Ethiopian asylum-seekers will continue to have their claims considered on an individual basis. There are also considerable numbers of Ethiopian migrants who arrived in Djibouti after returning from Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Those who are no longer able to return due to the conflict will be recognized as refugees sur place in Djibouti. Given the close commercial ties between it and the Tigray region, thousands of Tigrayan merchants and truck drivers are also currently stuck.



### Shelter and infrastructure, site planning and core relief items

**Sudan:** The Um Rakuba site requires urgent rehabilitation, including the construction of 2,000 additional shelters as a priority. These will help avoid congestion of communal areas and reduce the risks of contamination from COVID-19. Partners are also in the process of supporting the establishment of temporary communal shelters and kitchens, and distribution of core relief items to new arrivals is ongoing.

**Ethiopia:** Services to refugees in Tigray have been disrupted and, with the conflict expected to escalate, UNHCR anticipates that some 50,000 of the 96,000 refugees hosted in the region could be displaced and/or will need to be relocated to safer areas within Ethiopia. Shelter materials and other core relief items are being procured to respond to these needs.

The growing number of IDPs is also of concern and UNHCR is part of inter-agency efforts to prepare for a significant relief operation once access is secured. In Shire, before fighting broke out, UNHCR was working under the coordination of the Ethiopian Red Cross Society to deliver core relief items to some 5,000 newly-arrived IDPs. These activities will need to be significantly scaled-up and will require additional resources when operations can be resumed.

**Djibouti:** Preparedness measures will include the repositioning of core relief items and the establishment of adequate reception facilities for new arrivals. Core relief items for 1,000 families and household energy-related items are required immediately.



## Water, sanitation and hygiene

**Sudan:** UNHCR has identified four existing boreholes in Um Rakuba that require rehabilitation before they can be made operable, and three elevated tanks are needed to provide an adequate supply of water. Additionally, an estimated 300 shared latrines and related waste-management systems are urgently needed while partners work to scale up and support the constructions of emergency communal latrines.

**Djibouti:** Priority WASH activities entail the procurement of water trucks and WASH equipment.



## Public health

**Sudan:** Emergency health services are currently provided through several clinics run by the Sudanese Red Crescent, MSF, and Mercy Corps in addition to small roving teams from the Ministry of Health. However, the capacity to respond to the health needs of new arrivals is being overwhelmed by the constantly increasing numbers. Additional primary health care infrastructures, equipment, ambulances, drugs and health professionals are a priority. COVID-19 screenings are in place at registration centres, including social distancing measures, temperature and symptom screenings and

contact tracing of suspected cases. Health teams are also working to establish isolation areas for potential cases. The distribution of masks and soap is ongoing, with handwashing taps available, but additional supplies are required.

**Djibouti:** Preparation measures for health services in reception facilities require significant improvement, including additional drugs and ambulances. COVID-19 screening facilities and supply also need to be set-up.



## Logistics

**Sudan:** Transportation from the border areas, to reception points, and onwards to Um Rakuba camps are currently being covered by existing resources. However, the deployment of trucks is extremely costly, particularly in hard to reach border areas and additional resources are required to maintain these transportation services.



## Staffing and administration

UNHCR staff have been re-deployed to Kassala and Girba in **Sudan**, however, improved accommodation in proximity to the emergency response is urgently needed. **Djibouti** also requires additional human resources to support the response at reception facilities.

*Below: Ethiopian refugees, fleeing clashes in the country's northern Tigray region, cross the border into Hamdayet, Sudan, over the Tekeze river. © UNHCR/Hazim Elhag*



## Key challenges

**Communications and logistics:** The area along the Sudanese border where refugees are arriving and being sheltered is very remote. For example, relocating arrivals from Hamdayet to Um Rakuba takes a full day, and it will take two days travel from Hamdayet to reach a new site identified by the Government at Tenetba. As well, communications are very difficult as most of Eastern Sudan is out of internet and cellular coverage.

**Access in Ethiopia:** Flights in and out of the region are prohibited, road travel is limited because of the security situation and lack of

fuel, and communication lines are shut down. Conditions inside Tigray are becoming more difficult by the day with power outages and food and fuel supplies becoming extremely scarce. The UN has been actively advocating and negotiating for access to bring in fuel and humanitarian supplies, and to reach people in need.

In **Djibouti**, the border area is also very remote and overall living conditions are poor. The area is also out of internet and cellular coverage.

## Coordination

At the regional level, Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) partners are meeting to coordinate planning and undertake joint advocacy initiative and resource mobilization efforts in response to this new refugee emergency. The regional inter-agency coordination mechanism builds upon close consultation processes at country level.

In **Sudan**, operational coordination of the multi-sector refugee response at field level takes place in the Refugee Working Groups (RWG), which are co-chaired by UNHCR and COR. Specifically, the inter-agency response to the large refugee influx from Ethiopia is coordinated by the Kassala-based working group for the entire Eastern region and a sub-group RWG has been established in Gedaref. Other Sector working groups in Kassala include WASH, protection, health, food assistance, food security and livelihoods and shelter and non-food items.

Sectoral coordination meetings are taking place regularly and partners have finalized a 6-month inter-agency response plan for 100,000 refugees. COR and UNHCR lead the refugee response in collaboration with RRP partners in accordance with the Refugee Coordination Model. COR and UNHCR co-chair the Refugee Consultation Forum (RCF), which is the main inter-agency coordination mechanism for macro-level response planning, coordination, and policy and guidance development. The RCF is supported by technical advisory groups, with engagement of the IASC sector coordination groups. COR and UNHCR will continue to lead inter-agency planning, monitoring, and reporting in the context of this RRRP.

In **Ethiopia**, humanitarian coordination is led by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Office of the Resident Coordinator supported by OCHA. UNHCR also leads the Protection cluster for the IDP response, co-leads the Shelter cluster and leads the Refugee response for the Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia in line with the Refugee Coordination Model.

In **Djibouti**, inter-agency coordination mechanisms have been established in Ali-Sabieh. Meetings are co-chaired by the Executive Secretary of ONARS and UNHCR to discuss planning and response to this refugee crisis in close coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator, UN agencies and NGOs, including development actors.

## Funding the response

UNHCR is appealing for \$8.9 million to cover its initial emergency response. A comprehensive regional appeal with revised requirements for 2021 will be released in December/January 2021.

### Tigray emergency financial requirements | November - December 2020

Country	Sudan	Ethiopia	Djibouti	Total requirements
<b>Sector</b>				
Protection	1,050,000	60,069	143,750	1,253,819
Education	-	-	41,069	41,069
Shelter	1,300,000	584,000	-	1,884,000
Core relief items	900,000	855,931	358,679	2,114,610
WASH	800,000	-	185,000	985,000
Health	500,000	-	83,475	583,475
Logistics	450,000	-	400,000	850,000
Staffing/Admin	1,000,000	-	200,000	1,200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>1,411,974</b>	<b>8,911,974</b>



#### Sudan Inter-agency Refugee Emergency Response Plan

The Sudan Inter-agency Refugee Emergency Response Plan for the first six months of 2021, led by UNHCR, was developed and will be launched by UNHCR during High Commissioner Grandi's mission to Sudan on 29 November 2020.

The appeal targets 100,000 newly arriving refugees and the funding requirements amount to \$49.37 million for UNHCR within the full requirements of \$147 million for over 30 partners.

#### The importance of flexible funding

Flexible financial support greatly facilitates UNHCR being able to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. Flexible funds enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved.

UNHCR is grateful to the donors which have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions. Additional financial and operational information is available on the Global Focus website ([reporting.unhcr.org](https://reporting.unhcr.org)).