

Ethiopia – Tigray Conflict

MARCH 18, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

6 MILLION	4.5 MILLION	4 MILLION	2.3 MILLION	61,956
Estimated Population of Tigray	Number of People in Tigray Requiring Humanitarian Assistance	Estimated Number of People in Urgent Need of Food Assistance	Number of People Targeted Through the Northern Ethiopia HRP	Number of Ethiopian Refugees Arriving in Eastern Sudan Since November
GoE – 2017	UN – March 2021	Food Security Cluster – January 2021	UN – December 2020	UNHCR – March 2021

- On March 3, the GoE announced a transition to a notification system for international staff traveling to Tigray.
- Relocations and displacement from Tigray’s Western Zone result in influxes in Shire town and elevated humanitarian needs.
- Nine USAID/BHA implementing partners have reached approximately 1.3 million people in Tigray with multi-sector humanitarian assistance since the outbreak of the conflict, including 994,000 people reached with emergency food assistance through the USAID/BHA-supported CRS-led JEOP, as of March 10.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Tigray Response in FY 2021 and FY 2020	USAID/BHA ^{1,2}	\$112,947,625
	State/PRM ³	\$17,135,000 ⁴
	Total	\$130,082,625⁵

¹ USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

² USAID/BHA FY 2020 funding includes emergency food assistance from the former Office of Food for Peace and non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.

³ U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM). In addition, State/PRM provided \$22,633,000 towards the Tigray Response in the region.

⁴ Funding in this fact sheet includes assistance to refugees residing in Tigray region, which is also reported in the USAID/BHA Ethiopia fact sheet as part of the Ethiopia Complex Emergency.

⁵ This total includes \$326,361 in FY 2020 supplemental funding through USAID/BHA for COVID-19 preparedness and response activities.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Relief Actors Utilize New GoE System to Access Tigray; Challenges Persist

In early March, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) announced the transition to a notification system for international staff travelling to Tigray. Under the new system, which replaced the previous access approval process, relief actors must inform the GoE Ministry of Peace of their intent to travel to the region prior to their departure. Several relief actors have successfully utilized the notifications system since its implementation to deploy additional staff to Tigray, indicating progress towards increased humanitarian access.

Other impediments to the rapid expansion of response efforts to Tigray persist, including into rural areas of the region, where humanitarian needs are likely dire. Relief actors continue to emphasize the need for six-month visas for international relief staff, with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) noting that they would deploy additional surge staff for the Tigray response if longer-term visas for international workers were assured. In addition, relief agencies lack access to sufficient emergency communications equipment amid continued telecommunications service disruptions across the region and recurring blackouts in areas where services had resumed, such as Tigray's capital city of Mekele. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Ethiopia and U.S. Government (USG) leadership continue to engage the GoE on allowing the importation of emergency communications equipment.

Increased Relocations From Western Zone Strain Response Capacity

Relocations from and ethnically-motivated violence in Tigray's Western Zone, which has been controlled by Amharan regional authorities since November 2020, have resulted in the exodus of thousands of individuals from the region in recent months, primarily to North Western Zone, the UN reports. Relocations have increased in recent weeks, with more than 45,000 displaced or relocated people registered in North Western Zone's Shire town as of March 8, and reports of approximately 1,500 additional people arriving daily; relief actors estimates indicate that approximately 260,000 people had arrived in Shire by the week of March 8. Displaced or relocated individuals urgently require emergency food, shelter, protection, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance, but have received little aid to date; as such, the UN has underscored the need to rapidly scale up the provision of multi-sector assistance in Shire. In addition, relief actors have received reports regarding human rights abuses in Tigray, which U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken denounced on March 10.

As schools begin to reopen in Shire, relief actors are also becoming concerned about the potential forced relocation of displaced or relocated individuals, the majority of whom are sheltering in educational facilities and other collective sites. Relief actors are working to identify alternative sites and continue to discuss methods to resume education services while ensuring any IDP relocations from schools are safe, dignified, and voluntary.

Relief Actors Work to Scale Up Services at Adi Harush and Mai Ani Camps

Critical services are resuming in Tigray's Adi Harush and Mai Aini refugee camps, and Eritrean refugees arriving in the camps from Shire and other locations following the closure of Hitsats and Shimelba refugee camps have received food rations and other assistance, according to State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). To accommodate newly-arriving refugees secondarily displaced within Tigray, UNHCR and other actors are working to identify available land near Adi Harush and Mai Aini for the construction of emergency shelters for up to 15,000 individuals.

Insecurity Continues as Relief Actors Reach 1.5 Million With Assistance

Armed clashes in Tigray’s Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, and Southern Zones continue to restrict humanitarian access to vulnerable populations, with at least 950,000 individuals—including 460,000 people in Central Zone—still inaccessible to relief actors, the UN reports. Additionally, a majority of the region’s health facilities have been damaged and looted, while ongoing health facility lootings, particularly in Southern Zone, continue to impede access to health services. According to a recent Médecins Sans Frontières assessment of 106 medical facilities across the region, only 13 percent were functioning normally and nearly 70 percent had been looted, while approximately 20 percent of facilities visited by the NGO were occupied by armed actors. Despite ongoing challenges, NGOs operating in Tigray had reached approximately 1.5 million people with humanitarian assistance as of March 10 according to the Humanitarian International NGO Forum. Of this total, USAID/BHA partners have reached approximately 1.3 million people with multi-sector assistance, including nearly 994,000 individuals who had received emergency food assistance as of March 10 through the USAID/BHA-funded Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led Joint Emergency Operations Program (JEOP).

4.5 Million People in Tigray Require Humanitarian Assistance in 2021

An estimated 4.5 million people in Tigray—approximately 75 percent of the GoE’s 2017 record of the region’s population, the most recent available—require humanitarian assistance as a result of ongoing conflict in the region, compared with 950,000 in need of humanitarian assistance prior to the conflict’s onset, according to the 2021 Ethiopia Humanitarian Needs Overview. The collapse of public services, including water infrastructure, electricity supply, and health services; continued insecurity; and limited humanitarian access continues to generate displacement and exacerbate food insecurity, health risks, livelihood disruptions, malnutrition, and other needs in Tigray. As the evolving access opportunities in Tigray facilitate additional assessments, the UN reports that the number of individuals in need of life-saving assistance may increase.

KEY FIGURES



1.4 Million

People in Tigray targeted to receive USG emergency food assistance via the JEOP



994,000

People in Tigray reached with USG emergency food assistance via the JEOP to date

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

In response to acute food needs across Tigray, USAID/BHA is supporting the CRS-led JEOP, as well as WFP and other NGOs, to provide emergency food assistance—including commodities such as U.S.-sourced cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—to vulnerable people in the region. Through JEOP, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) had reached nearly 994,000 people with emergency two-month food rations in Mekele and Shire, as well as other *woredas*—or districts—in Central, Eastern, Southern, and South Eastern zones, as of March 10. Additionally, in response to nutrition needs in Tigray, USAID/BHA partner the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is distributing nutrition commodities—including quantities of High Energy Biscuits and ready-to-use therapeutic foods sufficient to meet the daily needs of up to 27,000 children younger than five years of age for two weeks—to conflict-affected populations.

HEALTH

With State/PRM support, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has distributed essential medicines and other medical supplies to violence affected health facilities in Tigray as well as in neighboring northern Amhara, and has also supported people displaced by the conflict in Tigray. State/PRM also supports UNHCR to provide health assistance to refugees in Tigray.

PROTECTION

In response to protection needs resulting from the conflict in Tigray, USAID/BHA supports the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and UNICEF, which conduct programs as humanitarian access restrictions and security conditions permit. IRC is expanding its protection services in Shire with USAID/BHA support, including by establishing GBV and child protection referral pathways with service providers and disseminating information on sexual exploitation and available protection services to 1,600 IDPs sheltering in the town. In addition, State/PRM supports UNHCR to provide protection and other multi-sector assistance to refugees and IDPs.

SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

USAID/BHA supports the provision of shelter and settlements assistance to conflict-affected populations in Tigray—as well as in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions—through the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Rapid Response Fund, as well as the Ethiopian Red Cross Society. USAID/BHA partners are constructing emergency shelters in Mekele for people displaced by conflict and distributing relief commodity kits—including blankets, bed mats, and washbasins—to recently displaced individuals, among other activities. In addition, State/PRM supports UNHCR to provide shelter assistance to refugees and IDPs in Tigray.



140,000

People in Tigray reached with water trucking services by CRS through the UNICEF RRM

WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM fund the provision of critical WASH assistance throughout Tigray. USG humanitarian partners are distributing WASH supplies and other relief commodities to conflict-affected and displaced populations, as well as delivering equipment to support the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure damaged by the conflict. USAID/BHA-supported water trucking services are assisting up to 94,000 people in Eastern Zone, while IRC has initiated water trucking services in and around Shire. Meanwhile, through the USAID/BHA-supported, UNICEF-led Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), CRS had reached more than 140,000 people across Central, Eastern, and Western zones with emergency water services, including reaching approximately 48,000 individuals with fuel to support pumping water and an estimated 92,000 people with water trucking, as of late February. In addition, through the RRM, CRS reached an estimated 28,000 people with hygiene promotion campaigns.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Following weeks of escalating tensions between regional and federal authorities, clashes erupted between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) in several locations across Tigray on November 4. Although the GoE declared victory against the TPLF on November 28, security conditions remain volatile across Tigray, with active conflict continuing to endanger populations in affected areas. Insecurity and its effects on livelihoods, markets, and the availability of services have generated and exacerbated humanitarian needs among local populations in the region, endangering and displacing populations within Tigray, into other regions of Ethiopia, and into adjacent areas of eastern Sudan.
- On November 17, 2020, Michael A. Raynor—U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia until January 2021—reissued a disaster declaration for Ethiopia for FY 2021 due to the continued humanitarian needs resulting from the complex emergency—including the conflict in Tigray—and the impact of ongoing climate, conflict, food insecurity, and health shocks on vulnerable populations. Separately, on October 16, 2020, Ambassador Raynor reissued a disaster declaration for Ethiopia due to the sustained widespread impacts of desert locust infestations in the country.
- On March 1, 2021, USAID activated a DART to lead USG humanitarian response efforts to the crisis in Tigray. USAID also stood up a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team to support the DART.

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CONFLICT RESPONSE IN FY 2021¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	Tigray-wide	\$300,000
CRS	Food Assistance-57,120 Metric Tons (MT) of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	Tigray-wide	\$29,992,763
	Program Support		\$52,520
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$30,345,283
STATE/PRM			
UNHCR	Multi-sector assistance	Tigray-wide	\$12,495,000
ICRC	Multi-sector assistance	Tigray-wide	\$4,640,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$17,135,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CONFLICT RESPONSE IN FY 2021			\$47,480,283

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CONFLICT RESPONSE IN FY 2020

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
CRS	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers, 33,690 MT of U.S. In-Kind Food Aid	Eastern Zone, Mekele, North Western Zone	\$68,000,000
	Health, WASH	Tigray-wide	\$215,250

Ethiopian Red Cross Society	Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Western Zone	\$695,341
iMMAP	HCIMA	Mekele	\$47,405
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Central Zone, Mekele, North Western Zone	\$676,639
IRC	Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$579,783
	Nutrition	Mekele	\$42,823
Pathfinder International	Health	North Western Zone, Western Zone	\$111,111
REST	Food Assistance—Cash Vouchers	Central Zone, Eastern Zone, South Eastern Zone, Southern Zone	\$4,109,593
UNICEF	Nutrition	Tigray-wide	\$124,397
WFP	Food Assistance-Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP)	North Western Zone	\$8,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$82,602,342
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CONFLICT RESPONSE IN FY 2020²			\$82,602,342

TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CONFLICT RESPONSE IN FY 2020–2021 **\$130,082,625**

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of March 18, 2021.

² This total represents funding previously reported on the Ethiopia FY 2020 Fact Sheet #4 and East Africa FY 2020 Development & Disaster Risk Reduction Fact Sheet, both dated September 30, 2020. This funding was redirected to address new humanitarian needs stemming from the conflict in Tigray.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
 - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
 - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)