



## Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Crisis

OCTOBER 29, 2021

### SITUATION AT A GLANCE

**6-7** 

People Facing Severe Acute Food Insecurity in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray

USAID - August 2021

5.2

People in Tigray Requiring Humanitarian Assistance

UN - May 2021

**2.1** 

People Displaced by the Crisis Across Northern Ethiopia

IOM - August 2021

49,490

Refugees From Northern Ethiopia in Eastern Sudan Since November 2020

UNHCR - September 2021

- Escalating hostilities in parts of Afar, Amhara, and
  Tigray regions have exacerbated humanitarian needs
  and limited access to populations in need, with GoE
  airstrikes in Tigray and lack of civil-military
  coordination prompting the suspension of UNHAS
  flights to the region.
- Access constraints continue to prevent urgentlyneeded supplies from reaching Tigray, while a severe humanitarian fuel shortage has caused relief organizations to significantly scale down or suspend most operations in the region, the UN reports.
- USAID/BHA AtA Sarah Charles visited Ethiopia from October 20 to 23 and urged parties to the conflict to enable humanitarian access to all populations in need in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray.



### **TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING**

For the Northern Ethiopia Crisis Response in FY 2021 and FY 2020

USAID/BHA<sup>1,2</sup> \$560,592,662

State/PRM<sup>3</sup> \$56,795,000<sup>4</sup>

Total \$617,387,662<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM). In addition, State/PRM provided \$45,388,900 toward the northern Ethiopia response in the Horn of Africa region, bringing the total U.S. Government (USG) funding to nearly \$663 million. A portion of this funding is also reported in the USG Sudan fact sheet.

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

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>This total includes \$326,361 in FY 2020 supplemental funding through USAID/BHA for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) preparedness and response activities.

## **KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

# Hostilities Escalate in Northern Ethiopia, With Airstrikes Prompting UNHAS Suspension of Flights to Tigray

Since mid-October, hostilities in northern Ethiopia between Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF)-aligned and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-aligned forces have significantly escalated, particularly in eastern Amhara Region, triggering additional population displacement and further restricting humanitarian access, the UN reports. In Amhara, active fighting in parts of North Gondar, North Wello, South Wello, and Wag Hamra zones has prevented humanitarian access to populations in need, while clashes in Afar Region's Awra and Ewa woredas, or districts, located in Zone 2, have resulted in an unverified number of civilian casualties. Additionally, troop movement near South Wello's Dessie and Kombolcha towns had prompted some humanitarian organizations to temporarily halt operations in the area as of October 22, according to relief actors. Regional authorities estimate more than 400,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are residing across Dessie and Kombolcha, though validated figures remain unavailable.

Meanwhile, the ENDF launched a series of airstrikes in Tigray Region beginning on October 18, with attacks in the regional capital city of Mekele, North Western Zone's Mai Tsebri town, and elsewhere resulting in at least 13 civilian deaths, an unconfirmed number of civilian injuries, and damage to civilian infrastructure as of October 28, international media and the UN report. Moreover, on October 22, airstrikes in Mekele forced a UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flight carrying II passengers bound for Mekele to reroute back to Ethiopia's capital city of Addis Ababa. The UN had obtained requisite Government of Ethiopia (GoE) clearances to conduct the flight, and not received prior warning of the airstrikes. As a result, effective October 23, UNHAS suspended flights to Tigray indefinitely, leaving humanitarian organizations operating in the region with no options for emergency air evacuations, as commercial flights to Tigray remain suspended. In response, the UN has called on the GoE and other parties to the conflict to provide security assurances to enable the resumption of humanitarian flights to Tigray. Relief organizations have been working to reduce their overall staffing footprint in Tigray in recent weeks; while humanitarians are committed to providing assistance, severe operational constraints compounded by increasing insecurity have prompted several organizations to withdraw some nonessential staff members, the UN reports, Furthermore, relief actors now lack means to transport operating cash into the region. Prior to the UNHAS suspension, on October 21, the GoE Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) notified USAID partners that cash would no longer be allowed on UNHAS flights; these flights were the only method to bring funds into Tigray, where the banking system has remained largely non-functioning since late June due to conflict.

## Access Constraints Prevent Critical Supplies From Reaching Tigray

The GoE's de facto blockade of Tigray continues to significantly inhibit humanitarian operations in the region. The route between Afar's regional capital city of Semera and Mekele remains the only viable overland option for transporting humanitarian commodities into Tigray. Approximately 1,100 trucks of supplies reached Tigray between July I and October 18, but this represents only 13 percent of requirements needed to sustain response operations during that period, the UN reports.

No humanitarian convoys have reached Tigray since October 18, as regional security forces at Afar checkpoints and opposition from local communities in Afar have prevented recent convoy attempts organized by the Logistics Cluster—the coordinating body for humanitarian logistics activities, comprising UN agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other stakeholders—from

entering the region. In addition, despite securing necessary approvals from the DRMC, the Logistics Cluster has been blocked from transporting fuel tankers into Tigray since early August, resulting in a severe fuel shortage in the region. As of October 22, fuel supplies available to humanitarians inside Tigray were depleted, with most relief organizations halting or significantly reducing operations—including food distributions in many rural areas; water trucking and distribution of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) items; nutrition screening and treatment activities; mobile health and nutrition team (MHNT) visits to populations in need; and outreach services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV)—as a result of the humanitarian fuel shortage, according to the UN. From October 14 to 20, only about 38,000 people received food assistance in Tigray due to a lack of fuel available to humanitarians, representing only 4.4 percent of the estimated 870,000 people requiring food assistance every week.

## Food Insecurity Projected to Worsen Across Afar, Amhara, and Tigray

The spread of conflict from Tigray into neighboring Afar and Amhara has significantly deteriorated food security conditions. Ongoing hostilities and population displacement have disrupted agricultural and income-generating activities and reduced access to emergency food assistance that had previously enabled vulnerable households to meet basic food needs prior to the conflict. In total, between 6 and 7 million people across Afar, Amhara, and Tigray are projected to require emergency food assistance through January 2022, according to USAID analysis. The worst-affected populations in all three regions face Catastrophe—IPC 5—levels of food insecurity, which will likely generate high levels of wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—and the risk of hunger-related mortality, according to an October Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) alert.<sup>6</sup>

Tigray remains the region of highest concern, with the majority of the region's population facing Emergency—IPC 4—or worse levels of food insecurity. Conflict-related disruptions to agricultural activities have resulted in a limited harvest, further reducing populations' access to food. Constraints on transporting food and critical supplies into the region have exacerbated food insecurity, even as fighting has abated across much of Tigray since July as hostilities shifted to its borders with Afar and Amhara, as well as Eritrea. Meanwhile, high food prices combined with reduced access to income-generating opportunities have resulted in Emergency level outcomes for some households in conflict-affected areas of Afar and Amhara, where humanitarian actors face considerable challenges in delivering assistance.

## USAID/BHA Leadership, DART Visit Crisis-Affected Populations and Call for Improved Humanitarian Access

Between October 20 and 23, USAID/BHA Assistant to the Administrator (AtA) Sarah Charles traveled to Addis Ababa to meet with the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), government officials, implementing partners, and UN leaders involved in the humanitarian response to advocate for unhindered access to affected populations in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray in accordance with international humanitarian law. AtA Charles also traveled with U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Geeta Pasi and USAID Mission Director Sean Jones to Amhara's regional capital city of Bahir Dar to meet with regional authorities, gain insight into GoE priorities for humanitarian assistance in the region, and hear from USAID partners about challenges in responding to conflict-affected communities. Additionally, AtA Charles met with IDPs, who shared personal accounts of the crisis and the living conditions of displaced households sheltering in Bahir Dar. The visit highlighted the urgent need for the safe and timely

<sup>6</sup> The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity. A Famine—IPC 5—classification applies to a wider geographical location, while the term classification of Catastrophe—also IPC 5—refers to a household. A household in Catastrophe has an extreme lack of food at the household level even with full employment of coping strategies. Famine is determined when more than 20 percent of households in an area are experiencing Catastrophe, when global acute malnutrition levels exceed 30 percent, and when the crude mortality rate exceeds two people per 10,000 persons per day.

movement of humanitarian supplies throughout Afar, Amhara, and Tigray; while the U.S. remains committed to relief efforts in northern Ethiopia, and continues to be the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia, authorities must enable implementing partners to reach affected populations with life-saving assistance.

#### **KEY FIGURES**

## **U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**



Crisis-affected people in Afar and Amhara reached with WFP emergency food assistance from August 15 to October 5



In response to acute food needs across northern Ethiopia, USAID/BHA is supporting the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), as well as the UN World Food Program (WFP) and other humanitarian partners, to provide emergency food assistance—including commodities such as U.S.-sourced cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—to vulnerable populations in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray. In Tigray, the JEOP and WFP reached approximately 774,000 people across Mekele and five of Tigray's six zones with food rations from September 9 to October 6, despite significant operational challenges. In Amhara, the JEOP expanded its caseload in response to rising needs, reaching more than 266,400 people with food assistance from early August to mid-October. Meanwhile, WFP delivered emergency food assistance to nearly 300,000 individuals affected by the crisis in Afar and Amhara between August 15 and October 5.



Children screened for wasting in Tigray by UNICEF from February to October

#### **NUTRITION**

With approximately \$24 million in FY 2021 funding, USAID/BHA supports 10 partners in their efforts to prevent and treat malnutrition across conflictaffected areas of northern Ethiopia. Using a community-based approach, USAID/BHA partners promote recommended infant and young child feeding practices through one-on-one counseling and group education sessions to improve nutrition outcomes. Additionally, USAID/BHA partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is distributing nutrition commodities—including High Energy Biscuits and ready-to-use therapeutic foods—to crisis-affected populations in Tigray. UNICEF and other partners are working to strengthen fixed-location health facilities and operating MHNTs, screening more than 1.3 million children for acute malnutrition and admitting more than 27,900 children with severe wasting—a life-threatening form of malnutrition—for treatment between February and October. In Afar and Amhara, UNICEF and USAID/BHA NGO partners are providing specialized treatment for malnutrition in children ages five years and younger and conducting infant and young child feeding counseling at community levels.



MHNTs in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray supported by USAID/BHA

#### **HEALTH**

The USG supports 13 partners providing critical health care services in northern Ethiopia through community health facilities and mobile health units. USAID/BHA partners are supporting more than 50 integrated MHNTs throughout Tigray, as well as more than 25 MHNTs in Afar and Amhara, which provide critically needed health and nutrition services to remote and hard-to-reach areas. MHNTs serve an essential function in areas where the

majority of health facilities have been damaged and looted and where ongoing insecurity continues to impede crisis-affected populations' access to health services. Additionally, partners are providing urgently required medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and personal protective equipment throughout Tigray, and are supporting the operation and rehabilitation of more than 300 health facilities. To mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on populations in Tigray, USAID/BHA partners are training local health care workers in infection prevention and control methods and strengthening community health coordination. With State/PRM support, an international NGO (INGO) has distributed essential medicines and other medical supplies to violence-affected health facilities in Tigray, as well as in northern Amhara. Additionally, State/PRM supports the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide health assistance to refugees in Tigray, including those sheltering in North Western Zone's Adi Harush and Mai Aini camps.



USG-supported partners providing dedicated protection services in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray

#### **PROTECTION**

In response to protection needs resulting from the crisis in northern Ethiopia, the USG supports 12 partner organizations conducting protection programs as humanitarian access and security conditions permit. Partners are expanding GBV case management support, training social workers and community-based case workers, providing dignity kits-which contain items to address the specific needs of women and girls—to GBV survivors, and establishing child-friendly spaces, among other activities. For example, with USAID/BHA support, the American Refugee Committee (ARC) launched protection services in Mekele in August, providing case management and psychosocial support services benefitting 250 individuals as of September 23. ARC also carried out awareness sessions, reaching 1,400 IDPs in Mekele with information on available protection services. In addition, State/PRM supports an INGO and UNHCR to provide protection and other multisector assistance to crisis-affected refugees and IDPs. With State/PRM support, UNHCR has scaled up protection services in Mai Ani and Adi Harush camps, as well as in Amhara's Dabat town, where the UN agency is working with regional authorities to develop a new camp to host crisisaffected refugees.



Rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting airlifted by USAID/BHA in coordination with IOM to Ethiopia to support needs in Tigray

#### **SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS**

With more than \$17 million in FY 2021 funding dedicated to shelter and settlements assistance, USAID/BHA supports crisis-affected populations in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray through implementing partners CRS, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Samaritan's Purse, and World Vision, as well as the IOM Rapid Response Fund (RRF). As of October 10, through the RRF, USAID/BHA partner IOM had reached nearly 92,000 crisis-affected individuals with emergency shelter assistance, and provided more than 196,000 individuals with life-saving relief commodities since the start of the conflict. Partners are also distributing relief commodity kits—which include bed mats, blankets, and wash basins—to recently displaced individuals, among other activities. In addition, State/PRM supports

UNHCR to provide shelter assistance to refugees and IDPs in Tigray.



#### **WASH**

USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners are distributing WASH supplies and other relief commodities to crisis-affected and displaced populations in northern Ethiopia, as well as delivering equipment to support the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure damaged during the crisis, constructing or rehabilitating water supply systems, and providing handwashing facilities in IDP sites and health facilities. USAID/BHA partner UNICEF provided safe drinking water through water trucking to nearly 76,100 people in Tigray and 32,500 people in Afar during September, and reached nearly 53,400 people in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray with critical WASH supplies. Meanwhile, with USAID/BHA support, the International Medical Corps (IMC) transported approximately 80 metric tons (MT) of WASH supplies through Logistics Cluster-led convoys to Tigray from July to October.



#### **LOGISTICS SUPPORT AND RELIEF COMMODITIES**

USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners are supporting essential logistics support for the humanitarian response in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray. With USAID/BHA support, WFP is providing critical coordination and logistics services, including critical transportation and storage of life-saving commodities, to the humanitarian community through the Logistics Cluster.

#### **CONTEXT IN BRIEF**

- Following weeks of escalating tensions between regional and federal authorities, clashes erupted between the TPLF and the ENDF in several locations across Tigray on November 4, 2020. Although the GoE declared victory November 28, clashes continued. After a sharp escalation in fighting in late June 2021, the GoE declared a unilateral ceasefire, ENDF elements withdrew from Tigray, and the TPLF gained control of much of the region as the conflict expanded to neighboring Afar and Amhara.
- Security conditions remain volatile, with active conflict continuing to endanger populations in affected areas of Afar, Amhara, and Tigray, including displacing individuals within Ethiopia and into adjacent areas of eastern Sudan.
- On November 17, 2020, Michael A. Raynor—U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia until January 2021—
  redeclared a disaster 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 redeclared a disaster 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 northern Ethiopia. USAID also stood up a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team to support the DART.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2021 1,2

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
	USAID/BHA		
ARC	Protection	Tigray-Mekele, Eastern, Central, North Western	\$1,500,000
CARE	Agriculture	Tigray–Eastern, South Eastern, Southern	\$9,175,461
CONCERN	Health, Nutrition	Amhara-North Gondar, South Wello; Tigray-South Eastern	\$800,000
CRS	Food Assistance–328,820 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	Amhara-North Wello, South Gondar, South Wello; Tigray-Mekele, Central, Eastern, South Eastern, Southern	\$276,863,088
	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Tigray–Central, Eastern	\$5,000,000
Danish Refugee Council (DRC)	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	Tigray-wide	\$339,996
FHI 360	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Tigray–Central, Eastern, North Western	\$5,999,048
GOAL	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Afar–Zone 4; Tigray–Mekele, Central, Eastern, South Eastern	\$3,000,000
IMC	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Afar-Zone I; Amhara-North Gondar, South Wello; Tigray-Central, North Western	\$4,000,000
iMMAP	HCIMA	Tigray-wide	\$87,480
IOM	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Afar–Zone 4; Amhara–North Gondar, South Wello; Tigray-wide	\$9,535,860
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Tigray–North Western	\$4,860,000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HCIMA	Tigray-wide	\$1,300,000
Plan USA	Protection	Tigray-Mekele, Central, North Western, South Eastern	\$1,800,000
Relief Society of Tigray (REST)	Food Assistance–Transportation	Tigray—Central, Eastern, South Eastern, Southern	\$570,000
Samaritan's Purse	Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Tigray–North Western	\$5,000,000
Save the Children Federation (SFC)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Tigray–Central, Eastern, North Western	\$5,000,000
UNICEF	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Afar-wide, Amhara-wide, Tigray-wide	\$10,410,382
UN Development Program (UNDP)/UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)	HCIMA	Tigray-wide	\$1,475,153
UN Population Fund (UNFPA)	Health, Protection	Tigray-wide	\$1,637,521
UN World Health Organization (WHO)	Health, HCIMA	Afar-Zone I, Zone 2, Zone 3; Amhara- wide, Tigray-wide	\$1,316,955
WFP	Food Assistance–91,049 MT of Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP)	Afar–Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 4; Amhara–North Gondar; Tigray–North Western, Southern	\$100,000,000
	Nutrition, Logistics Support	Afar-wide, Amhara-wide, Tigray-wide	
World Vision	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Tigray-Mekele, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern	\$5,131,897
ZOA	WASH, Shelter and Settlements	Tigray–Eastern, Southern, North Western	\$2,700,000
	Airlifted Relief Commodities		\$2,333,933
	Program Support		\$1,554,980
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDI	NG		\$461,391,754
	STATE/PRM		
Implementing Partner	Multi-Sector Assistance	Northern Ethiopia	\$14,340,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance	Afar-wide, Amhara-wide, Tigray-wide	\$42,455,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDI	NG		\$56,795,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARI	AN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ET	THIOPIA CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY	\$518,186,754

## USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA CRISIS 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	Tigray–Mekele, Eastern, North Western	\$68,000,000			
	Health, WASH	Tigray-wide	\$215,250			
Ethiopian Red Cross Society	Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Tigray-Western	\$695,341			
iMMAP	HCIMA	Tigray-Mekele, North Western	\$218,112			
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Tigray-Mekele, Central, North Western	\$1,118,911			
IRC	Protection, WASH	Tigray–North Western	\$604,492			
	Food Assistance–1,159 MT of U.S. In-Kind Food Aid	Tigray-Mekele, Eastern, South Eastern	\$2,019,312			
Pathfinder International	Health	Tigray–North Western, Western	\$111,111			
REST	Agriculture, Food Assistance—51,770 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid, Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Tigray—Central, Eastern, South Eastern, Southern	\$17,838,987			
UNICEF	Nutrition	Tigray-wide	\$379,392			
WFP	Food Assistance-LRIP	Tigray-North Western	\$8,000,000			
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING						

## TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA CRISIS RESPONSE IN FYS 2020–2021

\$617,387,662

- 1 Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2021.
- <sup>2</sup> Estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.
- <sup>3</sup> This total represents funding previously reported on the USG 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.
- 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
  - o Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at reliefweb.int.

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work