

ETHIOPIA SITUATION (TIGRAY REGION)

30 September 2021



Distribution of core relief items to 8,000 internally displaced persons in Sheraro, Tigray region, Ethiopia © UNHCR

Key Developments

ETHIOPIA

On 30 September, the Government of Ethiopia announced that seven UN officials from three organizations (OCHA, UNICEF and OHCHR) had been designated 'persona non grata' and asked to leave the country. The UN Secretary General expressed shock in a [statement](#), indicating the UN is "engaging with the Government of Ethiopia in the expectation that the concerned UN staff will be allowed to continue their important work."

On 28 September, the UN Under Secretary General for humanitarian affairs [told media](#) that he "assumes famine has taken hold" in the Tigray region where a "de-facto blockade" and lack of fuel, cash and trucks has dramatically restricted aid deliveries. He urged the Ethiopian government to immediately allow access of aid trucks in the region, citing that the crisis "can be remedied by the act of government". He added that 100 trucks a day of aid are needed to get to Tigray, but only 10% of this number had gained access in the past three months.

The corridor from Debark to Mai Tsebri where the Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps are located is still not accessible due to insecurity, while fully loaded supply trucks cannot cross the bridge to Mai Tsebri from the Shire side until repair works are complete. Discussions on how to move food for distribution in the refugee camps are ongoing, as with the route through Amhara region closed, the food needs to be moved from WFP's warehouse in Gondar, through Semera in Afar region into Mekelle and then to Shire and across the bridge to Mai Tsebri. Meanwhile, distribution of a partial monthly food ration began on 23 September with the limited food items remaining in warehouses on site.

SUDAN

On 26 September, clashes were reported between Sudanese Armed Forces and Ethiopian militia near Umm Barakit district, which sits within the al-Fashaga border region, some 27km south-east of Gedaref town. No casualties were reported however tensions remain high.

On 20-21 September, a delegation from SIDA led by the head of the humanitarian section at the Swedish Embassy in Sudan visited Um Rakuba and Tunaydbah, meeting with refugees, partners and visiting various facilities in the camps.

KEY FIGURES IN ETHIOPIA


60,000

Eritrean refugees confirmed hosted in Tigray, Ethiopia, at the outset of the crisis


2.1 million

estimated Internally displaced persons in Tigray, Ethiopia (OCHA)


7,630

Eritrean refugee households (**9,496** individuals) have been registered for residence in Addis.

KEY FIGURES IN SUDAN


55,785

Arrivals from Ethiopia in Sudan as of 31 August (*including 7,465 to Blue Nile State)


38,220

total individuals registered, including:

18,633

at Um Rakuba

19,560

at Tunaydbah


8,839

population pending for relocation

3,077

from Village 8

5,762

from Hamdayet

Ethiopia Response

The humanitarian situation across the Tigray Region remains deeply concerning for refugees, the internally displaced and host communities. Civilians have endured ten months of conflict with extremely limited basic services and assistance available, leading to a significant escalation in humanitarian needs with ongoing new displacements. The security situation remains volatile, affecting civilians and constraining humanitarian actors on the ground. Communication, electricity, and banking services remain intermittent. The conflict is now also affecting civilian populations in neighboring Amhara and Afar regions.



Eritrean Refugee Response

UNHCR continues to prioritize resumption of life-saving services for refugees in Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps. UNHCR and partners were able to transport the required fuel supply from Shire town and resume water services in the two camps as of 20 September. The food distribution that began in the camps on 23 September is the last consignment remaining in the WFP warehouse at the camps and is expected to cover refugee needs for one month. As of 25 September, some 16,000 refugees had collected partial food rations to date, out of 24,000 targeted refugees.

In Afar, food distribution for the 21,000 refugees in Berhale refugee camp was delayed and eventually completed by ARRA earlier this month, covering the month of August. Due to the volatile security situation around the Berhale camp, the area remains inaccessible for UN staff as guided by UNDSS based on recent security assessments.

WASH activities in Dabat continue, with the provision of potable water to persons of concern, hand washing awareness campaigns, solid waste disposal, disinfection of communal latrines and distribution of soap and washing basins. Disinfection of three water reservoirs for the host community in Dabat town was also completed.

The documentation exercise for Eritrean refugees who self-relocated to Addis Ababa from Tigray commenced on 4 August 2021 and is ongoing with the support of ARRA. As of 28 September, a total of 7,630 households representing 12,351 individuals had been registered for residence in Addis.

UNHCR is undertaking an initial one-off cash assistance starting with 8,488 of the recently registered refugees who self-relocated to Addis Ababa. The first round includes those that fled the Hitsats and Shimelba camps. A further round of assistance is planned once the expanded documentation exercise including all refugees who relocated from Tigray has been concluded.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)



Protection: The Relocation Task Force in Tigray led by the Protection and CCCM Clusters relocated 2,727 individuals (722 households) from three schools to Sebacare 4 IDP site in Mekelle. UNHCR and partners assisted with the identification, registration, and referral of 20 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and 89 persons with specific needs. The team also conducted information sharing and door-to-door vulnerability and NFI needs assessments, reaching 415 households. Solar lights were distributed to 354 households as well as 416 plastic sheets used for floor covering. A Protection Desk has been set up with the presence of two social workers from partner Innovative Humanitarian Solutions (HIS). The next relocation of 751 IDP households from Kisanet Primary school to Sebacare 4 is planned for next week.

IDP enrolment has been finalized in 26 sites in Mekelle with a total of 9,815 households enrolled by the Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BOLSA) and Tigray Statistics Agency with the support of UNHCR and partners. BOLSA will deploy enumerators out of Mekelle to continue the exercise.

UNHCR protection activities are being scaled up for IDPs in the Afar region, with two protection partners in place (International Medical Corps and Plan International) for child protection and GBV activities.

The total number of IDPs in Afar region reported by the government's Disaster Prevention Food Security Program Coordination Office (DPFSPCO) has notably increased to 23,335 households/140,012 individuals, residing in twelve collective sites. The host communities also have been hosting and assisting nearly 49,000 IDPs since the fighting began. UNHCR is working with local authorities and partners, to distribute shelter and other core relief items to the most vulnerable.

In Maichew, Southern Tigray, UNHCR conducted key informant interviews in three new woredas (Alaje, Qorem, and Alamata) to understand the protection needs. Findings will be shared with relevant partners. The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) assessed three woredas (Raya Azebo, Mekhoni, and Raya Chercher) and identified a total of 34 civilian children and adults with disabilities who are affected by the ongoing conflict.

A capacity-building training was conducted for 23 IDP leaders with the Organization for Social Service, Health and Development (OSSHD) to strengthen their capacity to reach out to IDPs effectively and enhance protection monitoring and response services through IDP leaders in Maichew.

In Shire, UNHCR organized a training on Protection Case Management (PCM)/Code of Conduct (CoC)/PSEA/GBV for staff from UN agencies, international non-governmental organizations and BoLSA. The training focused on strengthening knowledge and skills for the prevention and response to GBV cases.

In Dabat, an increase in the number of IDPs was observed in the aftermath of the reported killings that occurred in Chena village (10km from the town of Dabat) in early September. Some 680 households (4,607 individuals) are displaced and currently residing with the host community in Dabat. With significant new IDP arrivals into Debark, the number of IDPs in the town and its surroundings increased from 15,700 in August to an estimated 75,000 by mid-September. UNHCR is working to scale-up IDP operations in Amhara.

So far two IDP hotspots are identified in the Amhara region: Debark-Dabat and Dessie-Kombolcha. UNHCR has to date distributed NFIs for 1,793 households in Debark and is considering extending the same support to very vulnerable families identified in the fast-growing and dynamic IDP caseload in Dabat. On the Dessie-Kombolcha side, UNHCR has committed to distribute 5,000 NFI kits and discussion are ongoing to address the logistics challenges.



Shelter and Non-food Items: In Mekelle, UNHCR organized field visits to Sebacare 4 to assess the progress of the pending works before commencing with relocation of IDPs. Rehabilitation and leveling off the ground are ongoing, and 140 shelters are ready to host IDPs.

UNHCR offices in Abi Adi, Adigrat and Maichew have received NFIs for around 500 households each and distribution has started. Twelve trucks delivered NFIs in Semera for around 5,000 households for the distribution to IDPs in Afar.



Camp Coordination and Camp Management: Preliminary findings of the CCCM assessment conducted in the two IDP sites in Mai Tsebri last week indicated that almost 90 percent of the 30,946 IDPs recorded by local authorities live with host communities, while only 3,200 are regularly residing at the two IDP sites. Crucial needs for food, shelter and access to health services were observed. UNHCR recommended short-term interventions to address these needs, including immediate setting up of emergency shelters, provision of uninterrupted water supply and distribution of CRIs to the families currently residing in the sites.

Sudan Response

The number of refugees residing at Hamdayet transit centre has risen to 5,902 individuals. UNHCR and partners continued to provide life-saving assistance to this group, including safe and clean drinking water, hot meals, medical assistance, and core-relief items to new arrivals such as blankets, sleeping mats and mosquito nets. Protection desks in Hamdayet remain operational with UNHCR staff carrying out weekly visits to identify vulnerable individuals and refer them to appropriate services.

A significant increase in Qemant asylum-seekers was recorded with some 540 new arrivals crossing into eastern Sudan. This brings the total number of Qemant asylum-seekers to 1,991 since the influx began in July. UNHCR and partners are providing protection and critical assistance including access to healthcare, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, and targeted support to those with specific needs and vulnerabilities.

On 22 September, the relocation of some 1,451 persons of Qemant origin began from the school facility in Basinga, where the asylum-seekers have been hosted, to a new temporary and more suitable location in Basunda town. This exercise is coordinated with officials from Sudan's Commission for Refugees (COR) and local authorities. As of 23 September, a total of 552 individuals have been relocated to the new location, which will accommodate this group pending their eventual transfer to a long-term settlement. Protection screening of new arrivals in Basinga locality was carried out to identify vulnerable Qemant individuals and their needs prior to the relocation exercise to offer the appropriate assistance.



Protection: COR and UNHCR finalized preparations to begin issuing ID cards in Um Rakuba camp and Tunaydbah settlement in Gedaref State. This project is currently piloted in Um Rakuba camp – where some 660 refugees have received ID cards – and will target around 27,000 individuals aged 16 years and above. Government-recognized identity documentation is integral to the legal and socio-economic inclusion of refugees within their host communities and also in line with UNHCR's commitment under the Global Compact on Refugees to share resources and expertise with the host government in order to strengthen their capacity for individual registration and documentation.

During the reporting period, the protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) task force met to discuss follow-up actions and way forward on a joint PSEA strategy. All partners are expected to sign the Code of Conduct, including staff recruited from the refugee and host community. SEA risk assessments are currently underway in camps and inter-agency SOPs on SEA have been drafted for partners to review.



Education: A total of 3,234 (56% of the target) children are enrolled in schools in both Um Rakuba and Tunaydbah. 433 of these (39%) will attend early childhood care and development (ECCD), 2,447 (68%) primary school and 354 (33%) secondary school. Initial planned changes to the instructional programme have begun with relevant stakeholders before rolling out with communities, teachers, and learners in collaboration with community services sector.

UNHCR, through Care International, completed the construction of 64 gender segregated latrines in 7 learning centres and three child friendly spaces in Um Rakuba. This activity is part of an Education Cannot Wait initiative intended to enhance the delivery of education in emergencies.



Health: As of 23 September, a total of 1,328 Hepatitis E patients have been recorded: 1,121 in Um Rakuba, 102 in Tunaydbah, 18 in Hamdayet and 7 in Village 8. Most patients presented with mild symptoms. Health and WaSH partners and the Ministry of Health are continuing to work together to respond to the outbreak. Measures include enhanced water and sanitation interventions and the promotion of personal and community hygiene practices.

Following discussions with the Ministry of Health, the age bracket for emergency vaccinations for new arrivals has been expanded from under-5s to under-15 years. This "catch-up" vaccination campaign is ongoing.

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