

Ethiopia – Tigray Crisis

JUNE 3, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<p>6 MILLION</p> <p>Estimated Population of Tigray Region <i>GoE – 2017</i></p>	<p>5.2 MILLION</p> <p>People in Tigray Requiring Humanitarian Assistance <i>UN – May 2021</i></p>	<p>2 MILLION</p> <p>People Displaced by the Crisis Within Tigray <i>UN – May 2020</i></p>	<p>63,000</p> <p>Ethiopian Refugees Arriving in Eastern Sudan Since November <i>UNHCR – April 2021</i></p>
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- ERC Lowcock has warned of the risk of famine in Tigray without an immediate scale up of humanitarian assistance. USAID food security analysts estimate approximately 1.25 million people are experiencing Emergency levels of acute food insecurity, including 250,000 people potentially facing Catastrophe conditions as of May 25.
- Ongoing hostilities have resulted in at least nine humanitarian workers' deaths in Tigray since November and continue to disrupt relief operations.
- Insecurity and resulting displacement have led to increased protection risks for at-risk groups, while GBV cases likely continue to be underreported.
- The USG continues high-level advocacy efforts, including a visit by SE Feltman to the region.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Tigray Response in FY 2021 and FY 2020	USAID/BHA ^{1,2}	\$265,190,451
	State/PRM ³	\$17,135,000 ⁴
	Total	\$282,325,451⁵

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 toward the Tigray response in the region, bringing the total U.S. Government (USG) funding for the Tigray response to nearly \$305 million.

⁴ 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.

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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

ERC Warns of Famine Risks as Food Security Conditions Worsen in Tigray

In a May 25 UN Security Council report, UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) Mark Lowcock has warned that northern Ethiopia's Tigray Region faces a serious risk of famine if humanitarian assistance is not scaled up in the next two months. According to ERC Lowcock, while below-average rain, desert locust infestations, and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to increased acute food insecurity and malnutrition, the scale of the food crisis is a clear result of the ongoing conflict and the obstruction of humanitarian activities by armed actors.

Similarly, increased conflict since late 2020 across much of Ethiopia is driving the highest food assistance needs recorded since 2016, according to humanitarian organizations. The population at risk of acute food insecurity in Tigray—where the UN estimates there were more than 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of May and the conflict has left multiple *woredas*, or districts, inaccessible—represents between 30 and 35 percent of those in need countrywide. As of May 25, USAID food security analysts estimate that approximately 1.25 million people are experiencing Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity, including 250,000 people potentially facing Catastrophe—IPC 5—conditions.⁶

Nutrition outcomes have also deteriorated in 10 of the worst-affected areas of Tigray that remain accessible, where more than 20 percent of surveyed children ages five years and younger are experiencing wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, according to humanitarian organizations. The cessation of violence, unhindered humanitarian access, and scaled-up food, health, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance are needed to mitigate increasing food consumption gaps and associated levels of acute malnutrition.

Insecurity Continues to Impact IDPs, Humanitarian Actors and Operations

Nearly seven months into the crisis, ongoing hostilities and insecurity continue to adversely affect IDPs and hinder ongoing humanitarian efforts, according to the UN. On May 24, more than 200 male IDPs were detained by military actors and transported from sites hosting approximately 12,000 IDPs around North Western Zone's Shire town, drawing UN condemnation for arbitrary arrests, beatings, and other mistreatment. While the motivation for the arrests is unclear, many of the detainees were released in the following days, according to international media. Separately, at least nine humanitarian workers have been killed in Tigray since November, including an Ethiopian staff member of an Italian non-governmental organization (NGO) that died as a result of a stray bullet on May 29, international media report.

Despite a March 3 declaration by the office of the Prime Minister of the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) granting aid organizations unfettered access in Tigray, humanitarians have endured access and security issues such as movement denials, confiscation of supplies and vehicles by military actors, threats and searches at military checkpoints, and demands for permission and approval from local authorities and military actors in recent weeks, according to the UN. Between the beginning of the crisis in November and April 30, the UN recorded more than 570 incidents blocking or limiting humanitarian access, including more than 100 incidents in April. More than 60 percent of the incidents occurred in Central, Eastern, and North Western zones, while more than 40 percent of the total incidents involved active hostilities. According to the UN, much of Central Zone remains cut off from humanitarian access and,

⁶ 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.

as of May 21, two towns hosting 360,000 IDPs within the zone, Adwa and Axum, had only received a single food distribution each since November. Furthermore, travel between major centers in the region—including Tigray’s capital city of Mekele and Shire—remains fluid, while there was no access in and out of Eastern Zone’s Hawzen town between May 15 and 21, limiting water trucking to the town.

IDP Women, Children, and At-Risk Groups Face Increased Protection Risks

Persistent violence, displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and associated disruptions to community and household life during the crisis have contributed to increased numbers of protection incidents—including a significant increase in reports of gender-based violence (GBV)—affecting women, children, and other at-risk groups in Tigray, particularly IDPs, according to the UN. While the full scale of protection violations is unknown, Tigray’s Regional Health Bureau recorded at least 1,200 reported cases of GBV in the region between February and May 28, while the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) projects that approximately 22,500 survivors of sexual violence in Tigray will seek clinical care in 2021. GBV incidents are likely undercounted due to survivors’ fear of stigmatization and retaliation, as well as limited access to trusted service providers, according to UNFPA. Protection actors—including USG partners—continue attempts to increase access to hard-to-reach areas to conduct protection assessments, expand services, and ensure a consistent presence in all IDP sites. State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recently reestablished protection assistance at North Western Zone’s Adi Harush and May Ayni refugee camps, including psychosocial support services for unaccompanied children, as well as women and girls exposed to GBV.

UN Requests \$853 Million for Northern Ethiopia Response

Humanitarian partners have finalized the Northern Ethiopia Response Plan requesting \$853 million in funding to meet the multi-sector needs of 5.2 million people affected by the Tigray crisis, according to the UN. Most urgently, the Food Security Cluster—the coordinating body for humanitarian food assistance activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders—intends to reach all 5.2 million people in need with six rounds of food distributions through December. In addition, the Nutrition Cluster will attempt to reach 1.4 million children ages five years and younger and pregnant and lactating women with preventative treatments and interventions through the end of the year in response to increasing rates of wasting. The Protection Cluster plans to reach 1.4 million beneficiaries with protection services during 2021. The plan also requests funding for emergency shelter and relief commodities, agricultural assistance, health and WASH support, and the construction and support of 30 new IDP sites across Tigray that are expected to host more than 720,000 IDPs through December.

The new funding request follows the April 28 Inter-Agency Standing Committee activation of a Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up for northern Ethiopia and the UN’s May 6 announcement of a \$40 million allocation to the Tigray response. Despite new and reallocated funding, as of May 14, UN agencies were facing a funding gap of \$197 million through the end of July, and of \$502 million against the total appeal through the end of 2021.

U.S. Special Envoy Continues High-Level Advocacy in Ethiopia, Eritrea

U.S. Special Envoy (SE) for the Horn of Africa Jeffrey Feltman traveled to Ethiopia, Eritrea, and neighboring countries from May 4 to 13, continuing high-level USG advocacy efforts related to the ongoing crisis in Tigray. During the visit, SE Feltman engaged with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and other key GoE leaders, as well as Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, highlighting the scale of the humanitarian crisis in Tigray. SE Feltman called for the withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Ethiopia and condemned continued human rights abuses in the region.

KEY FIGURES



2.8 Million

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



27,000

Children whose daily needs can be met by UNICEF HEBs



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MHNTs operating in Tigray with USAID/BHA support

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY

In response to acute food needs across Tigray, USAID/BHA is supporting the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), as well as the UN World Food Program (WFP) and humanitarian partners, to provide emergency food assistance—including commodities such as U.S.-sourced cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—to vulnerable people in the region. Combined, the JEOP and WFP had reached more than 2.8 million people across Mekele and five of Tigray's six zones with food rations since the beginning of the crisis, as of May 23. The JEOP caseload in Tigray includes clients of the Productive Safety Net Program, a GoE social protection program targeting food-insecure households.

NUTRITION

With more than \$18 million in FY 2021 funding, USAID/BHA supports six partners in their efforts to prevent and treat malnutrition across Tigray. Using a community-based approach, USAID/BHA partners promote recommended infant and young child feeding practices through one-on-one counseling and group education to manage wasting. Additionally, with redirected FY 2020 funding, USAID/BHA partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is distributing nutrition commodities—including quantities of High Energy Biscuits (HEBs) 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 crisis-affected populations in Tigray. In addition, UNICEF and other partners supported the Tigray Regional Health Bureau through strengthening static health facilities and mobile health and nutrition teams (MHNTs), admitting more and 3,400 children with severe wasting—a life-threatening form of malnutrition—for treatment since February. By mid-April, USAID/BHA partner WFP and its sub-partners had also reached more than 51,000 children and pregnant and lactating women with nutrition assistance.

HEALTH

The USG supports six partners providing critical health care services in Tigray through community health facilities and mobile health units. Five USAID/BHA partners are supporting nearly 30 integrated MHNTs throughout the region, which provide critically needed health and nutrition services to remote and hard-to-reach areas. MHNTs serve an essential function in a region where a 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 the region, and are supporting the operations and rehabilitation of 300 static clinics. 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, 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 northern Amhara Region, and has also supported people displaced by the conflict in Tigray. State/PRM additionally supports UNHCR to provide health assistance to refugees in Tigray, including those sheltering at Adi Harush and May Ayni.



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Child-friendly spaces established with USAID/BHA support

PROTECTION

In response to protection needs resulting from the conflict in Tigray, USAID/BHA supports FHI 360, GOAL, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and World Vision, which conduct protection programs as humanitarian access and security conditions permit. With USAID/BHA support, partners are expanding GBV case management support in the region, training social workers and community-based case workers, providing dignity kits—which contain items catered to the specific needs of women and girls—to GBV survivors, and establishing child-friendly spaces, among other activities. IRC is scaling up 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.



1,500

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 \$14 million in FY 2021 dedicated to shelter and settlements assistance, USAID/BHA supports crisis-affected populations in Tigray—as well as in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions—through implementing partners CRS, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Samaritan’s Purse, and World Vision, as well as the IOM Rapid Response Fund. USAID/BHA, in coordination with IOM, recently airlifted 1,500 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting to Ethiopia, sufficient to support the shelter needs of more than 18,000 crisis-affected individuals. Partners are also distributing relief commodity kits—including 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.



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IDP sites in Mekele reached by FHI 360 with WASH assistance

WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM fund the provision of critical WASH assistance in Tigray. USG humanitarian partners are distributing WASH supplies and other relief commodities to crisis-affected and displaced populations, as well as delivering equipment to support the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure damaged by the conflict, constructing or rehabilitating water supply systems in 30 communities, and providing handwashing facilities in IDP sites and health facilities. USAID/BHA partner FHI 360 is providing

latrine cleaning materials and conducting hygiene promotion trainings for water management committee members—in six IDP sites in Mekele, and is providing water trucking to two of the six sites. 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.

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 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—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 Disaster Assistance Response Team (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 CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2021^{1,2}

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
CRS	Food Assistance—57,120 Metric Tons (MT) of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$29,992,763
	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Central, Eastern zones	\$5,000,000
FHI 360	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Central, Eastern, North Western zones	\$5,999,048
GOAL	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Mekele, Central, Eastern, South Eastern zones; Afar Region	\$3,000,000
iMMAP	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	Tigray-wide	\$87,480
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Tigray-wide	\$8,000,000
IRC	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$4,860,000
Relief Society of Tigray (REST)	Food Assistance—Transportation	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$570,000

Samaritan's Purse	Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	North Western Zone	\$5,000,000
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HCIMA	Mekele, North Western Zone	\$300,000
WFP	Food Assistance—91,052 MT of Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP)	North Western, Southern zones	\$100,000,000
	Nutrition, Logistics Support	Tigray-wide	
World Vision	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Mekele, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern zones	\$5,131,897
	Program Support		\$220,260
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$168,161,448
STATE/PRM			
ICRC	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$4,640,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$12,495,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$17,135,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2021			\$185,296,448

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY 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	Mekele, Eastern, North Western zones	\$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	Mekele, Central, North Western zones	\$1,118,911
IRC	Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$579,783
	Nutrition	Mekele	\$42,823
Pathfinder International	Health	North Western, Western zones	\$111,111
REST	Agriculture, Food Assistance—51,770 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid, Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Central, Eastern, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$17,838,987
UNICEF	Nutrition	Tigray-wide	\$379,392
WFP	Food Assistance—LRIP	North Western Zone	\$8,000,000
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$97,029,003
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2020³			\$97,029,003

TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FYs 2020–2021			\$282,325,451
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¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding.

² Estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

³ 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](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)