

Ethiopia – Tigray Crisis

APRIL 15, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

6 MILLION	4.5 MILLION	4 MILLION	2.3 MILLION	62,383
Estimated Population of Tigray Region <i>GoE – 2017</i>	People in Tigray Requiring Humanitarian Assistance <i>UN – March 2021</i>	Estimated Number of People in Urgent Need of Food Assistance <i>Food Security Cluster – January 2021</i>	People Targeted Through the Northern Ethiopia HRP <i>UN – December 2020</i>	Ethiopian Refugees Arriving in Eastern Sudan Since November <i>UNHCR – April 2021</i>

- Ongoing disruptions to communications services and lack of emergency communications equipment continue to hinder the expansion of humanitarian operations beyond town centers and main roads. The DART and USG leadership continue to advocate for the importation of communications equipment.
- Food assistance and agriculture support are urgently required in areas of Tigray projected to face Crisis and Emergency levels of acute food insecurity through September to prevent extreme food consumption gaps and avert excess mortality.
- In response to the crisis, USAID/BHA, in coordination with IOM, recently donated and airlifted 1,500 rolls of plastic sheeting to Ethiopia to support emergency shelter efforts.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Tigray Response in FY 2021 and FY 2020	USAID/BHA ^{1,2}	\$265,102,970
	State/PRM ³	\$17,135,000 ⁴
	Total	\$282,237,970⁵

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.

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

Insecurity, Impediments to Humanitarian Access Persist

More than five months after conflict broke out in northern Ethiopia's Tigray Region, ongoing insecurity continues to generate and exacerbate humanitarian needs and hinder access to many conflict-affected people. The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) notification system for international humanitarian worker travel to Tigray, introduced in March, has improved access, with nearly 190 UN staff members deployed in the region as of April 6. However, insecurity continues to hinder the expansion of humanitarian operations, with most roads in Tigray only partially accessible and large areas hard to reach or wholly inaccessible, according to the UN. In response to security incidents affecting humanitarian actors in Ethiopia—including a late March incident during which Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) staff in Tigray's Eastern Zone witnessed armed forces assault an MSF driver and execute four civilians—the Humanitarian International Non-Governmental Organization (HINGO) Forum issued a statement on April 1 condemning attacks against relief staff and calling for their protection. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) reports that armed actors do not appear to be targeting humanitarian workers in Tigray and continues to monitor the effects of ongoing insecurity on humanitarian actors, as well as advocate for the cessation of hostilities.

Following the March 26 announcement by the Government of Eritrea that it would withdraw Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) troops from areas of Tigray near the Ethiopia–Eritrea border, the GoE Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on April 3 that Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) troops had assumed positions vacated by withdrawing EDF elements. While the presence and activities of EDF elements in Tigray have inhibited relief activities and disrupted critical services, the timeline for EDF withdrawal, as well as the potential repercussions of a withdrawal on security and humanitarian access, remains unclear.

In addition, ongoing disruptions to communications services and electricity continue to impede the expansion of humanitarian assistance beyond major cities and towns in Tigray. Many relief actors have been unable to coordinate activities in rural areas, where humanitarian needs are likely severe, due to a lack of emergency communications equipment. The USG continues to engage the GoE on allowing the importation of emergency communications equipment, and the GoE recently restored internet connectivity for some UN agencies operating in Tigray's regional capital of Mekele and North Western Zone's Shire town.

Conflict, Macroeconomic Conditions Elevate Emergency Food Needs

Active conflict, limited access to agricultural inputs, and low levels of economic activity are constraining food and income access in Tigray, resulting in elevated levels of food insecurity across the region, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). Constraints on population movements are limiting labor migration, a critical source of income among poor households during the April-to-June planting season, while low-income levels and high food prices continue to hinder food access despite marginal improvements in market function and economic activity in Tigray during March. While the June-to-September *kiremt* rainy season facilitates household engagement in agricultural activities in typical years, FEWS NET anticipates the diminished access to agricultural land and inputs will undermine crop cultivation and the 2021 harvest.

Meanwhile, ongoing hostilities throughout Tigray, continued access constraints, and imprecise beneficiary targeting have likely limited the reach of humanitarian assistance provided to date, according to FEWS NET. Widespread Crisis—IPC3—and Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity are

projected to persist across Tigray through September, while large-scale food, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) assistance are required through September to prevent extreme food consumption gaps and avert excess mortality.⁶ FEWS NET notes that additional humanitarian assistance may be required beyond September if households are unable to engage in agricultural activities during the 2021 farming season. In response to significant emergency food needs in Tigray, USAID/BHA continues to work with partners to scale up emergency food distributions and support agricultural livelihood activities.

USAID/BHA Provides In-Kind Assistance to Internally Displaced Populations

More than 1.7 million people were internally displaced across Tigray as of March 27, according to Tigray Regional Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs estimates; the figure is expected to increase as internally displaced persons (IDPs) are increasingly registered in collective sites in the region, the UN reports. According to assessments conducted by relief partners and the UN in Shire and Central Zone's Adwa and Aksum towns, IDPs are sheltering within highly congested collective sites, with host communities, or in the open, and urgently require humanitarian assistance and relocation services ahead of the *kiremt* rainy season. Additionally, thousands of newly displaced or involuntarily relocated persons from Western Zone continue to arrive in Shire, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports.

In coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), USAID/BHA recently donated and airlifted 1,500 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting from USAID's warehouse in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to Ethiopia to contribute to emergency shelter efforts for people affected by ongoing conflict in Tigray.

AI Fashaga Tensions Persist as Refugees Flee Tigray Conflict

Humanitarian actors have expressed concern regarding escalating tensions related to AI Fashaga, a contested area of land between Ethiopia and Sudan, though the dispute has not directly affected humanitarian operations in Ethiopia as of mid-April. As of April 10, nearly 62,400 had fled Ethiopia into eastern Sudan since the start of conflict in Tigray in November, according to UNHCR. In response, the USG is engaging donor countries to increase funding availability. In addition, USAID/BHA and State/PRM continue to support partners, including UNHCR, to respond to the humanitarian needs of refugees and IDPs, through constructing emergency shelters, supporting registration efforts within collective sites, and distributing emergency relief commodities, such as plastic sheeting and kitchen equipment.

Rise in COVID-19 Cases Exacerbates Humanitarian Needs

Despite escalating community spread of COVID-19 in Ethiopia, with a nearly 11 percent increase in new cases recorded between March 29 and April 4, government and health actors have been unable to conduct COVID-19 surveillance in Tigray since the beginning of the conflict in November, according to the UN World Health Organization (WHO). However, the GoE Ministry of Peace recently announced that it had completed preparations to resume community-wide testing in the region in coming weeks. The USG also supports partners operating in Tigray to adapt programs with measures to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread, such as requiring handwashing at food distribution sites. In addition, the USG is providing medical facilities and mobile health clinics with urgently needed supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), assisting partners in responding to cases of COVID-19.

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.

KEY FIGURES



1.4 Million

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



\$18 Million

In USAID/BHA support for life-saving nutrition programming in FY 2021



6

Number of USG partners supporting critical health interventions in Tigray

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 Operations Program (JEOP), as well as the UN World Food Program (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 the JEOP, Relief Society of Tigray (REST) had reached more than 1.4 million people in 12 *woredas*—or districts—across five of Tigray’s six zones with two-month food rations since the beginning of the conflict, as of April 8. Due to increasing food needs among conflict-affected populations, the JEOP caseload in Tigray now includes clients of the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), 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—the deadliest form of malnutrition. 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 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 in Tigray.

HEALTH

The USG supports six partners providing critical health care services in Tigray through community health facilities and mobile health units. Four USAID/BHA partners are providing urgently required medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and PPE throughout the region. 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 Mai Aini camps in North Western Zone.



4

Number of USG partners responding to protection needs resulting from the conflict in Tigray

PROTECTION

In response to protection needs resulting from the conflict in Tigray, USAID/BHA supports FHI 360, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and World Vision, which conduct programs as humanitarian access and security conditions permit. With USAID/BHA support, partners are expanding gender-based violence (GBV) case management support in the region, training social workers and community-based case workers, and providing dignity kits to GBV survivors, 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 conflict-affected populations in Tigray—as well as in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions—through implementing partners CRS, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, 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. 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.



\$10 Million

In USAID/BHA support for life-saving WASH interventions throughout Tigray in FY 2021

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 conflict-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 schemes in 30 communities, and providing handwashing facilities in IDP sites and health facilities. 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 initiated water trucking services for 25,000 people in Eastern Zone’s Edaga Hamus town in early March. Through the RRM, CRS has 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 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—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 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 2021¹

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
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Tigray-wide	\$8,000,000
IRC	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$4,860,000
REST	Food Assistance—Transportation	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$570,000
Samaritan's Purse	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	North Western Zone	\$5,000,000
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (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			\$168,073,967
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 2021²			\$185,208,967

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 2020²			\$97,029,003
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FYs 2020–2021			\$282,237,970

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of April 15, 2021.

² 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)