

Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis

JANUARY 28, 2022

SITUATION AT A GLANCE

7-7.5
MILLION

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

USAID – October 2021

9.4
MILLION

People Targeted for Humanitarian Assistance in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray

UN – January 2022

2.1
MILLION

People Displaced by the Crisis Across Northern Ethiopia

IOM – October 2021

50,081

Refugees From Northern Ethiopia in Eastern Sudan

UNHCR – January 2021

- Critical shortages of supplies have threatened a halt in life-saving activities in Tigray, absent an immediate improvement in humanitarian access. The GoE has announced measures to improve access to the region, though no humanitarian convoys have reached Tigray since mid-December due to insecurity along the only currently used land route into the region.
- Conflict continues to generate displacement and humanitarian needs in northern Ethiopia, with multiple airstrikes in Tigray leading to civilian casualties in recent weeks.
- Despite operational constraints, USAID/BHA partners continue to provide emergency food assistance in northern Ethiopia, distributing more than 6,300 MT of food in Afar and Amhara between January 10 and 16.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Northern Ethiopia Crisis Response in FY 2021

USAID/BHA¹ \$473,410,249²

State/PRM³ \$56,795,000⁴

Total \$530,205,249

For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 7.

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

² Total value of food assistance and associated costs adjusted from estimated to actual values.

³ U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM).

⁴ Funding in this fact sheet includes assistance to refugees residing in Tigray, which is also reported in the U.S. Government (USG) Ethiopia fact sheet as part of the Ethiopia Complex Emergency.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Supply Shortages in Tigray Reach Critical Low Levels Amid Limited Access

A critical shortage of cash, fuel, and relief commodities has threatened a halt in many humanitarian response activities in northern Ethiopia's Tigray Region, absent immediate improvements in access to the region by road and air, the UN reports. As of January 27, all international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in Tigray reported having depleted their fuel stocks, according to the UN. While the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) continues to operate two passenger flights per week between Ethiopia's capital city of Addis Ababa and Tigray's capital city of Mekele, which remains the only means of bringing cash into the region, as banks are non-functioning, relief organizations have been unable to transport the amount of cash needed to sustain operations due to Government of Ethiopia (GoE) restrictions. As a result, there was insufficient operational cash in Tigray to support food assistance distributions or health, nutrition, shelter, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support activities as of January 20, according to the UN. Further, the lack of essential services—including banking, electricity, and telecommunications—continues to hinder response activities across sectors, the UN reports. Amid a severe shortage in medical supplies, a USAID/BHA partner flight transported approximately 3 metric tons (MT) of medical supplies from Addis Ababa to Mekele on January 24, representing the first flight carrying medical supplies since December 10. Additionally, on January 26, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported its first successful flight transporting medical supplies to Mekele by air since September, with a second flight on January 27 carrying additional medical supplies. While the flights mark limited progress, the need for essential medicines and trauma kits remains critical in Tigray following months with no medical supplies entering the region, the UN reports.

Meanwhile, no humanitarian convoys have reached Mekele by road since mid-December due to heightened insecurity along the only currently used land route into Tigray, which connects Mekele with Afar Region's capital city of Semera, a critical humanitarian logistics hub. The lack of humanitarian movement into Tigray for more than one month has exacerbated already dire supply shortages in the region and resulted in record low amounts of food being distributed in Tigray, with assistance reaching only approximately 10,000 people between January 6 and 12, according to the UN. As of January 26, relief actors in Tigray had only enough food stocks to provide one full round of food assistance to an estimated 20,000 people, compared with the 5.2 million people in need of emergency food assistance in Tigray. Moreover, virtually no nutrition supplies remained in Tigray as of January 26, preventing relief actors from providing supplementary feeding and treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

GoE Announces Measures to Improve Access, Humanitarian Convoy Stalls

As the need for humanitarian access becomes increasingly acute after one month without supplies in Tigray, the GoE Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) announced measures to improve access to the region in late January, according to the UN. In a meeting with humanitarian partners on January 21, the EDRMC discussed measures for resuming the movement of humanitarian convoys and fuel tankers from Semera to Mekele, increasing the frequency of UNHAS flights to transport humanitarian cargo, and revising the limits on the transportation of operational cash, according to the Logistics Cluster—the coordinating body for humanitarian logistics activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders. However, on January 23, a convoy of 27 UN World Food Program (WFP) trucks carrying an estimated 800 MT of humanitarian food commodities departed Semera but was unable to proceed past Serdo—the first checkpoint in Afar along the Semera–Mekele route—due to insecurity along the Tigray–Afar border, according to international media. GoE authorities reported on January 24 that the convoy had returned to Semera from Serdo.

Airstrikes, Clashes Continue to Impact Civilians in Tigray

Conflict continues to generate civilian casualties, mass displacement, and humanitarian needs in northern Ethiopia. Ethiopia National Defense Force (ENDF) airstrikes on targets in Tigray escalated beginning in December, resulting in the deaths of at least 108 civilians between January 1 and 15 alone, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. On January 5, an airstrike hit Mai Ani refugee camp in Tigray's North Western Zone, killing three Eritrean refugees, two of them children, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports; a subsequent airstrike killed at least 17 people in nearby Mai Tsebri town on January 10. Separately, on January 7, a series of airstrikes struck an internally displaced person (IDP) camp near North Western Zone's Dedebit town, killing 59 people and injuring an estimated 30 people, according to international media. In Southern and South Eastern zones, a series of airstrikes against multiple towns killed 12 people on January 15, according to the UN.

In addition to immediate impact on civilians, the airstrikes and ongoing conflict along Tigray's borders have also contributed to critical shortages of basic resources in affected areas. A mid-January assessment by UNHCR of conditions at Mai Ani and nearby Adi Harush refugee camp—the first conducted since the airstrike at Mai Ani—found widespread shortages of food, health supplies, and safe drinking water among refugees, with the camps' health clinics having closed due to a lack of supplies. Deteriorating conditions in the camps, in particular the lack of medicines and health services, have led to an increase in preventable deaths, with more than 20 deaths recorded during the six weeks preceding the assessment, according to UNHCR. While relief actors are providing assistance to civilians displaced by recent airstrikes, response efforts have been severely limited by a lack of supplies, fuel, and operational cash.

IDP Returns Accelerate Amid Continued Displacement

New displacement in northern Ethiopia has continued in 2022, with fighting in and around Afar's Abala town that began in mid-December displacing at least 52,000 people to Semera and several surrounding areas, according to a January 18 International Medical Corps (IMC) report. Some IDPs have fled into Tigray, and the UN recorded more than 5,500 people seeking shelter at sites in and around Mekele following the recent hostilities in Abala, many of whom have not received humanitarian assistance. As of January 25, hostilities had spread to nearby Berhale, Erebti, and Megale *woredas*, or districts, displacing tens of thousands of people to areas of Afar's Zone 2, though the total number of people displaced by fighting along the Afar–Tigray border remains unverified, according to the UN. UNHCR also reports that ongoing fighting in Tigray's Western Zone has displaced an unknown number of residents to other areas of Tigray in recent weeks; information verification remains challenging amid limited access and telecommunications. In Amhara, clashes in West Shewa Zone beginning in December have increased the number of IDPs arriving in North Shewa Zone's Debre Berhan city, the UN reports.

Meanwhile, as conflict continues to displace some communities, other residents of northern Ethiopia have returned to their areas of origin in December. The harvest season, along with improved access and the resumption of services in some areas, led to increased IDP returns in Tigray in December, although exact figures could not be verified due to limited telecommunications, the UN reports. Humanitarian organizations and Tigray regional authorities continued to facilitate voluntary IDP returns in January, with an estimated 9,000 IDPs returning to their villages in Central, North Western, South Eastern, and Southern zones between January 11 and 25, according to UNHCR. In Amhara, following the withdrawal of Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-aligned forces from much of the region, as many as 300,000 people had returned to their homes in North Shewa and South Wello zones by the end of December with assistance from regional authorities, according to the UN, which notes that humanitarian organizations were not involved in the process and could not confirm whether returns

were voluntary. Although most returnees in the two zones sheltered with friends and relatives, thousands were believed to be residing in shelters damaged during the fighting, and relief actors have reported acute humanitarian needs in areas of return across Amhara. As of mid-January, approximately 23,000 IDPs in Hadelela and Samurobi *woredas* in Afar's Zone 5 had voluntarily returned to their areas of origin elsewhere in Afar, but infrastructure and livelihoods in areas of return have been severely disrupted, the UN reports.

Supply Shortages, Access Challenges Impact Health Activities

During the first week of January, with support from USAID/BHA, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) began a measles vaccination campaign in Mekele and eight other communities across Tigray, with the goal of vaccinating more than 767,000 children ages 6 to 59 months against measles. As of January 20, the UN agency had provided vaccinations to more than 145,000 children. However, critical shortages of fuel, operational cash, and vehicles, as well as a limited number of available health care workers in Tigray and limited cold storage capacity, have hampered the effectiveness of the campaign to date, and UNICEF urgently requires fuel to move forward with the next phase of the campaign. Fuel and medicine shortages have reduced the number of mobile health and nutrition teams (MHNTs) operating in rural areas of Tigray, from 57 in late 2021 to 18 as of mid-January, according to the UN; a second round of cholera vaccination of children in Tigray is also on hold due to a lack of supplies. Additionally, in Amhara, the UN reports that shortages of medicine and other equipment continue to challenge efforts to restart essential health services in conflict-affected areas where security conditions have improved in recent weeks.

KEY FIGURES



500,000

Crisis-affected people in Tigray reached with emergency food assistance between mid-October and mid-January



110,000

Children screened for wasting in Tigray by UNICEF during November

U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

FOOD SECURITY

In response to acute food needs across northern Ethiopia, USAID/BHA is supporting the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP) consortium of NGOs, as well as WFP, which operates with the support of 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 500,000 people since mid-October amid severe operational constraints, but have reduced operations significantly since December due to supply shortages in Tigray and the inability to transport additional supplies. Previously, the JEOP had reached approximately 2.5 million people across Tigray with food rations between June and November. In Amhara, the JEOP expanded its caseload in response to rising needs, reaching an estimated 325,000 people between January 10 and 16. Meanwhile, WFP delivered emergency food assistance to nearly 48,000 individuals affected by the crisis in Afar during the same period.

NUTRITION

With approximately \$24 million in FY 2021 funding, USAID/BHA supports 10 partners in their efforts to prevent and treat malnutrition across conflict-affected 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. USAID/BHA partner UNICEF and other partners are also working to strengthen fixed-location health facilities and operating MHNTs, screening more than 110,000 children for acute malnutrition in Tigray during November alone. 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.



60

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

HEALTH

The USG supports 12 partners providing critical health care services in northern Ethiopia through community health facilities and mobile health units. USAID/BHA partners have supported more than 60 integrated MHNTs throughout Afar, Amhara, and Tigray, which provide critically needed health and nutrition services to remote and hard-to-reach areas, though the number of MHNTs active in Tigray has been reduced significantly due to lack of supplies and fuel. 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. With State/PRM support, an INGO has distributed essential medicines and other medical supplies to violence-affected health facilities in Tigray, as well as in Afar and northern Amhara. Additionally, State/PRM supports UNHCR to provide health assistance to refugees in Tigray, including those sheltering in Adi Harush and Mai Aini.



12

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 gender-based violence (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. In addition, State/PRM supports an INGO and UNHCR to provide protection and other multi-sector assistance to crisis-affected refugees and IDPs. With State/PRM support, UNHCR has scaled up protection services in Mai Ani and Adi Harush, as well as in Amhara's Dabat town, where the UN agency is working with regional authorities to develop a new camp to host crisis-affected refugees.



92,000

People reached with IOM shelter assistance during 2021

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-managed Rapid Response Fund (RRF). As of December 5, through the RRF, USAID/BHA partner IOM had reached

nearly 92,000 crisis-affected individuals with emergency shelter assistance, and provided more than 182,000 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.



143,000

People in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray reached with essential WASH supplies

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 106,000 people in Tigray and 52,000 people in Afar during November, and reached nearly 143,000 people in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray with critical WASH supplies. Meanwhile, with USAID/BHA support, IMC transported approximately 80 MT of WASH supplies through Logistics Cluster-led convoys to Tigray from July to December and reached an estimated 14,000 people with hygiene promotion activities during the first half of January.



\$12 Million

In dedicated USAID/BHA logistics support

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AND RELIEF COMMODITIES

USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners are providing 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 on 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. On November 2, 2021, the GoE declared a nationwide state of emergency in response to renewed and spreading hostilities, which was formally lifted on January 26, 2022. ENDF elements regained control of Afar and Amhara following the withdrawal of TPLF elements on December 20.
- 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 18, 2021, U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Geeta Pasi redeclared a disaster for Ethiopia for FY 2022 due to the continued humanitarian needs resulting from the complex emergency—including the entrenched armed conflict in northern Ethiopia—and the impact of climate, conflict, food insecurity, and health shocks on vulnerable populations across the country.
- On March 1, 2021, USAID activated a Disaster Assistance Response Team (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 2021¹

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
American Refugee Committee (ARC)	Protection	Tigray—Central, Eastern, Mekele, North Western	\$1,500,000
CARE	Agriculture	Tigray—Eastern, South Eastern, Southern	\$9,175,461
CONCERN	Health, Nutrition	Amhara—South Wello; Tigray—South Eastern	\$800,000
CRS	Food Assistance—328,820 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	Amhara—North Gondar, North Shewa, North Wello, South Gondar, South Wello, Wag Hamra; Tigray—Mekele, Central, Eastern, South Eastern, Southern	\$288,881,583
	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Tigray—Central, Eastern, Mekele, South 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	Amhara—South Wello; Tigray—Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western	\$5,999,048
GOAL	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Afar—Zone 4; Tigray—Central, Eastern, Mekele, South Eastern	\$3,000,000
IMC	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Afar—Zone 1; Amhara—North Gondar, North Shewa, South Wello; Tigray—Central, North Western	\$4,000,000
iMMAP	HCIMA	Tigray-wide	\$87,480

IOM	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Afar–Zone 1, Zone 4; Amhara–Central Gondar, North Gondar, North Shewa, 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 (SCF)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Tigray–Mekele, Central, Eastern	\$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 1, 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	\$73,000,000
	Nutrition, Logistics Support	Afar-wide, Amhara-wide, Tigray-wide	\$27,000,000
World Vision	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Afar–Zone 1, Zone 4; Amhara–North Wello, South Wello; Tigray–Mekele, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern	\$5,131,897
ZOA	WASH, Shelter and Settlements	Amhara–North Shewa; Tigray–Eastern, Southern, North Western	\$2,700,000
	Airlifted Relief Commodities		\$2,333,933
	Program Support		\$1,554,980
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$473,410,249
STATE/PRM			
Implementing Partner	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$14,340,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$42,455,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$56,795,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2021²			\$530,205,249

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2020

TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$99,200,908
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020^{3,4}			\$99,200,908
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020-2022⁵			\$629,406,157

¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of October 12, 2021.

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

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

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

⁶ In FY 2021, 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 for FY 2021-FY 2022 to nearly \$675 million. A portion of this funding is also reported in the USG Sudan fact sheet.

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)