

# Ethiopia – Northern Ethiopia Crisis

FEBRUARY 25, 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

**51,200**

Refugees From Northern Ethiopia in Eastern Sudan

UNHCR – January 2022

- The expansion of fighting in northern Ethiopia, particularly in Afar and Amhara, has led to large-scale displacement in recent weeks, and humanitarian needs are high among IDPs and recent returnees.
- The GoE lifted Ethiopia's state of emergency on February 14 and released UN staff detained under the measure.
- Access to Tigray via land routes remains severely limited, with no humanitarian convoys reaching the region for more than two months.
- UNHAS flights continue to transport essential medical supplies to Tigray, but severe fuel shortages have limited distribution of supplies to medical facilities.



## TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

For the Northern Ethiopia Crisis Response in FY 2021

USAID/BHA<sup>1</sup> \$473,410,249<sup>2</sup>

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

**Total \$530,205,249**

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

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

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

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

<sup>4</sup> 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

### Expanding Conflict Generates Displacement and Humanitarian Needs

Conflict between Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)-aligned elements and regional security forces in Afar Region has escalated in recent weeks, with fighting reported across multiple *woredas*, or districts, in Afar's Zone 2 in February, the UN reports. Afar regional authorities estimate that hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced in Afar due to the recent clashes, although relief actors have been unable to determine the exact number due to limited access. Several informal sites hosting internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain inaccessible to humanitarian actors due to insecurity, while some displaced populations are reportedly trapped behind lines of contact, according to the UN. In addition to generating new displacement, the fighting in Afar has led to secondary displacement of already-displaced communities in Afar, including Eritrean refugees. On February 3, unidentified attackers targeted Afar's Berahile refugee camp, killing at least five residents, abducting several women, and displacing an estimated 20,000 refugees, including more than 4,000 who have arrived in Afar's capital city of Semera, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the UN agency estimates that 10,000 additional refugees who were residing with host communities have also been displaced by the fighting in Afar. Humanitarian actors, including UNHCR and the UN World Food Program (WFP), are providing the refugees in Semera with food assistance and nutrition, protection, and shelter services.

In Amhara Region, while access to most of the region has improved in recent weeks, insecurity in North Gondar, North Wello, and Wag Hamra zones continues to generate new displacement, according to the UN. Deteriorating conditions along the border with Tigray Region, particularly in Wag Hamra's Sekota *woreda* and North Wello's Raya Kobo *woreda*, have resulted in multiple displacements for some households and disrupted access to humanitarian assistance. An estimated 30,000 IDPs are sheltering in Wag Hamra's Sekota and Zequala *woredas*, and more than 12,000 people have arrived in Raya Kobo in recent weeks seeking humanitarian assistance, according to the UN. Further, an estimated 21,000 recent returnees in conflict-affected areas of North Wello require emergency shelter assistance.

### GoE Lifts State of Emergency as Access Challenges Continue

On February 14, the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) House of People's Representatives voted to lift the nationwide state of emergency (SoE) that had been imposed on November 2 due to escalating hostilities with the TPLF. Upon its implementation, the SoE led to the arbitrary detention of individuals suspected of links to the TPLF, including humanitarian workers. In a February 15 statement, the U.S. Department of State welcomed the decision to lift the SoE as a step towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict in northern Ethiopia while calling on the GoE to release those who had been arbitrarily detained. As of February 18, authorities had released the last of the 16 UN staff members detained under the SoE since November.

While the GoE has committed to improving humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas of Ethiopia, Tigray remains cut off from ground access to the rest of the country, with no humanitarian convoys having reached the region since December 14, according to the UN. Convoy movement to Tigray continues to face obstructions related to fighting on the Afar-Tigray border and insecurity along the route connecting Semera with Tigray's capital city of Mekele, the only land route into Tigray that had been open to relief actors from July to December 2021. Access to operational cash for humanitarian staff in Tigray remains limited, and severe shortages of fuel and relief commodities persists, limiting organizations' ability to address humanitarian needs.

## **Fuel Shortage Inhibits Distribution of Medical Supplies Arriving on Flights**

UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights continued to transport essential medical supplies to Tigray and transported the initial shipments of nutrition supplies during the week of February 21, though severe shortages of fuel have complicated the distribution of supplies to health facilities in the region. Between February 2 and 4, a USAID/BHA non-governmental organization (NGO) partner transported nearly 15 metric tons (MT) of life-saving medicines to Mekele. From February 11 to 19, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) airlifted approximately 34 MT of medical commodities to Tigray. Meanwhile, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) transported nearly 10 MT of medical supplies over 12 flights on behalf of the GoE Ministry of Health and more than 3 MT of ICRC medical supplies over four flights, as of February 15. As cargo flights remain the only means of transporting humanitarian supplies to Tigray, the Health Cluster and Nutrition Cluster—the coordinating bodies for humanitarian health and nutrition activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders—continue to coordinate with humanitarian partners to prioritize the transport of life-saving cargo through the Logistics Cluster.

While the resumed cargo flights mark limited progress, the amount of medical and nutrition supplies reaching Tigray remains insufficient to adequately respond to urgent needs in the region, and the severe shortage of fuel has hindered the distribution of supplies to health facilities in dire need. The Logistics Cluster informed partners that it could only support the dispatch of supplies if partners first secure fuel. As of February 14, WHO had moved recently arrived supplies to storage facilities in Mekele until the UN agency is able to secure fuel for distributions, and with UN advocacy, some relief actors had secured very limited amounts of fuel from Tigray authorities as of February 15. The restoration of road access is required in order to transport the quantity of supplies and fuel needed by humanitarian actors to respond to the scale of needs in Tigray.

## **Relief Actors Scale Up Measles Campaign in Tigray**

With USAID/BHA support, health actors led by the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have continued measles prevention and treatment programs in Tigray, despite continued fuel and supply shortages. As part of this campaign, between February 1 and 8, health actors screened more than 72,000 children for malnutrition, compared with only 1,100 during the previous week, as well as around 11,000 pregnant and lactating women; out of the 72,000 children screened, more than 1,800 were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Measles vaccinations are also ongoing in Tigray, with health actors vaccinating approximately 595,000 children during their second phase of vaccinations as of February 10, the UN reports. However, severe fuel and supply shortages continue to hamper health and nutrition activities in Tigray, including the measles campaign. Health workers reported walking up to 22 miles to administer measles vaccinations due to the lack of fuel, the UN reports.

## **Severe Food Insecurity Persists in Northern Ethiopia**

Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity are likely to persist across Tigray and parts of Afar and Amhara through at least May as the ongoing conflict continues to severely disrupt access to livelihood activities and markets, according to a February report from the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET).<sup>6</sup> Although improved security conditions in Amhara have resulted in greater access to markets, household income and ability to purchase food remains limited. The ongoing fighting in Afar has also driven increased food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly among displaced communities, WFP reports. FEWS NET estimates that communities in Afar’s Zone 4 and Amhara’s North Wello and Wag Hamra zones, as well as parts of Afar’s Zone 2, are experiencing Emergency

<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.

conditions, with other communities in the two regions facing Crisis—IPC 3—conditions.

In Tigray, where access to food has been severely curtailed since the beginning of the conflict, available supplies of emergency food assistance are minimal compared to current needs, according to WFP. Household purchasing power is highly limited due to a lack of opportunities to generate income and increases in the price of staple foods. Severe food insecurity is widespread, particularly in urban areas and among female-headed households, and many households in Tigray are resorting to negative coping strategies, such as reducing portions or number of meals per day. WFP also notes that the conflict has disrupted planting and harvests in Tigray, reducing food production in agricultural areas and generating greater dependence on humanitarian aid.

## KEY FIGURES



**884,000**

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



**101,000**

Children treated for SAM in northern Ethiopia by UNICEF during 2021

## 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 884,000 people with more than 13,000 MT of food assistance 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 2021. USAID/BHA partners have provided emergency food assistance to an estimated 1.2 million people in Amhara and 500,000 people in Afar under the current round of distributions since January.

### 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 mobile health and nutrition teams (MHNTs), screening nearly 825,000 children for acute malnutrition in Tigray during 2021. 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, admitting more than 44,000 children experiencing SAM for treatment in Amhara and nearly 20,000 children in Afar during 2021.



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. USAID/BHA partner International Medical Corps (IMC) has reached more than 804,000 IDPs across Afar, Amhara, and Tigray through the operation of more than 20 MHNTs since the beginning of the response. 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 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 camps.



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.



33,600

People reached with IOM shelter assistance in northern Ethiopia during January

## 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 February 23, through the RRF, USAID/BHA partner IOM had reached more than 33,600 crisis-affected individuals across northern Ethiopia with emergency shelter assistance and provided 21,000 individuals in Afar and Amhara with life-saving relief commodities during January alone. 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.



**765,400**

People in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray reached with essential WASH supplies during 2021

## **WASH**

USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners are distributing water, sanitation, and hygiene (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 1 million people in Tigray and 338,000 people in Afar during 2021, and reached nearly 765,400 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 2021 and reached an estimated 7,200 people with hygiene promotion activities during the first half of February.



**\$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 Ethiopia National Defense Forces (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; the Ethiopian parliament voted to lift the state of emergency on February 14, 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, then-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,

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
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
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
WHO	Health, HCIMA	Afar–Zone 1, Zone 2, Zone 3; Amhara-wide, Tigray-wide	\$1,316,955
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
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$473,410,249</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
Implementing Partner	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$14,340,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$42,455,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$56,795,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>\$530,205,249</b>

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

<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>	<b>\$99,200,908</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020<sup>3,4</sup></b>	<b>\$99,200,908</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE NORTHERN ETHIOPIA RESPONSE IN FY 2020-2022<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>\$629,406,157</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

<sup>3</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>4</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.

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

<sup>6</sup> 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)