

# Tigray Situation Update

17<sup>th</sup> May 2021



*Eritrean refugees arriving in Mai Aini refugee camp as part of the relocation programme conducted by UNHCR and the Government Agency for Refugees and Returnees, ARRA. © UNHCR/Hanna Qassis.*

## Background and key developments

On 4 November 2020, military confrontations between federal and regional forces in Ethiopia's Tigray region, which borders both Sudan and Eritrea, led the Government to declare a State of Emergency. Since then, and despite the announcement of an official end to the law enforcement operation in late November, [large areas of Ethiopia's Tigray region are still affected by armed clashes and insecurity](#), leading to further forced displacement of population – particularly in Western Tigray.

**OCHA** says that while there are some improvements in humanitarian access in Tigray, Ethiopia, the situation remains fluid and unpredictable. Blockades by military forces have in recent days severely impeded access to rural areas, where humanitarian needs are most severe. And armed hostilities continue in North-Western, Central, Eastern, South-Eastern and Southern Zones.

## Displacement figures

Ethiopia is home to **178,980** Eritrean refugees across the country, equal to 22% of the total refugee population in Ethiopia of 801,349. Before the conflict, UNHCR had registered 96,223 Eritrean refugees in the Tigray region, sheltered in four refugee camps in the western part of the region: Mai Aini (21,682), Adi Harush (32,167), Shimelba (8,702) and Hitsats (25,248).

According to Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA) and the Early Warning Response (EWR) regional directorate from the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC), the conflict in Tigray has displaced an estimated 1.7 million persons (IDPs).

## Operational response

### Refugee response



#### POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

UNHCR continues to identify and register Eritrean refugees in Tigray, Afar, and Addis Ababa. It is estimated that many refugees are still dispersed in “hard to reach”-areas across Tigray region.

#### Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps

- As of 25 April, a total 8,123 persons had been relocated, either spontaneously or through the formal relocation process by UNHCR and the Government’s Agency for Refugees and Returnees, ARRA; this number includes refugees who were formerly residing in Shimelba and Hitsats prior to closure. In the first week of May, an additional 35 refugees were relocated from Shire to Mai Aini and Adi Harush.

#### Mekelle and Adigrat

- UNHCR has continued the identification exercise for registered Eritrean refugees and unregistered Eritrean Asylum seekers in Mekelle and Adigrat. By the end of April, UNHCR had identified 1,881 refugees and asylum seekers in Mekelle and Adigrat and is assessing the possible relocation of registered refugees to the camps.

#### Addis Ababa

- UNHCR and ARRA have temporarily, and due to COVID-19 measures suspended the joint identification exercise, which started on 9 March 2021, targeting refugees who self-relocated from Shimelba and Hitsats refugee camps to Addis Ababa. By 23 April 2021, the total number of refugees identified in the exercise was 1,658 households (2,963 individuals).

**PROTECTION**

- In Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps, UNHCR's individual reception, counselling and registration services are reopened, and the protection and other critical services are continuously resuming.
- UNHCR in collaboration with ARRA organized protection trainings, targeting newly elected Refugee Central Committees (RCCs) in Adi Harush and Mai Aini camps and government authorities at the Command post in Mai Tsebri. The trainings covered an induction on international protection of refugees, the legal framework on IDPs, as well as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).

**SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS (NFI)**

- All newly relocated refugees have received Core Relief Items (CRIs) upon arrival Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps.
- All refugees relocated to Mai Aini and Adi Harush have been moved from communal shelters in schools to emergency shelters in the camps, allowing schools to reopen and classes to resume.

**FOOD SECURITY**

- In Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps, the general food distribution for the month of April has been completed.

**EDUCATION**

- Following the closure of the Mai Aini secondary school in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the conflict in Tigray, teachers returned to the school in April and classes resumed in May.
- Primary school buildings, previously used as communal shelters for relocated refugees, were vacated, allowing schools to reopen.

## Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) response

**POPULATION DISPLACEMENT**

- Ongoing fighting in the North-western and central Tigray has caused a surge in the number of IDPs fleeing into Shire since mid-April. The Government's National Disaster Risk Management Council

(NDRMC) estimates approximately 600,000 IDPs are displaced in and around Shire town, sheltered in 16 sites and within the host communities.

- To date, local authorities in **Shiraro**, estimate about 97,000 Ethiopians are internally displaced within Shiraro administrative area. Most IDPs are living within the host community, and about 30,000 individuals are living in 10 settlements in Shiraro.
- In **Mai Tsebri**, local authorities estimate that some 25,000 IDPs are displaced in the area, including 8,500 individuals living in a communal site, while the rest are living with the host community.
- Local authorities in **Mekelle** estimate about 7,260 IDP households are currently sheltered in 16 informal sites mostly schools and health centres across the city, while an estimated 52,000 IDPs live within the host community.



## PROTECTION

- UNHCR and our partner Innovative Humanitarian Solutions (IHS) conducted protection monitoring in **Axum, Adwa** and **Debaguna**, and more visits are planned for the coming weeks. IDPs are found to be in dire need of assistance such as food and basic household items, health care, shelter etc.
- An OCHA-led humanitarian access working group, including UNHCR and other UN agencies, is working to increase access to “hard to reach” areas within Tigray region and determine the possibility to scale up presence and delivery of assistance in those locations.
- In IDP sites in both **Shire** and **Mekelle**, UNHCR is conducting regular protection monitoring and is maintaining protection desks to provide protection counselling and referring vulnerable individuals to specific services.
- Protection risks such as sexual and gender-based violence are reported in IDP sites across Tigray. The overcrowded shelter conditions – in some sites 30-40 individuals share one shelter – the lack of gender segregation in some sites, general insecurity and limited assistance, are enhancing the vulnerability. It is expected that many cases remain unreported, as survivors may be focused on their immediate, urgent needs for food, shelter and water. Other protection concerns are the lack of care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children and other vulnerable groups. Women and Girls safe spaces have been constructed in some sites by UNHCR’s partners, and there are plans to establish more safe spaces.



## SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRI)

- In **Mekelle**, the new Sebacare 4 site is expected to be fully functional by mid-June and a one-month timeline for the relocation of IDPs has been agreed upon. This new site is expected to host over 19,000 individuals (3,800 households). UNHCR’s partners Action for the Needy (ANE) and Development Expertise Center (DEC) have now completed 328 shelters out of a target of 500 shelters.

- The management of the IDP sites in **Shire** has been divided between UNHCR and IOM.
- UNHCR has completed the construction of 250 emergency shelters in Five Angels site in **Shire**, where additional 250 emergency shelters are being constructed by Samaritan's Purse. This will support the initial relocation of some 25,000 individuals (5,000 families) from overcrowded schools.
- A new IDP site in Matsa – with an estimated capacity of 340 emergency shelters – has been identified a few kilometers outside of **Shire** town. A site plan has been developed and is currently awaiting approval.
- In **Mekelle**, UNHCR with partners ANE and DEC distributed core relief items such as blankets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, buckets, kitchen sets and soap to 1,000 IDP households in different sites. To date, core relief items have also been distributed to IDPs in sites in **Shire**, **Shiraro**, **Mai Tsebri**, **Debaguna**, and **Adi Daero**.

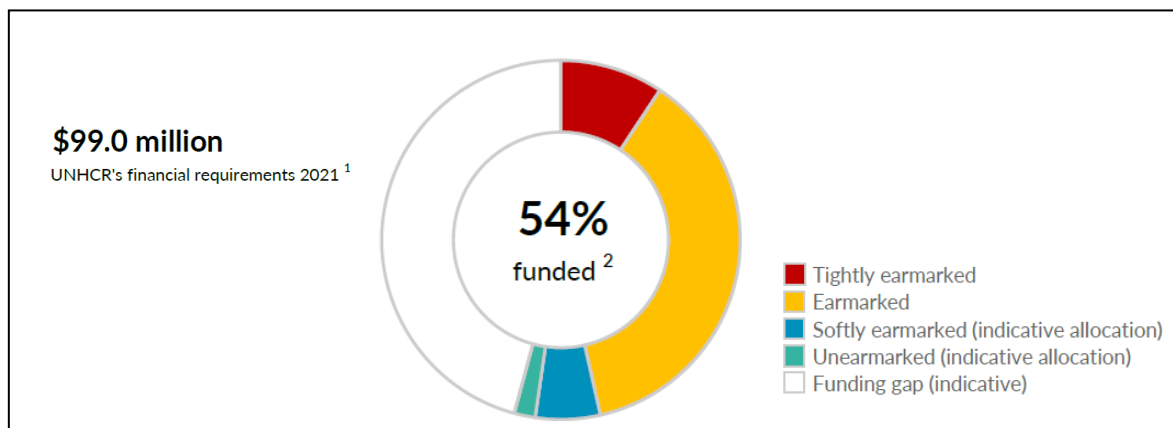
## Issues and Operational challenges

- Despite the efforts to scale up the humanitarian response in the Tigray region, the volatile security situation, resource, and logistical constraints continue to strain service delivery to the displaced population whose situation needs urgent attention.
- As the conflict is continuing in Tigray region, civilians remain at risk, and new displacement is putting a strain on public services and humanitarian agencies in responding to the urgent needs of the IDPs. The urgent needs of displaced families include shelter, access to water and sanitation, and food assistance. In addition, malnutrition is reportedly high among displaced children.
- The limited fuel situation across the region poses a logistical constraint on the humanitarian operations, particularly as water supply pumps and water trucking to the displaced population require fuel. The continued closure of the airport in Shire as well as the limitations to the telecommunication networks are also challenging the humanitarian response for UNHCR and partners.

# Ethiopia Emergency Situation Funding Update

(As of 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021)

The [UNHCR Regional Appeal for the Ethiopia Emergency Situation \(Tigray\)](#) covers the period January to June 2021 and highlights the needs of approximately \$99 million for Ethiopia and Sudan. Ethiopia’s needs within the appeal amount to \$49.7 million (\$32.3 million for refugee response and \$17.4 million for IDP response\*. The overall appeal is currently 54% funded. UNHCR Ethiopia would like to express its thanks to funding received for Ethiopia specifically from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), ECHO, Japan, Norway, and the United States of America (USA), alongside situation level funding from Finland, Luxembourg, and other Private donors.



*\*These needs are also reflected in the larger Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 and Country Refugee Response Plan 2021*

**CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>3</sup> | USD**

	■ Unearmarked	■ Softly earmarked	■ Earmarked	■ Tightly earmarked	Total
United States of America	-	-	19,130,000	-	19,130,000
European Union	-	-	-	2,799,989	2,799,989
Finland	-	2,389,486	-	-	2,389,486
Norway	-	-	1,167,815	-	1,167,815
UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe	-	866,882	-	-	866,882
United Kingdom	-	-	810,811	-	810,811
Italy	-	-	-	586,166	586,166
Education Cannot Wait	-	-	-	500,000	500,000
France	-	351,700	-	-	351,700
Novo Nordisk Foundation	-	327,004	-	-	327,004
Luxembourg	-	305,998	-	-	305,998
Latter-day Saints Charities	-	-	-	172,200	172,200
Australia for UNHCR	-	157,658	-	-	157,658
Liechtenstein	-	110,375	-	-	110,375
Private donors USA	-	100,000	-	-	100,000
Other private donors	-	234,620	-	-	234,620
<b>Sub-total</b>	-	<b>4,843,722</b>	<b>21,108,626</b>	<b>4,058,356</b>	<b>30,010,704</b>
Indicative allocation of funds and adjustments <sup>6</sup>	1,871,618	939,427	15,666,115	5,162,719	23,639,879
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,871,618</b>	<b>5,783,149</b>	<b>36,774,741</b>	<b>9,221,075</b>	<b>53,650,583</b>

Methodology: Unearmarked funding is allocated and reallocated multiple times during the year to allow UNHCR to fund prioritised activities. This funding update includes an indicative allocation of funds so as to accurately represent the resources available for the situation. The contributions earmarked for the Ethiopia Emergency shown above are combined with an indicative allocation of the softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions listed below. This allocation respects different levels of earmarking. Adjustments relate to programme support costs and carry-over.

**OTHER SOFTLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>4</sup> | USD**

United States of America 65.6 million | Canada 8.7 million | Private donors Australia 3.7 million | Sweden 3.5 million | Denmark 2.9 million | Switzerland 2 million

IGAD | Ireland | Luxembourg | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors

**UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS<sup>5</sup> | USD**

Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Spain 28.3 million | Germany 26 million | France 20 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 14.3 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

**Notes:**

1. The financial requirements of the Ethiopia Emergency include requirements in Ethiopia and Sudan.

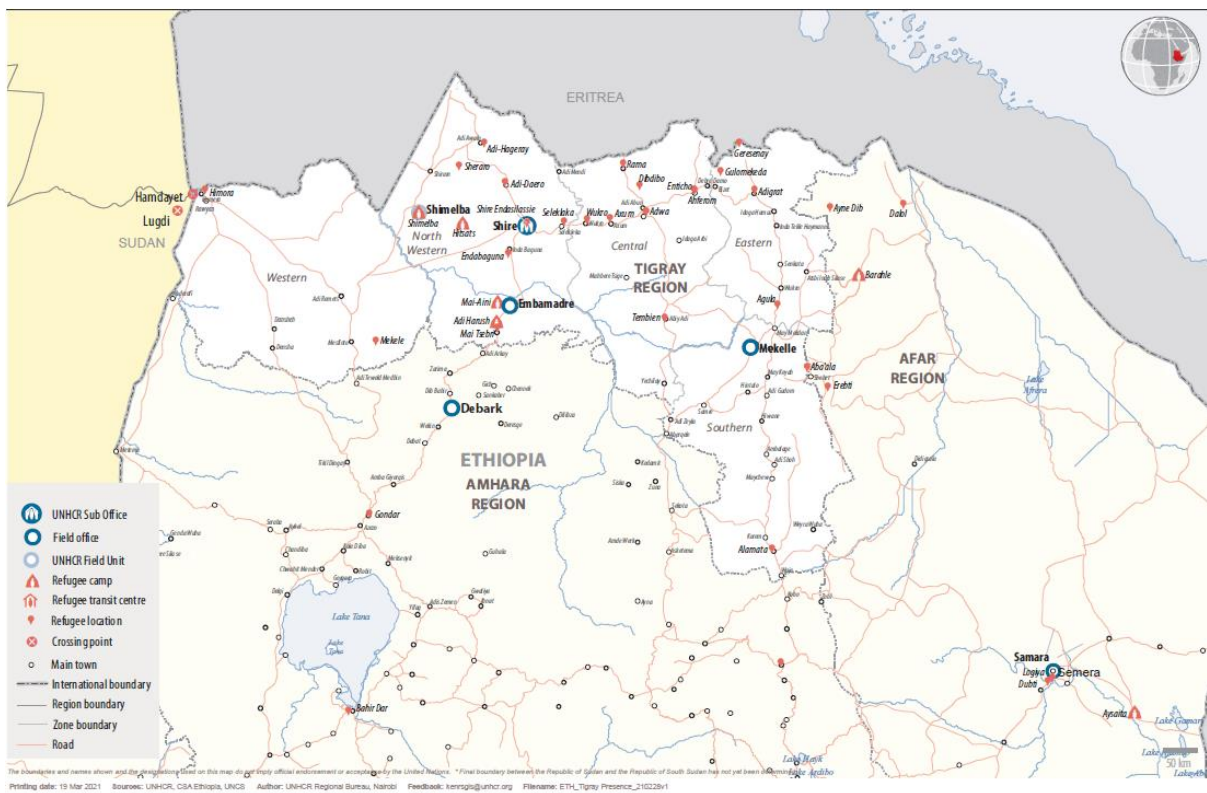
2. The percentage funded (54%) and total funding amount (\$53,650,583) are indicative based on the methodology described above. This leaves an indicative funding gap of \$45,340,973 representing 46% of the financial requirements.

3. Contributions to the Ethiopia Emergency are shown by the earmarking modality as defined in the Grand Bargain.

4. Due to their earmarking at a related region, sub-region, country or theme, the other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used for the Ethiopia Emergency. Where a donor has contributed \$2 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

5. Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk. Where a donor has contributed \$10 million or more, the total amount of the contribution is shown.

## Ethiopia operation: UNHCR presence in Tigray



In Tigray region, UNHCR has a Sub-Office in Shire as well as a Field Office in Mekele, where the Agency is scaling up its presence to meet the current protection and humanitarian needs of refugees and IDPs. Furthermore, UNHCR has recently set up a temporary operational hub in Debarke and an operational presence in Mai Tseabri to support the re-establishment of services in Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps and to build up capacity to contribute to efforts to assist IDPs in Tigray and Amhara regions.

Since the announcement of the Ethiopian Government of a [transition from the previous clearance mechanism for international aid workers to a flexible notification system](#) by email to the Ministry of Peace, UNHCR has been able to deploy additional staff to Tigray region to support the scale up of the response and currently counts more than 90 staff in the region.

### CONTACTS

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### LINKS

- [Ethiopia Data Portal](#)
- [Ethiopia Situation – Tigray Emergency Situational Page](#)
- [Facebook, Twitter](#)