

## ETHIOPIA EMERGENCY SITUATION

16 November 2021



*Ethiopian refugees from Tigray in eastern Sudan. © UNHCR*

### Key Developments

#### REGIONAL

UNHCR is currently updating existing regional contingency plans for the Ethiopia situation, including for Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. While the further evolution of the conflict and external and internal displacement patterns are difficult to predict, UNHCR and partners are putting in place preparedness measures in several countries with the approach of “no regrets” – including procurement and prepositioning of tents and core relief items in countries like Sudan where these items can be used in others parts of the country if not needed for an influx from Ethiopia. Identification of potential sites and coordination with relevant authorities is ongoing. The Regional Bureau is carrying out an overall gap analysis to identify where support would be most needed by sector.

#### ETHIOPIA

On 9 November, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Martin Griffiths concluded his four-day visit to Ethiopia. In a [statement](#), the ERC said he had “constructive discussions” with Prime Minister Abiy and his Deputy on the humanitarian situation in the country and the challenges aid organizations face in getting assistance to all Ethiopians in need. In Mekelle, the ERC engaged with *de facto* authorities on the need for humanitarian access and protection of civilians through all areas under their control, and respect for humanitarian principles. At the same time, a high-level mission with WFP and OCHA visited the Amhara region and discussed with the Amhara Regional President to identify means

of improving humanitarian access and aid to people in need in Amhara region, including those newly affected by the conflict. The mission also visited an IDP site.

On 5 November, UNHCR, WFP and ARRA appealed for US\$68 million to avoid food ration cuts for over 700,000 refugees' country-wide in Ethiopia. In a [joint statement](#), the agencies said that funding shortages will force ration cuts of up to 60 percent of the minimum food basket recommended. Growing risks including increased malnutrition and anemia, stunted child growth, deterioration of the health status due to susceptibility to diseases/infection and a myriad of protection risks have further been compounded by the COVID 19 pandemic.

On 3 November, OHCHR released the joint OHCHR/Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report on human rights violations in the Tigray conflict. The report urges that "*All parties involved in the escalating conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray must stop fighting immediately, or else risk pushing the region's catastrophic humanitarian situation over the edge,*" [said](#) the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet at the launch of the report. The report details the findings of the Joint Investigative Team (JIT) including human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian and refugee law committed by all parties involved in the conflict noting some of which may amount to "war crimes and crimes against humanity" and further states that "*perpetrators must be brought to justice.*"

## **SUDAN**

Demonstrations against the military takeover of the government have continued in Khartoum and other States since 25 October, resulting in several casualties of civilians. Over 30 persons have been reported as having been killed and more injured during the demonstrations. Humanitarian operations have largely been able to continue throughout the country and specifically for the Ethiopian refugee response in eastern Sudan.

UNHCR and partners welcomed the new Commissioner for Refugees (COR) – appointed prior to 25 October – to several refugee-hosting sites in eastern Sudan. As part of a five-day mission to the region, the Commissioner and his delegation met with refugee and host community representatives and several partners in Hamdayet Transit Centre, Um Rakuba camp and Tunaydbah settlement.

## **Ethiopia Response**

*The humanitarian situation across northern Ethiopia remains deeply concerning for refugees, the internally displaced and host communities. Civilians have endured one year of conflict with extremely limited basic services and assistance available, leading to a significant escalation in humanitarian needs with ongoing new displacements. The security situation remains volatile, affecting civilians and constraining humanitarian actors on the ground. Communication, electricity, and banking services remain intermittent.*

*Most areas within the Tigray region remain largely accessible, with restrictions along the Northern Border, where foreign forces are present; however, access to the Western part of Tigray remains highly restricted, with limited access to Dansha and Tsegede woredas only. In Afar, fighting reached Chifra, a strategic town located some 100 km from Mile and 170 km from Semera. All humanitarian activities have been suspended in that area as well as in woredas bordering Tigray.*



## Eritrean Refugee Response

Construction works are progressing in Alemwach refugee site in Dabat, Amhara region, including on 40 planned communal hangars, communal kitchens, and rub-halls/warehouses. An adequate supply of clean drinking water is being provided in the three interim emergency collective centres for refugees, which have a maximum capacity of up to 8,000 persons. Meanwhile, work is ongoing to upgrade existing WASH services through maintenance of septic tanks, latrines, and shower blocks. A hydrogeological and geophysical survey to identify potential borehole drilling sites within the Alemwach camp and surrounding areas has been completed by UNHCR and partners.

Insecurity compounded by movement restrictions and rigorous inspections at several checkpoints has not allowed UNHCR and partners to undertake regular monitoring visits to assess implemented activities in the two refugee camps of Barhale and Aysaita in Afar region. Refugee and Returnee Services (RRS) staff (former ARRA) however, continue to be present at camp level. WFP distributed two-month food rations in both camps in October.

A total of 15,003 Eritrean refugees (12,299 households) who self-relocated from Tigray have been registered for residence in Addis Ababa. Of these, 7,516 individuals have been identified with at least one specific need. A total of 12,286 individuals have been assisted to open bank accounts to facilitate cash transfers.

Despite substantial shortages in fuel and cash, supply managed to dispatch core relief items (CRIs) Mai Ani and Adi Harush refugee camps for distribution. The CRIs comprised of 6,543 fleece blankets, 2,593 sleeping mats and 147,530 laundry soap.

## Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

UNHCR continues to scale up its presence, response, and protection interventions in the context of the escalating needs of IDPs in the Amhara region. In Bahir Dar, UNHCR enhanced its presence by renting office working space and has provided equipment for staff on ground to ensure smooth implementation of activities.

A total of 36 staff are currently present in Gondar/Bahir Dar in the Amhara region. As part of the protection response scale-up, UNHCR deployed a senior Protection staff to Bahir Dar, to oversee protection activities in the region.

On 12 November, a series of rapid multi-sectoral assessments commenced in the region with UNHCR CCCM/Shelter and Protection staff visiting two IDP sites in Ebenat, located in southern Gondar. Critical needs were observed in these sites and a rapid NFI response has been initiated with partner Action Africa Help International (AAHI) in consultation with the CCCM Cluster and Supply. The government has identified two relocation sites in the outskirts of Ebenat, both requiring significant improvement prior to IDP relocation. Similar assessments are planned to take place shortly in Debre Birhan, Gondar, Dabat and Debark areas, in coordination the sub regional/national Clusters. Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to distribute NFIs for the entire population of IDPs hosted in the three schools of Debark town (Walyia, Millennium and the Kindergarten). As of 11 November, UNHCR assisted a total of 883 families out of the targeted 997 representing approximately 90 percent of the plan. In Dessie and Kombolcha, all planned activities continue to be on hold due to insecurity.



**Protection:** UNHCR carried out a three-day Protection Cluster workshop between 10 - 12 November in Shire. The objective of the workshop was to enhance overall coordination amongst partners and strengthen the overall IDP protection response in Shire. The workshop focused on specific cross-cutting issues such as core contents of specific protection sectors; identification of vulnerable persons in each area; promoting community-based protection; review and updating of referral pathways; updating service mapping for all partners and locations in Shire; and guidance for protection mainstreaming of the specific area in other clusters. A total of 35 participants representing 20 partners took part in the workshop.

UNHCR continues to conduct visits to the 18 IDP sites in Shire to ensure provision of support to partners through promoting coordination, addressing gaps, and conducting direct discussions with community leaders and IDP families. Outcomes of these visits continue to inform the Protection Cluster/Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and strengthen advocacy efforts.

UNHCR is working with Bureau of Women and Children's Affairs (BOWCA) in Amhara to enhance protection desks set up and capacity across the region. UNHCR will train BOWCA staff prior to the launch of protection desks. UNHCR/UNFPA held 19 sessions of community dialogue on GBV prevention and mitigation in West Armachio, Dabat, Debark and West Gondar zones covering a total of 379 participants of whom 146 are female.



**Shelter and Non-food Items:** In the Amhara region, a multifunctional team of UNHCR, representing CCCM, ES/NFI and Protection, conducted a deep field mission on 12 November to the Ebinat IDP site located in South Gondar zone and home to an estimated 600-1,000 households. IDPs are currently hosted in two schools. Key findings indicated the dire need for humanitarian assistance across all sectors to complement the response by the Regional Government Disaster Prevention and Food Security Coordination Office (DPFSCO) supported by UNICEF. Immediate needs include CRIs (blankets, sleeping mats, soap, jerrycans, plastic sheets, buckets, etc.) and emergency shelters. Additionally, there is an urgent need to support the ongoing efforts to relocate IDPs from schools to a new site. Delivery of CRIs is planned shortly in collaboration with ES/NFI UNHCR partner Africa Action Help International (AAHI).



**Camp Coordination and Camp Management:** In preparation for reopening of primary schools in Tigray, relocation of IDPs from schools continues to take place. A total of 16,029 IDPs have been evacuated by zonal authorities in the past two weeks from 12 IDP sites in Adigrat, Edagahamous and Abi Adi to secondary schools. In Mekelle and Shire, a total of 13 IDP sites have so far been evacuated by zonal authorities, without coordination with the IDP Relocation Task Force. A joint mission was undertaken to assess

the situation of IDPs evicted from schools in Adigrat. Findings indicate that IDPs have encountered significant protection challenges during the process including lack of access to basic services, food, and water in the new relocation sites. Discussions were held with zonal authorities about the development of a formal site in Adigrat for the relocation of IDPs, while holding off on ongoing evacuations.

UNHCR CCCM partner Action for the Needy (ANE) facilitated the distribution of dignity kits in five collective centers in Mekelle. Over 2,200 reproductive age females benefited from dignity kits.

## Sudan Response

*While many activities inside the camps are so far unaffected, the uncertainty of the current situation risks disrupting the delivery of life-saving and essential services, including the distribution of much-needed food, shelter and CRIs. Staff of the Commission for Refugees (COR) continue to be present at the camps.*

The number of Ethiopians crossing into Hamdayet has remain relatively low, with a total population of 6,034 at Hamdayet as of 14 November. With a few recent arrivals, the total number of Qemant asylum-seekers has reached 2,322 since the influx began in July 2021.

The relocation of some 2,000 Qemant asylum-seekers to Basunda was completed following sustained pressure by authorities to move this group from Basinga. The plan is to temporarily accommodate this group in Basunda while the operation prepares the permanent site, Babikri. Biometric enrolment is underway prior to this group's planned move to Babikri in the coming weeks. The operation is currently awaiting a formal response from authorities with regards to the site's designation as a settlement.

Preparations for the phased relocation from Village 8 to Tunaydbah is ongoing. The start date has been tentatively planned for the coming weeks and a detailed workplan is currently being finalised. So far, initial discussions with refugees indicate some reservations about relocating further inland to the camps for various reasons. For example, some stated that they felt settled in Village 8 and had established ties with the host community while others are keen to maintain close ties with their families across the border. In the meantime, several plots have been demarcated in Tunaydbah in preparation.



**Protection:** UNHCR and COR issued 844 ID cards to registered refugees in Um Rakuba and 542 in Tunaydbah settlement, bringing the total to 4,842 and 2,762 respectively.

The protection working group is currently revising various referral forms. The inter-agency general protection referral form has been endorsed while work is ongoing to finalize child protection and GBV referral forms to facilitate referrals by non-GBV actors.



**Education:** Between 4-11 November, Save the Children and the Gedaref State Ministry of Education trained a total of 60 people from eight (8) parent-teacher associations from early childhood care and development centres in Um Rakuba and Tunaydbah on their roles and responsibilities and the importance of child safeguarding.

Improving enrolment rates continues to remain a priority. To date, more than 50% of school-age children are out of school. Efforts are ongoing to increase enrolment by scaling up the provision of learning centres in the camps to widen refugees' access to education at all levels.



**Health:** Following sustained advocacy with the Ministry of Health (MoH) by UNHCR and partners, including IRC, UNICEF and WHO, preparations are underway to launch a COVID-19 vaccination targeting refugees in Um Rakuba, Tunaydbah and Village 8. Over 19,000 doses have been availed so far. Vaccinations will cover refugees aged 18 and above.

A distribution of personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves and hand sanitizers is ongoing as part of COVID-19 prevention measures. The exercise will cover refugees, partners, and the host community in Um Rakuba, Tunaydbah and Village 8.

MoH, UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR carried out a mass nutrition screening for children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women in Basunda with data analysis underway.



**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:** A total of 1,050,200 litres of water was provided via water pumping from rivers and through water treatment plants, boreholes, and water trucking between 4-11 November 2021. Water supply increased to 26 litres per day (l/p/d) in Um Rakuba, 23 l/p/d in Tunaydbah, 20 l/p/d in Village 8 and 17 l/p/d in Hamdayet and 13l/p/d in Basunda transit centre. This brings the average available supply of water to 21 l/p/d which is above the SPHERE minimum standard in post-emergencies.

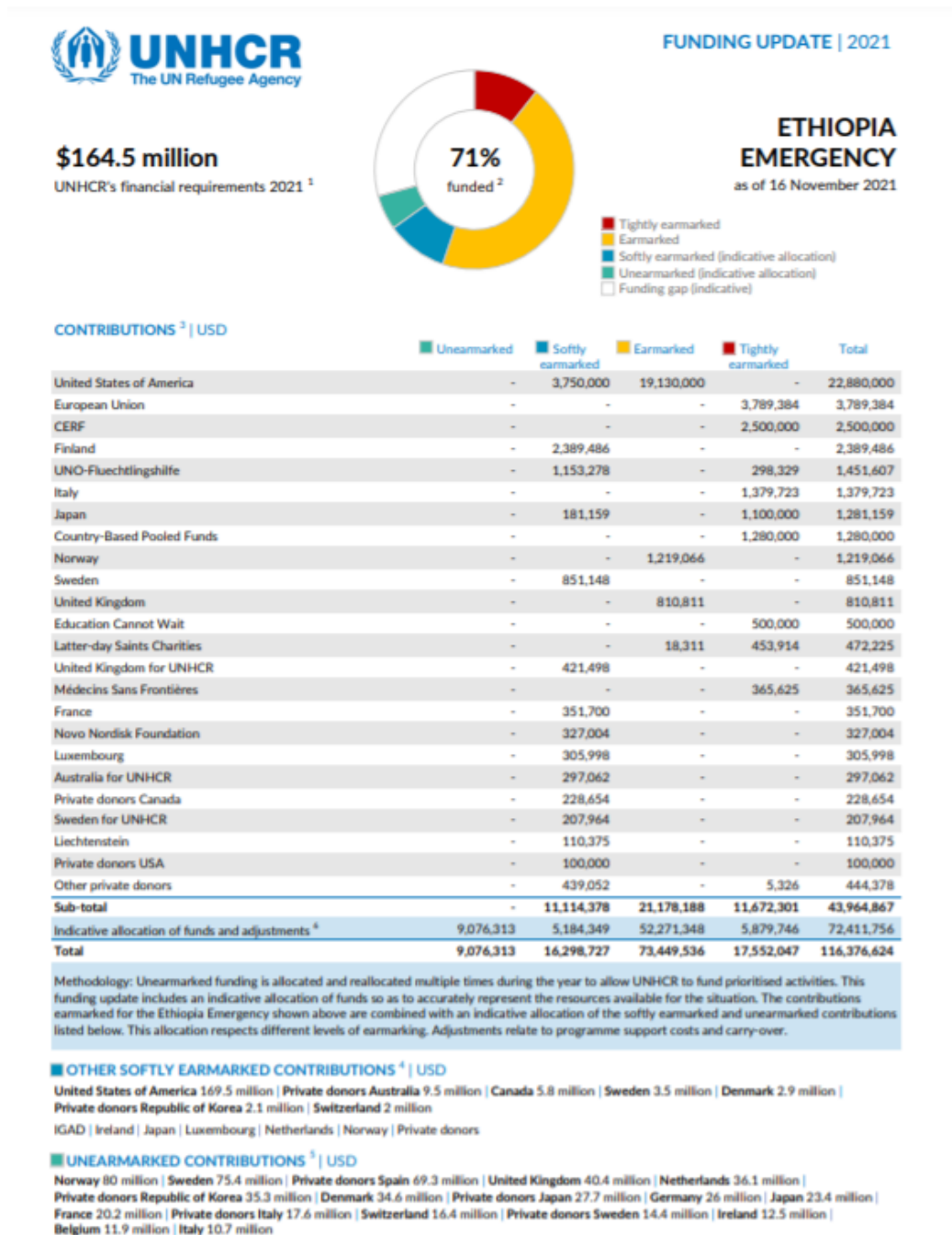
Efforts to improve latrine coverage are ongoing. 980 latrines have been completed so far in Um Rakuba and an additional 330 are under rehabilitation/construction or planned. 1,400 have been completed in Tunaydbah with another 561 requiring rehabilitation/construction.



**Shelter and Non-food Items:** UNHCR partner Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has completed the construction of five (5) tukuls (semi-permanent shelters) which were immediately handed over to refugees in Um Rakuba. This project is part of ongoing efforts to scale up the provision of durable shelters in the camp.

Site clearance continues to be carried out by COR in Babikri in preparation for the relocation of Qemant asylum-seekers from Basunda. Once the site is cleared, plots will be demarcated.

## Funding Overview



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