Response to Internal Displacement in Ethiopia

January to December 2021

1. Provide quality protection support and services to IDPs.
2. Address basic needs of IDPs through shelter, core relief items and camp management activities enhancing their protection.
3. Support IDPs in achieving a durable solution of their choice to their displacement.

Conflict, inter-communal violence, natural disasters and other impacts of climate change continue to drive people into displacement. Some have lived in displacement for several years, while others have fled their homes very recently. It is estimated that over 4.2 million people are internally displaced across the country, while 1.5 million IDPs are returning to find a durable solution.\(^1\) All of them need our attention.

In response to this internal displacement situation, in 2021, UNHCR reached over 1.7 million people in nine of Ethiopia’s regions including Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Dire Dawa, Gambella, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali and Tigray. In addition, UNHCR supported over 580,000 IDPs in communal settings through its camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) role.

UNHCR responds to internal displacement on a needs-basis, works closely with partner organizations and coordinates its activities with authorities as well as through the respective humanitarian Cluster.

\(^1\) DTM, National Displacement Report No. 10, December 2021.

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Highlights

Overview
In 2021, UNHCR expanded its programme to respond to the growing internal displacement situation in Ethiopia to cover nine regions.

Our interventions, implemented with our partners and in close coordination with authorities, reached over 1.7 million people with protection services, shelter and core relief support. Of those, over one million people were reached with protection activities, including activities that support IDPs’ durable solution decisions. In addition, UNHCR’s CCCM role supported 580,000 IDPs in communal settings, the majority in 68 sites in Amhara and Tigray regions.

Scale up in Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions
UNHCR started to scale up its response to address the humanitarian needs of IDPs for protection, shelter, and core relief items in the Tigray region with the onset of the crisis. In 2021, it increased its operational footprint, in particular in the third quarter of the year, and also expanded its presence and operational response into Afar and Amhara regions as of August 2021, alongside with the activation and strengthening of its coordination roles for the Protection and CCCM Clusters, active in all three regions. As a preparedness measure, currently, stocks of core relief items for over 100,000 people are in place.

In Spotlight
In Oromia and SNNP regions, UNHCR together with its local partners – Bule Hora, Dila and Wollega Universities – supported 32,300 people with legal aid and awareness in 2021 aimed at restoring housing, land and property and civil documentation. Nearly half of them women.

In Oromia, Somali and SNNP regions, UNHCR invested in conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding, notably through community-led initiatives that promote social cohesion, facilitate inter-communal peace dialogues, mitigate and resolve tension and conflict.

In 2021, UNHCR and partners reached over 670,000 people, in particular persons with specific needs, such as persons with disabilities for example, with tailored assistance through core relief items and shelter support thereby enhancing their protection and resilience.
Operational Response

In **Afar and Amhara regions**, UNHCR and partners significantly scaled up the response in support of the newly displaced. In the last quarter of 2021, some 430,000 people had access to protection services, including through protection desks, and received core relief and emergency shelter support in the two regions, a 20 time increase since September. In Debre Berhan, Amhara region, for example, seven protection desks were established to provide access to information, counselling and direct support and referrals, as well as child-friendly spaces in three sites.

In both regions, investments have also been made in capacity development, both through training of partners and members of the Protection Clusters, as well as material support and quick impact projects, with a view to enhance the overall response capacity in the regions.

Given the shift toward return that set in among the IDP communities in both regions in the last quarter of 2021, and while new displacement continued, UNHCR also initiated early action to support IDPs wishing to return, while maintaining advocacy to prevent pressure and forced returns. For example, in the Amhara region, some 2,500 IDPs were supported in their voluntary returns. In both regions, UNHCR together with regional authorities and partners established respective coordination platforms to allow for planning and joint efforts to catalyse durable solutions early on.

In the **Benishangul Gumuz region**, UNHCR and partners supported over 100,000 internally displaced people, with a particular focus on women and children, with protection services, psycho-social support and case management, shelter, core relief items, scholastic materials, hygiene kits and clothing throughout 2021 in Assosa, Bambasi and Sherkole IDP sites, as well as in the Metekel zone. Despite the many access challenges in the region, UNHCR together with its partners, was able to address some of the needs of IDPs in the Metekel zone. Protection awareness and training activities on prevention and protection against GBV and SEA, as well as on child protection, complemented the operational support.

In 2021 in the **Gambella region**, UNHCR together with its partners assisted nearly 8,000 IDPs with shelter support and core relief items to address some of the basic needs of those newly displaced by natural disasters, such as flooding. In addition, UNHCR carried out a training on camp coordination and camp management, including on GBV mainstreaming in CCCM activities, for 28 participants from among regional authorities and partners.
UNHCR and partners also supported nearly 113,000 IDPs and returning IDPs in the East and West Wollega zones of Oromia region.

In the past three months alone, UNHCR in partnership with the Wollega University’s seven legal aid centres supported over 4,700 IDPs, returning IDPs and other persons with specific needs, raising legal awareness and providing free legal aid and counselling, preparing written court interventions and assisting in legal representation before court to restore their housing, land and property rights and civil documentation. UNHCR and ANE provided core relief items to over 20,000 newly displaced in the Wollegas, half of them women. In addition, UNHCR together with partner ANE assisted over 600 persons with specific needs with cash to help meet their basic needs or cover rental subsidies.

In West Guji and Gedeo zones of Oromia and SNNP region, UNHCR and its partners supported over 110,000 IDPs and returning IDPs.

In the last quarter of 2021, some 2,280 IDPs and returnees received legal aid and legal awareness support through the 12 free legal aid centers of Dila and Bula Hora Universities, reaching a total of over 21,000 people throughout 2021. This collaboration has proven to be essential to assist IDPs and returnees restore their housing, land and property or to obtain civil documentation. In Konso zone and Alle special woreda, UNHCR further established eight community-based protection committees to serve as interlocutors between the communities and the humanitarian partners to ensure effective community participation.

UNHCR provided cash support to 2,050 IDP returnees, particularly women-headed households and persons living with disability in West Guji, Gedeo and Konso zones, and Alle special woreda, enabling those supported to cover their basic needs, partake in day-to-day activities and enhance their resilience. Some 1,850 women and persons with disabilities, identified through protection monitoring, were supported through shelter construction. Nearly 36,000 people affected by conflict and flooding in Konso zone and Alle, Yirgachefe and Kochore, as well as Abaya and Galana woredas received core relief items to help recover from their losses.
Through UNHCR’s office in the Dire Dawa region, UNHCR and partners supported over 10,000 IDPs, returning and relocated IDPs through protection, shelter and materials for permanent shelters, core relief items as well as livelihoods (such as set up of mini markets) to address their needs and facilitate their path to durable solutions. Of those, nearly 900 women, including survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and female-headed households, as well as persons with specific needs among the host community received livestock support to help them generate income.

In the Somali region, UNHCR responds to the needs of IDPs through our offices in Jijiga and Melkadida, reaching nearly 70,000 people.

Over 10,000 internally displaced people, including those recently displaced in Siti zone and in the newly forming IDP settlement in Tuli-Guled woreda, as well as in Fafan, Doolo, Korahia and Liben zones, received core relief and emergency shelter support. This included tailored assistance to dozens of persons with specific needs, in particular older persons or persons with disabilities, who were assisted with wheel chairs, walking or hearing aids. In Tuli-Guled woreda, UNHCR with partner ANE nearly finalized the transitional shelters for almost 900 returning IDPs, including older persons, people with disabilities, child-headed households, and women and girls at risk, who had lost their homes as result of conflict.

UNHCR also continued to invest in community conflict resolution committees and community-based protection committees, as well as different IDP associations, such as for women and girls, youth and persons with disabilities. These committees promote peaceful co-existence and social cohesion, facilitate inter-communal peace dialogues, and issue early warnings on potential conflict and mitigate tension.

UNHCR and partners undertook efforts to prevent and respond to GBV in Dollo Ado and Filtu woredas, as well as at four sites in the Fafan zone. This included case management and referral pathways, including service provision to survivors, training of partners and government staff on case management, clinical care and psychosocial support to GBV survivors, as well as awareness-raising activities and material support. In the past quarter, UNHCR organized and facilitated community dialogues to raise awareness on and prevent GBV involving over 3,500 people.

UNHCR complemented its operational support with technical support to regional and local administrations, including through protection trainings for frontline staffers and material assistance, such as the office materials and the donation of vehicles.
In the **Tigray region**, UNHCR and partners expanded its multi-sectoral programme to facilitate access to protection services, and to provide core relief and shelter support. In total, the programme reached nearly 860,000 IDPs and host community members with specific needs. In addition, UNHCR’s CCCM role supported over 560,000 IDPs in 48 sites across the region. Due to access and other operational challenges, UNHCR’s response, alongside that of other humanitarian partners, slowed down. In particular, UNHCR’s programme expansion outside the main response hubs in Mekelle and Shire as well as other activities and services, such as the protection desks, suffered by the reduced mobility due to the lack of fuel in particular.

This nonetheless, in the last quarter of 2021, UNHCR and its partners was able to reach nearly 115,000 people. With the increasing pressure on IDPs living in primary school, and the reported incidents of forced evictions, UNHCR centred its efforts on the safe, dignified and voluntary relocation and returns alongside concerted advocacy against forced evictions through the Protection and CCCM Clusters. Specifically, UNHCR continued to support the voluntary relocation of over 15,000 IDPs to the Sabacare 4 site in Mekelle. In December, the first pilot of assisted voluntary returns of 536 IDPs to Samre took place as well. Over 3,800 people benefitted from the information, counselling and referral services at the remaining protection desk network, including ahead of their relocation or return, while over 15,000 children received mental health and psycho-social support in child friendly spaces and more than 12,000 people were reached with GVB prevention and response services.
Gaps and challenges

Humanitarian access to several areas of internal displacement, as well as security concerns for partners and staff, remain key challenges to the response in several regions.

In the Tigray region specifically, the paramount limitations are related to the lack of cash, phone and internet connectivity and fuel. Due to the fuel shortage, UNHCR, as most organizations, had to significantly reduce its activities and presence in Tigray as of October 2021.

In other parts of the country, the limited presence of humanitarian responders or the reduction in the overall response capacity in locations with high needs, such as the Somali region, the Wollegas, West Guji or Gedeo zones in Oromia and SNNP regions, has resulted in serious gaps in the response, compounding existing and creating new protection concerns and leaving durable solution opportunities unmaterialized.

2022: Way forward

In 2022, UNHCR together with its partners will:

- aim at building on the scaled-up response to internal displacement across the country, and strengthen and solidify its protection response notably by building on the good practices established in different parts of the country.
- pursue durable solutions to internal displacement with the views and needs of the displaced communities at the centre. UNHCR will also further enhance its coordination role on durable solutions at federal and regional levels, in support of the Government and in close collaboration with key humanitarian and development partners.
- strengthen its Cluster lead and co-lead roles, notably for protection and CCCM, and leverage Cluster leadership to advocate for stronger presence and programmes of partner organizations for a more robust inter-agency response.
- As part of the shelter/NFI Cluster, UNHCR, as one of the largest responders in this sector, will continue to advocate for protection outcomes through assistance interventions.

Coordination and Partnerships

UNHCR’s vision is for all internally displaced people to find protection from harm, live peacefully, learn, work and flourish as contributing members of the communities in which they live, and find longer-term solutions to build a secure future.

In implementing its programme on internal displacement, UNHCR works closely with the Federal Government of Ethiopia, Regional authorities, other UN agencies, NGOs, the displaced population as well as host communities. To ensure that its response is well coordinated, UNHCR works closely with the three Clusters for Protection, Shelter/NFI and CCCM with a view to place the protection of IDPs at the centre of the humanitarian response.

Read more on UNHCR’s engagement in situations of internal displacement, in our 2019 policy.
FACT SHEET > IDP Response (Ethiopia) / Jan-Dec 2021

Funding (by 31 December 2021)

USD 93 million requested for the UNHCR Ethiopia IDP response in 2021 – 20% has been received to date.

UNHCR is grateful for the contribution to the UNHCR Ethiopia IDP Operation in 2021

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2021
Norway 80 million | Private donors Spain 75.9 million | Sweden 75.4 million | United Kingdom 40.4 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 38.8 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Japan 30.9 million | Germany 26 million | Japan 23.4 million | France 20.2 million | Private donors Italy 19.6 million | Private donors Sweden 16.9 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million | Private donors USA 10.6 million

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