



Northern Ethiopia Emergency Update

01 February 2022



Ketema and her son sought shelter in Mekane Selam after she fled from the South Wollo zone. She is happy about the warm blanket she received during the distribution of core relief items to IDPs in Amhara. ©UNHCR/D. Dieguen/ Dec 2021

Key Figures

UNHCR supported the voluntary return of **12,222 internally displaced persons** to their areas of origin in safety and dignity.

257,000 IDPs, refugees, returnees, and affected populations benefitted from UNHCR protection interventions.

41,000 IDPs, refugees, returnees, and affected populations received core relief items.

1,338 displaced women and girls received dignity kits.

Context

The humanitarian situation across Northern Ethiopia is deeply concerning, with over **2.6 million internally displaced persons¹ and 93,500 refugees² & asylum seekers** in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions of northern Ethiopia. Over 15 months into the conflict, the overall security situation remains complex and fluid, hindering effective delivery of lifesaving assistance to the most affected populations. Since June 2021, the conflict that started in November 2020 in Tigray, has spread to the neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions forcing an increasing number of people to leave their homes within the country. This situation has brought undue burden to the civilian population that continues to endure the conflict with minimal basic services and assistance. Humanitarian needs have risen dramatically, with over **9.4 million people in urgent need of food and other aid³**.

Since December 2021, the security situation has improved in selected zones of Amhara and Tigray, prompting the spontaneous and voluntary returns of almost 240,000 to their area of origin. However, IDP returnees and affected populations are facing challenges such as unexploded ordnance, stigma, psychosocial, and family separation. UNHCR has been working with partners to provide protection and response to the most pressing needs in displacement sites and host communities in accessible areas.

Protection activities and Response

UNHCR has continued to scale up its presence in Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions. UNHCR has offices in Semera (Afar) and Debarq (Amhara), Mekelle and Shire (Tigray), **five field units** across the Tigray region (Abi Adi, Adigrat, Maychew, Sheraro and Axum) and three in Amhara: Gondar, Bahir Dar and Debre Birhan. In 2022, UNHCR set up a presence in Dessie, Amhara region. However, as conflict persists, many areas remain out of reach for our teams - hindering access to those in desperate need.



Protection

In January 2022, UNHCR reached over **257,000 IDPs with various protection interventions**, including protection monitoring and assessment, refugee verification, awareness-raising, capacity building, prevention and response of gender-based violence (GBV), material assistance, identification of persons with specific needs, Child Protection, psychosocial support, counselling, and legal assistance.

- **Refugee verification - Using biometric verification UNHCR, with the Ethiopian Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS)**, continues to locate and verify refugees who have relocated from the refugee sites to other locations due to the conflict. In Amhara, as of end January, there were **636 refugees** accommodated in the three temporary sites in Debat, Debarq. Together with the RRS, UNHCR continues to develop a new refugee site in Alemwach, Debat.
- **UNHCR, together with Government counterparts, partners and other humanitarian agencies conducted protection assessment of 167,625 IDPs to foster** an effective and targeted response in Afar, Amhara and Tigray.
- **15,744 IDPs** benefitted from protection services and referrals at 58 Protection Desks established to respond to priority needs expressed by IDPs and refugees in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray region.
- **4,450 children** accessed the **child-friendly spaces and community-based child protection structures**, including Child welfare committees and Child Rights Clubs with orientation provided through social workers in Amhara and Tigray.
- **87 community leaders and partners** in Tigray received training and capacity building on Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence prevention and advocacy for IDPs.
- **1,510 IDPs** (865 women and 643 men) in Tigray and sensitization sessions on topics related to management of unaccompanied and separated children and WASH.

¹ Sources: DTM Ethiopia National Displacement Amhara, Afar and Tigray - <https://tinyurl.com/2p89czzs>

² Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons by Region, 31 January 2022

³ OCHA: Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update. Northern Ethiopia - Humanitarian Update | Situation Reports (unocha.org)

- **Protection against Gender-Based Violence:** UNHCR provides **support to survivors of gender-based violence**, including information, referrals to medical care, psychosocial support, counselling, and legal assistance. In January, **1,338 displaced** women and girls received dignity kits in Tigray.

Material Assistance

UNHCR Core relief items in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray region have reached over **41,165 IDPs** (13,767 households). CRIs delivered included blankets, sleeping mats, jerry cans, plastic sheets, buckets, soap, kitchen sets, and mosquito nets. In addition, **1,200 IDPs in Debre Birhan, Amhara** received solar lamps and 540 tarpaulins. In Tigray, soap was distributed to **1,531 IDPs**. UNHCR set up new warehouses in Debre Birhan, Dessie, Gondar and Bahir Dar with enough storage capacity for operational and emergency response.

Durable solutions - Return and Relocation

Through its protection and solutions mandate, one of UNHCR priority is to facilitate the voluntary return of IDPs to their areas of origin. Since December 2021, UNHCR has supported the return of **12,222 IDPs** (Amhara 2538 and Tigray 9,684) to their areas of origin. The Protection Desks in IDP sites were used to assist in the return counselling exercise for over **9600 IDPs** in Tigray.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

UNHCR and partners manage 60 sites and collective centers (54 in Tigray and 6 in Amhara) hosting nearly **512,000 internally displaced persons**. In addition, as co-lead of the CCCM Cluster, UNHCR supports community led site maintenance activities, capacity building for government officials, partners, and persons of concerns.

Coordination

UNHCR leads the Protection Cluster, co-leads with IOM Camp Coordination Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster and contributes to Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (ES/NFI) Cluster in all three regions (Afar, Amhara and Tigray) In 2022, UNHCR is working with **12 implementing partners** across Afar, Amhara and Tigray.

Working with partners

UNHCR works closely with a wide range of partners to respond to the most pressing needs of the displaced persons, refugees and affected populations in camps and host communities in the Afar, Amhara and Tigray regions including **government entities** - the Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO) Disaster Prevention Food Security Program Coordination Office (DPFSPCO), the Regional Emergency Coordination Center (ARECC) and Bureau of Social Affairs (BOWCSA/BOWSA BOLWSA), **Seven United Nations Agencies:** OCHA, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, WHO, WFP and FAO, and **international and national NGO partners:** Action for the Needy in Ethiopia (ANE), Association of Ethiopian Educated in Germany (AEEG); African Humanitarian Aid And Development (AHADA), Action Africa Help International (AAHI); Agency Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus Development and Social Service Commission (EECMY); Development Expertise Center (DEC); Innovative Humanitarian Solutions (IHS); The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (DICAC); International Medical Corps (IMC); GOAL Ethiopia (GOAL), Refugee Returnees Services (RRS) and World Vision (WVI).

Funding updates

Of **\$205.4 million** in financial requirements for the Ethiopia Emergency in 2022, UNHCR has thus received only **25.9 million USD (13 percent) as of 22 February**, with a funding gap reaching USD 179.5 million.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to UNHCR operation in Ethiopia, as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

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For more information:

Martin Manteaw, Principal Situation Coordinator, manteaw@unhcr.org

Juliette Stevenson, Senior External Relations Officer, stevens@unhcr.org