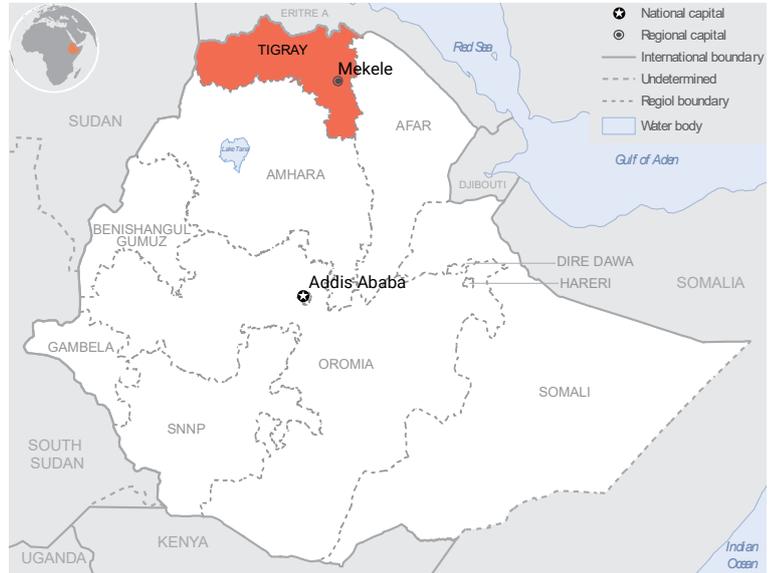


This report is produced by OCHA Ethiopia and covers the period from 20 to 24 November 2020. The next report will be issued on Friday, 27 November.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 22 November, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has issued a 72-hour-ultimatum for the Tigray People's Liberation Front based in the capital Mekelle to surrender. The Federal government will start implementing the "third phase of the ongoing law enforcement operation" in the region upon the expiry of the ultimatum.
- The UN and humanitarian organizations continue to be extremely concerned about the safety and welfare of civilians in Tigray region, including more than 500,000 citizens and 200 aid workers currently in Mekelle where fighting is likely to escalate.
- Shortages of fuel, cash and access to basic services continue to be reported due to insecurity and restrictions on movement. The resultant shortages in food and water amongst others are likely affecting the most vulnerable first and foremost.
- The UN and humanitarian partners in Ethiopia are ready to scale up humanitarian assistance to people affected by the conflict and are calling for free, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all affected areas.
- The number of people fleeing to Sudan has increased to more than 41,000, including 18,000 children, with cases of malnutrition reported among the new arrivals.



Tigray region, Ethiopia. Source: CSA, OCHA. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

850,000

People already dependent on some type of humanitarian assistance

1.1M

Projected additional people to need assistance due to conflict (Tigray, Amhara, Afar)

41,000

Asylum seekers in Sudan since 7 November

US\$75.6M

Outstanding requirement in the Humanitarian Preparedness Plan

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The humanitarian situation in Tigray region remains highly tense and volatile, with thousands of people reportedly lacking access to assistance since the conflict erupted on November 4th. This crisis comes at a time Ethiopia is grappling with a dire humanitarian situation caused by displacement, desert locust infestation, food insecurity and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shortage of basic supplies has been reported across in Tigray. More specifically, shortages of fuel and cash are becoming very critical, including for humanitarian organizations in the region impacting humanitarians' ability to respond to the increasing needs and carry out humanitarian need assessments. According to UNHCR for example, food supplies for the camps will run out in one week and water will cease imminently if humanitarians have no access to fuel for the water pumps.

Most of the 600,000 people in Tigray region who rely on monthly food assistance have not received their November rations, which should have been distributed in the first week of the month. At least 250,000 people that receive direct support cash transfers, and are among the poorest, have not receive their benefits as well. The situation is also dire for the 96,000 Eritrean refugees across the four camps in Tigray region. Without unconditional humanitarian access, there is great concern about the delivery of the most basic services, including water and essential medicines.

The fighting continues to displace people within Tigray as well as into Amhara and Afar regions and across the border into Sudan. Several thousands of people have reportedly arrived in Yalo district (Afar region) from Chercher district, Southern zone (Tigray region). Several more people have also reportedly fled further inland from Yalo district to Gulina district in zone 4 (Afar region) fearing violence following heavy military deployment in Yalo district.

Meanwhile in Amhara, regional authorities reported the return of some 900 IDPs from Woldia district to their place of origin in Raya Kobo district in the North Wollo zone and Alamata district in Tigray region.

There is no market access in 10 districts (*woredas*) in Afar region along the border with Tigray affecting an estimated 650,017 people in these areas, including 166,383 people who need urgent emergency relief food and other social services. Afar regional authorities are making arrangements with suppliers and local traders for food and other commodities to be transported to the border towns. Partners working in the border areas of Afar and Tigray regions have also halted their humanitarian services for the past two weeks due to insecurity and operational challenges. According to WFP, there is no access to transport food and nutritional supplies from Mekelle, Kombolcha and Adama warehouses. In addition to granting unhindered humanitarian access, humanitarian actors have further called on the authorities to avail fuel and allow access to cash at the border districts.

Following the 72-hour-ultimatum issued by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on 22 November for the TPLF to surrender, the Government's Spokesman for the State of Emergency Task Force for the conflict stated on 23 November that Mekelle has been encircled and that final preparations were underway to move into the city. The UN and humanitarian partners in Ethiopia are gravely concerned about the safety of civilians in Mekelle, including more than 200 aid workers who remain in the city where fighting is feared will intensify.

The UN and humanitarian actors in affected areas are calling on the parties to the conflict to adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law, particularly protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, schools and water systems and humanitarian support. Similarly, the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia and other religious groups have called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, a refrain from inflammatory words and propaganda, and a resolution of the conflict through dialogue. Security for all the humanitarian community also remains critical to ensure delivery of assistance to affected people

Cross-border impact

The situation in Tigray continues to have a spill-over effect on the humanitarian responses in the region, mainly in Sudan. UNHCR is warning that a full-scale humanitarian crisis is unfolding, as thousands of refugees flee ongoing fighting in Ethiopia's Tigray region.

According to UNHCR, more than 41,000 people have now fled to Sudan, including over 18,000 children and 57 per cent males, as of 24 November. In Sudan, due to limited capacity at the transit areas, some refugees are living in market areas in Hamdayet, while others are hosted by the community in nearby villages. UNHCR has revised its planning figures for refugees due to the conflict in Tigray region to assist between 210,000 and 215,000 refugees over the next six months, with the vast majority (200,000) in the Sudan side of the border. Priority needs include nutrition and food assistance as well as water, sanitation and hygiene and shelter. At least 16 children have



Figure 1 Tens of thousands of refugees are crossing the border from Ethiopia to Sudan, fleeing conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Many of them arriving in Hamdayet Reception Center where humanitarian partners are responding to their immediate needs. WFP has been on ground since day one, providing emergency food and logistics support. 17 November 2020. WFP/Leni Kinzli

been identified as severely acutely malnourished, while 184 are moderately acutely malnourished and 195 pregnant and lactating women are malnourished. UNICEF estimates that some 12,000 children – some of them without parents or

relatives – are among those sheltering in refugee camps and registration centers in Sudan. Inside Tigray region, an estimated 2.3 million children need humanitarian assistance

The Norwegian Refugee Council has reported that pregnant women, separated families and sick elderly people are among the thousands of refugees continuing to arrive daily into Sudan from conflict-stricken Ethiopia. NRC’s Country Director in Sudan called on donors to “urgently release money and help save thousands of lives” and said “the Sudanese government can also support aid agencies by swiftly resolving logistical challenges and avoiding unnecessary delays in the delivery of aid.”

HUMANITARIAN PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Following the inter-agency meeting in Bahir Dar (Amhara regional capital) on 17 November, UNICEF reported available supplies, including health and nutrition supplies in the Regional Health Bureau, WASH supplies in the Regional Water Bureau, as well as shelter supplies. The National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) reported having enough food supplies for some 300,000 people until January 2021. The SWAN consortium (Save the Children, World Vision, AAH and NRC) has prepositioned WASH-non-food item supplies for 500 households in Dessie (Amhara region). ICRC has prepositioned four ambulances at Gonder Zone of Amhara region. However, delivery and dispatch of the assistance continue to be hindered due to insecurity and blocked roads.

Meanwhile, the Amhara Regional Government deployed their teams and supplies, including food and non-food items to the North Wollo and West Gonder Zones. The Government anticipates 7,000 IDPs in North Wollo and 13,000 other IDPs in West Gonder Zones.

In Tigray, two teams were tasked to establish a reception centers in Axum and Adigrat as per the decision by the regional Emergency Coordination Center (ECC). At least 1.3 million people are estimated to be displaced, though registration and verifying is not possible due to poor access. The ECC agreed to come up with an immediate action plan dedicated to the newly displaced and mobilize available resources to respond to the humanitarian need of the most vulnerable ones.

UN and NGOs in Tigray continue to assist vulnerable people with available stock where possible. OCHA is working closely with all humanitarian partners in Ethiopia to mobilize resources and critical personnel for the response, pre-positioning stocks and strengthening coordination.

UNHCR, in partnership with the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA), UN agencies and NGO partners is continuing to extend protection and humanitarian assistance to over 96,000 Eritrean refugees who are mostly sheltered in the refugee camps, and in the host communities in Tigray. Stocks of humanitarian commodities are quickly depleting.

The International Federation of the Red Cross has launched an Emergency Plan of Action. ICRC has said that it stands ready to act as a neutral intermediary for the release of people detained in relation to the fighting in Tigray.

The Logistics Cluster is mapping the cargo pipeline and fuel needs of partners prepared to operate into Tigray for the next three months. Additional mapping of main partners warehouses is on-going. Warehouse capacity is being contracted for partners at Adama (Oromia region), and a dedicated fleet is also being positioned in Semera (Afar region) and Adama (Oromia region)

As of 23 November, 41,193 refugees have arrived in Sudan since 07 November. The majority, 68 per cent, arrived in Kassala state with 32 per cent arriving in Gedaref state and 2 per cent in Blue Nile state. The daily average of new arrivals since 10 November stands at 2,931, according to UNHCR. Increased assistance is reaching refugees as more deliveries of supplies arrive at the border—including food, medical supplies and ready to use therapeutic and supplementary food. WFP is providing high energy biscuits to the refugee prior to relocation, while Muslim Aid is prepared hot meals for new arrivals with WFP support. COVID-19 screening procedures are being implemented at the entry points. The European Commission is mobilizing an initial €4 million (US\$4.74 million) to assist the displaced people in Kassala and Gedaref states in eastern Sudan. From 17-18 November, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator together with UNHCR and UN agencies’ country representatives undertook a mission to the border area to meet government officials and assess the response and how to speed up delivery.

COORDINATION

In Tigray, the Mekelle Disaster Risk Management Technical Working Group newly established Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) finalized the revision of the 2020 regional Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) with an additional caseload of 1.3 million people expected to be affected by the current crisis. The revised EPRP amounts to ETB 3.1 billion (around \$81 million) and seeks to address the needs of IDPs, PSNP beneficiaries, refugees and communities affected by Desert Locust amongst others. ICRC, WASH, and the Health bureau have started responding with the

available resources but are calling for urgent mobilization of resources to avert malnutrition, impact of COVID-19 pandemic, and waterborne diseases, including cholera.

Inter Cluster Coordination Groups (ICCG) continued to hold regular meetings in Semera (Afar), Bahir Dar (Amhara) and in Mekelle (Tigray). An Inter-Cluster Coordination forum has been activated in Shire, while a sub-national access working group has been activated in Semera. UNHCR Ethiopia is leading a daily inter-agency coordination cell in Shire to discuss the evolving situation, which involves both refugee issues and the emerging IDP situation.

In Afar region, a joint Regional Emergency Coordination Center has been activated, which includes humanitarian agencies (UN and I/NGOs) and regional sector bureaus, chaired by Regional Head of Disaster Preparedness and Food Security and co-chaired by OCHA. An operational plan is being developed for humanitarian partners to continue operation and access to the border districts. IOM is planning rapid displacement assessment with engagements of sector office and partners to get access to the areas to monitor and track the displacements.

In Amhara, OCHA led an inter-agency coordination meeting attended by UN agencies, I/NGOs and WASH and NFI cluster coordinators in order to operationalize the cluster activities outlined in the Humanitarian Preparedness Plan, endorsed by the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team on 16 November. The Bahir Dar sub-national Disaster Management Technical working group, consisting of humanitarian agencies (UN and I/NGOs) and regional sector bureaus have been activated. The teams are chaired by the Regional Head of Disaster Preparedness Bureau. The Amhara Regional Bureau of Peace and Security will facilitate access to the border areas of Amhara. OCHA is working closely with the representatives of cluster lead agencies in Amhara region to reactivate the WASH, Protection, Agriculture, Health and Nutrition clusters in the region and has through the Bureau of Peace and Security initiated communication with the Police Commissioner to negotiate access for the MSF team, which are ready to assess and respond in the border areas between Amhara-Tigray and in areas controlled by the Ethiopian Defense Forces inside Tigray region. According to the Security focal points in Afar region, road movement along the Tigray-Amhara road is blocked except for military and Government movement.

FUNDING UPDATE

A Humanitarian Preparedness Plan targeting nearly 2 million people has been released. The plan seeks US\$75.6 million to provide life-saving assistance to people affected by the conflict in Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions until January 2021. The targeted population includes existing humanitarian caseload and additional 1.1 million people expected to need assistance as a result of the conflict.

The total 'top priority' funding requirements to facilitate the minimum preparedness activities to respond to the projected needs between November 2020 and January 2021 is US\$ 96.9 million. Considering available resources, the outstanding requirements is \$75.6 million (see breakdown in the table below). Protection mainstreaming will be promoted across all sectors by incorporating protection principles in humanitarian assistance and promoting access, safety and dignity in humanitarian assistance. While additional in-house capacities can be mobilized, regional and international support is required, both in terms of technical and financial support to ensure effective and timely humanitarian assistance to the evolving humanitarian context in northern Ethiopia.

Below is the sector breakdown of the Preparedness Plan requirements per sector.

Sector	Total requirement (US\$ Millions)	Outstanding requirements (gap) (US\$ Millions)
Education	2.9	2.9
ES/NFI	18.5	15.3
Food	36.9	26.6
Health	9.8	8.7
Logistics	5.0	4.5
Nutrition	8.5	3
Protection	2.6	2.1
WaSH	12.8	12.5
Total	\$ 96.9 M	\$ 75.6 M

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