

SITUATION UPDATE



International Medical Corps staff members educate community members in Shire, Ethiopia, about sanitation and hygiene practices.

The security situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia remains volatile. The nature of the conflict changed significantly last week when the government declared a unilateral ceasefire on June 28, withdrawing all troops from Mekele. At the same time, according to news reports, Eritrean troops withdrew from the region, all of which has had a marked impact on the security situation.¹ Increases in uncertainty have led to disruption in humanitarian assistance across the region.

Nevertheless, significant humanitarian needs persist in both Ethiopia and Sudan, with more than 5 million people in need of assistance. Humanitarian partners in Ethiopia have already reached approximately 3.7 million people with food assistance, in an effort to counteract the effects of persistent food insecurity and increasing levels of malnutrition. However, the risk that significant portions of the population slip into severe food insecurity—and potentially famine—remains. It is difficult to get accurate estimates of the extent of malnutrition, as many people remain in inaccessible parts of the region, but UNICEF estimates that more than 56,000 children will require treatment for acute malnutrition this year alone.²

According to UNHCR, more than 46,000 Ethiopian refugees have fled to Sudan due to the violence, crossing the border through Kassala, Gefaref and Blue Nile. As a result of the rainy season, which began in early June, tents, latrines and other facilities in Um Rakuba and Tunaydbah camp have been damaged, meaning flood-prevention measures remain a priority in the area. The humanitarian community also continues to respond to the health, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) needs of refugees in Sudan.

International Medical Corps Response

Ethiopia

International Medical Corps has been providing vital services to internally displaced people in Shire, Shiraro and Axum. We currently have nine mobile health and nutrition teams providing a variety of services, including outpatient consultations, nutrition screening, antenatal consultations, family-planning services and health education.

FAST FACTS

- In Ethiopia, International Medical Corps has directly reached roughly 125,450 people with services across all our operations.
- International Medical Corps has screened 31,641 children and pregnant women for acute malnutrition since we started delivering services in the area.
- In Hamdeyet refugee camp in Sudan, community leaders and mobilizers who have been trained by International Medical Corps on how to screen people for COVID-19 have referred more than 1,000 people for COVID-19 testing.

¹ UNOCHA: Flash update – Ethiopia Tigray Region Humanitarian Update, July 1, 2021.

² UNOCHA: Ethiopia Tigray Region Humanitarian Update, June 24, 2021. <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/ethiopia/>

In Shire, Shiraro and Axum, the mobile health and nutrition teams have reached more than 70,000 people directly with services. Teams have provided consultations to 5,350 people in the last two weeks alone, bringing the total number of consultations to 25,047. More than 50,000 people have indirectly received COVID-related and other health messaging.

Given the growing concerns around rising malnutrition in the region, the mobile teams have screened 10,521 children under five for acute malnutrition, along with 2,383 pregnant and lactating women. Acute malnutrition rates among the children screened in Shire and surrounding areas are 10% and 2%, respectively, for moderate and severe acute malnutrition.

International Medical Corps also has been delivering health and nutrition services in Humera, Wolkayit and Tsegede woredas since the early stages of the crisis. The teams have so far reached more than 55,000 direct beneficiaries, providing 27,000 consultations, screening more than 18,700 children and pregnant women for malnutrition, and providing mental health counseling to nearly 1,000 people. We also have indirectly reached 49,381 people with COVID-19 and mental health awareness-raising messages.



International Medical Corps staff members deliver COVID-19 prevention messages outside a mobile health and nutrition clinic in Shire, Ethiopia.

Sudan

International Medical Corps has been implementing activities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among refugees within the Hamdeyet refugee camp. As part of this effort, we trained 25 community health volunteers who have gone on to carry out awareness-raising activities and share information on COVID-19, reaching 2,532 people in areas such as schools and markets. Alongside this, International Medical Corps has distributed 200 posters and 1,000 leaflets on COVID-19 prevention, and 5,000 masks to 750 families in the refugee community and the host community. We also have provided 4,000 bars of soap and 400 jerrycans, and have set up 80 handwashing stations throughout the camp. To further prevent the spread of COVID-19, we also have trained community leaders and mobilizers on how to screen people for COVID-19; these people have in turn referred more than 1,000 individuals for COVID-19 testing.

International Medical Corps has also been providing support in the Tunaydbah refugee camp, including screening for acute malnutrition, delivering 100,000 medical masks to community health facilities and providing education about COVID-19.

In Sudan, we are still planning to expand our services to refugees in the area, while complementing other humanitarian actors' activities, such as supporting services at the Gedaref Hospital Nutrition Stabilization Center, which receives referrals from Tunaydbah and Umm Rakuba camps, as well as from the host community.



An International Medical Corps handwashing station in Hamdeyet refugee camp.