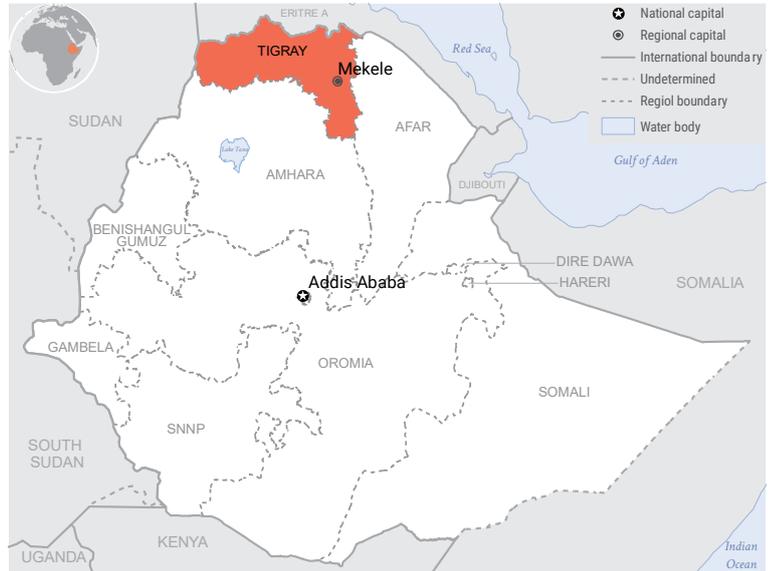


This report is produced by OCHA Ethiopia and covers the period from 3 November to 6 November 2020. The next report will be issued in due course.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tension between the federal Government and Tigray regional government has been escalating since the region held elections on 9 September despite the postponement of national elections due to the pandemic. This escalation eventually led to armed conflict in the early hours of 4 November 2020.
- Tigray region is home to approximately 600,000 people dependent on food relief assistance (more than 400,000 food insecure, 100,000 IDPs and nearly 100,000 refugees). In addition, 1 million people receive safety net assistance.
- The blockage of air and road access to the region, as well as the regional communication black-out is significantly affecting humanitarian operations.
- The disruption in the distribution of humanitarian supplies is contributing to the worsening of the humanitarian context, as it prevents timely and adequate assistance to vulnerable communities.
- We urge all warring parties, at all levels, to grant uninterrupted humanitarian access to affected population, as well as to existing humanitarian beneficiaries (food insecure, refugees, IDPs and migrants) and to all areas affected by the desert locust infestation.
- We ask donor partners and friends of Ethiopia for urgent mobilization of additional resources to address potential new needs as a result of the conflict, as well as existing needs captured in the Humanitarian Response Plan (<https://bit.ly/2JEroEd>). Despite rising humanitarian needs, the Ethiopia humanitarian appeal is only 49.4 per cent funded, including \$187 million Government allocation.



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.

600,000

Relief food beneficiaries

1M

PSNP clients

100,000

Internally displaced persons

96,000

Refugees

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In the early hours of 4 November, the Ethiopian defense forces (EDF) and the security forces of the ruling Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) clashed near Mekelle airport. Military confrontation was also reported near Dansha in Western Tigray. An official statement by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on 4 November announced that the EDF were given orders to start military offensive against TPLF in Tigray. According to an official statement by the Prime Minister, "operations by federal defense forces underway in northern Ethiopia have clear, limited and achievable objectives — to restore the rule of law and the constitutional order, and to safeguard the rights of Ethiopians to lead a peaceful life wherever they are in the country." The Prime Minister also called on the Ethiopian people "to follow the situation calmly, monitor possible localized flare ups, and to stand with the national army."

Effective 6 November, a State of Emergency (SoE) for Tigray region was decreed by the Council of Ministers in accordance to article 93(1)(a) of the Ethiopian Constitution and approved unanimously by the Parliament. The SoE is for a period of six months and an SoE Task Force was established, led by the Chief of Staff of the armed forces and accountable to the Prime Minister. The Taskforce is given the mandate to: a) disarm any security forces in Tigray region and to maintain the peace and security of the civilian population; b) impose restrictions on modes of transportation; c) impose curfew; d) detain those suspect of taking part in illegal activities that endanger the constitutional order; e) use proportionate force to restore law and order; f) take measures necessary in furtherance of the objectives of the State of Emergency.



Recent military confrontations in Tigray region. Source: Government, media.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Roads within and to the region are cut, flights prohibited, and communication lines are shut down in the region. The Ethiopia Human Rights Commission and some opposition parties have called for ensuring the protection of civilians. The Government, including the defense forces, reassured the population that caution is being taken to ensure the safety of civilians. Large movements of security forces to the northern region have been reported.

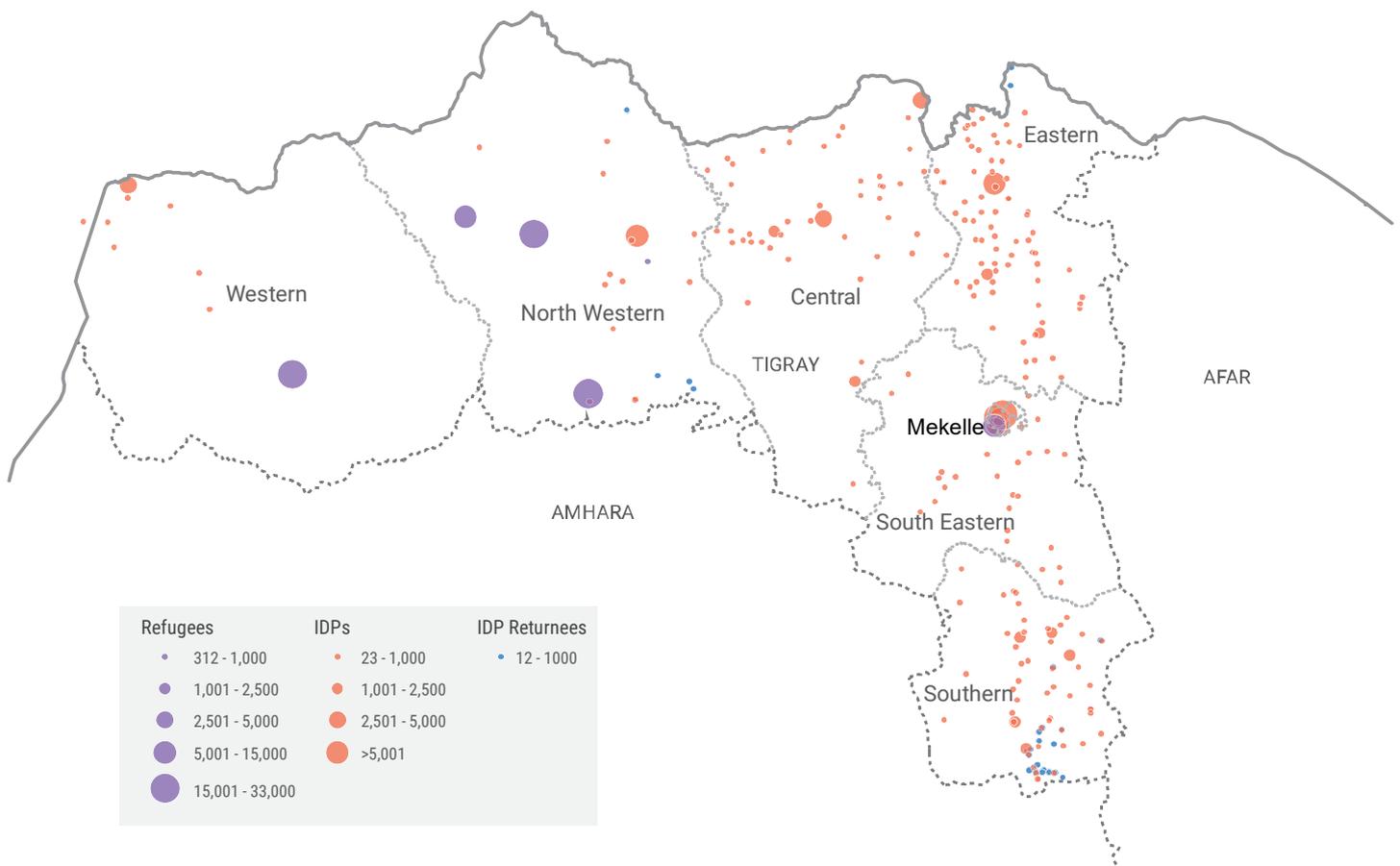
Today, 7 November, Ethiopia's House of Federation has voted to establish a transitional government in Tigray regional state.

Humanitarian concerns

There more than 2 million people in need of some type of assistance in Tigray. The region is home to one million safety net clients. There are at least 500,000 relief food beneficiaries on the humanitarian appeal, of which 100,000 are IDPs. Tigray region is also hosting 96,000 refugees (12 per cent of the country's refugee caseload), and close to 16,000 returned migrants. Round 6 relief food commodities that were due to be dispatched yesterday, 6 November, have been halted. While $\frac{3}{4}$ of the relief food beneficiaries are assisted by the Government (NDRMC), the remaining caseload is assisted by the NGO consortium JEOP. WFP assists the refugee population. The escalation of conflict in the region risks to seriously increase the humanitarian caseload.

Vulnerable groups in Tigray region

Zone	Baseline population	PSNP clients	Current food beneficiaries (non-displaced)	IDPs	Returned IDPs	Returned migrants	Refugees
Central	1,481,017	257,384	104,615	17,473		1,111	
Eastern	1,048,223	332,095	96,163	20,210	138	5,575	
Mekelle	520,930	15,811	3,453	28,371		315	7,818
North Western	923,343	86,962	45,133	8,864	931	1,532	66,429
South Eastern	451,060	119,258	51,803	2,638		2,196	
Southern	793,139	199,173	95,332	16,922	4,496	4,749	
Western	467,889	69		6,103		168	21,682
Total	5,685,602	1,010,752	396,499	100,581	5,565	15,646	95,929



Locations of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returned IDPs in Tigray region. Source: IOM-DTM, UNHCR. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

The region is one of the worst-affected by desert locust infestation with threats of new swarms arriving in the coming weeks. The locusts are concentrated in the central and northwest zones of Tigray and are damaging crops, pastures and rangelands. The regional Early Warning directorate and key humanitarian partners were conducting an assessment to determine the impact of the desert locust on the livelihoods and food security of the population. There is an ongoing desert locust response operation in the region that is feared to have stopped due to insecurity, risking further damage to crops impacting food security. Effective desert locust control depends on coordinated and equal interventions in all affected regions. The blockage of air and road access to the region, as well as the communication black-out is affecting humanitarian operations, and the real time assessment of humanitarian needs.

The region registered more than 6,600 Covid-19 cases and 45 deaths since March 2020. At least 1,234 patients are currently in isolation centers. The daily testing capacity in the region has been challenged by shortage of reagents and testing kits. Possible interruption of COVID-19 prevention and control is another humanitarian concern.

The overall disruption of the distribution of humanitarian supplies and the personnel risk of aid workers will likely contribute to the worsening of the humanitarian context, as it prevents timely and adequate assistance to vulnerable communities.

There are close to 9 million people at high risk due to this conflict who are living in the vicinity of regional and national boundaries with Tigray. Should the conflict escalate, it is possible that these people may be affected which would lead to massive displacements within and outside of Ethiopia. Protection of civilians and ensuring their access to basic services is amongst the top priority of humanitarian partners. Conflict always exposes populations, particularly women, children, the elderly and the disabled to exploitation and various forms of abuse. The situation of displaced persons is particularly of concern as without assistance and their inability to meet their basic needs, the likelihood of them resorting to negative coping strategies is high.

In addition to the consequences to the people in need based in Tigray, there is a concern that the vacuum left by security forces re-deployed from other critical areas, may incite more ethnic violence including attacks on ethnic minorities by UAG (unknown armed group) and further movements of population in other parts of the country, as well as widespread protection need. In addition, the threat of uncontrolled diseases and desert locust infestation reaching other regions of the country and neighboring countries is high.

HUMANITARIAN PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Lack of communication and road access is preventing partners to gauge the situation on the ground and identify needs. There are currently 31 partners involved in non-refugee response operation in the region, including 16 INGOs, 9 UN agencies, 4 National NGOs and 2 Government agencies. With the information at hand the below are some of the preparedness actions taken by partners on the ground.

Food

- NDRMC has enough resources to address current needs (to 300,000) until January 2021, while JEOP needs to re-stock the warehouse in Tigray by December to ensure assistance, including for Round 6.
- JEOP has the capacity to scale up to cover the food needs for the entire caseload in Tigray should NDRMC be unable to do so.
- WFP provides relief food for the entire refugee caseload, which is then distributed by the Agency of Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA). UNHCR is currently finalizing an updated contingency plan.

WASH

- SWAN prepositioned WaSH/NFI for 500 HHs in Dessie (Amhara region).
- UNICEF prepositioned WaSH supplies in Tigray for 5000 people). It has capacity to dispatch resources for an additional 13,000 people.

Health

- Trauma kits pre-positioned in Mekelle to cover 100 people initially
- Emergency health kits for 10,000 people prepositioned in Mekelle
- Deploying two sub-national cluster coordinators
- SWAN consortium on standby
- ICRC prepositioned four ambulances at Gondar ERCS to transport casualties from border areas.
- Preliminary discussion held with MSF to set up emergency response in Tigray

ES/NFI

- No supplies in Tigray, some stocks in Desse (500 kits).
- Limited resources for cash for ES/NFIs with SWAN and IOM/RRF (conditional on banks and markets).

Nutrition

- Nutrition supplies for the fourth quarter were dispatched to the region.

Number of humanitarian partners, by cluster

