

ETHIOPIA SITUATION (TIGRAY REGION)

1-15 August 2021



UNHCR and Ethiopian officials register Eritrean refugees in Addis Ababa.

Key Developments

On 10 August, [UNHCR launched an appeal for US\\$164.5 million](#) to assist 96,000 Eritrean refugees and 650,000 internally displaced people in Ethiopia's Tigray region and up to 120,000 Ethiopian refugees in eastern Sudan. Some US\$ 101.3 million, or 61 per cent of the appeal, will help provide essential aid such as shelter, domestic items and protection, including support for survivors of gender-based violence, inside Tigray. In addition, US\$ 63.2 million will strengthen UNHCR's response in eastern Sudan and Blue Nile State, where we are providing protection assistance, shelter, water and sanitation, health, and logistics. UNHCR is also working to urgently preposition supplies and put in place facilities at border points for any new arrivals from Ethiopia.

ETHIOPIA

- On 30 July, UNHCR and its partners [regained access](#) to the Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps for Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Violent clashes in the area had prevented UNHCR staff from reaching the camps since 13 July. The delivery of urgently needed assistance restarted on 5 August for the 23,000 refugees in both camps. However, access is limited by a complex and fluid security situation and refugees continue to face dire conditions. Basic services such as healthcare remain unavailable, and clean drinking water is running out. UNHCR continues to advocate for safe passage which will allow refugees from Mai Aini and Adi Harush to be moved to the new site of Alemwach, near Dabat town, some 135 kilometers away.

- The limitations on telecommunication remain a major operational challenge, with no phone network and limited VSAT operational in the Tigray region. City power in Shire and Mekelle has been unavailable for the past few days. UNHCR continues to provide internet access to UN agencies, NGOs (partners and non- partners) at its offices. Scarcity of fuel and cash continues to impact the effective delivery of many humanitarian programmes, and with limited possibilities of bringing in supplies, UNHCR and other agencies are unable to operate at full capacity.

SUDAN

- On 2 August, USAID Administrator Samantha Power visited Um Rakuba refugee camp during her first official visit to Sudan. During her visit, Administrator Power had the opportunity to listen to powerful accounts from refugee women in a focus group discussion organized by UNFPA. Some shared stories about loss and what they left behind while others spoke about their hopes for the future. Administrator Power also met with representatives from the nearby host community in Um Rakuba, which is home to some 20,000 refugees. The delegation visited a WFP food distribution site, where the Administrator had the opportunity to speak to refugees and learn more about their views on the recent switch from cash to in kind food assistance.
- The operation continues to prepare for a considerable influx in light of the fluid and dynamic situation in Ethiopia. Tensions remain high particularly around border areas since most new arrivals are entering Hamdayet through Zahana village border point. Advocacy with authorities to relocate new arrivals safely to the camps has been stepped up in the event the situation across the border deteriorates further. As of 14 August, a total of 335 new arrivals were reported in Hamdayet Transit Centre.

Ethiopia Response

The humanitarian situation across the Tigray Region remains deeply concerning for refugees, the internally displaced and host communities. Civilians have endured eight months of conflict with extremely limited basic services and assistance available, leading to a significant escalation in humanitarian needs with ongoing new displacements. The security situation remains volatile, affecting civilians and constraining humanitarian actors on the ground. Communication, electricity, and banking services remain intermittent. The conflict is now also affecting civilian populations in neighbouring Amhara and Afar.



Eritrean Refugee Response

Adi Harush and Mai Aini: The general food distribution in the two Mai Tsebri camps commenced on 5 August and was finalized on 13 August. As of 10 August, a total of 19,494 individuals had collected their monthly rations in Adi Harush (8,317 individuals) and Mai Aini (11,177 individuals) refugee camps. Final consolidation of the total number of refugees who received food is underway. The manual verification of beneficiaries during the exercise slowed down the distribution process, as internet connectivity for use of online verification systems is inaccessible.

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted as part of the rapid protection assessments in both camps to gather information on the situation on the ground after weeks of absence from the camps due to the escalation of the conflict in the area. The FGDs were carried out with refugee representatives and two randomly selected refugee groups in Adi Harush (15 male, 10 female) and Mai Aini (12 male and 10 female) with the aim to help initiate the process of organizing a detailed survey.

Dabat: As of 12 August, a total of 127 refugees and asylum seekers have been relocated to the temporary accommodation site in Dabat, with 15 new arrivals and four new-borns in the past week. UNHCR has requested ARRA to facilitate documentation of the asylum seekers and new-borns.

Stage I of implementation of activities in all seven sites in Dabat for the new Alemwach refugee camp has been completed. UNHCR and partners are mobilizing resources to expedite the next phase of activities including the construction of 100 communal hangers and 4,000 family shelters with adequate sanitation facilities. The infrastructure is planned to accommodate an expected 20,000 refugees to be relocated from Mai Aini and Adi Harush camps when the security situation allows. Moreover, UNHCR is working on consolidating plans of partners IHS and ANE for site development, facilitating monitoring of ongoing works and completion timelines. Meanwhile, site preparation works have started aimed at excavating 8 hectares of land and access roads which will facilitate the construction of communal hangers, rub halls and sanitation facilities.

Addis Ababa: The documentation exercise for Eritrean refugees who self-relocated to Addis Ababa from the former Shimelba and Hitsats camps commenced on 4 August 2021 is ongoing together with ARRA. As of 12 August, a total of 2,132 individuals (1,486 households) received a new refugee ID document, and 152 individuals (125 Households) received a new proof of registration. Partnering with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE), UNHCR has assisted 1,476 Households to open bank accounts to facilitate the transfer of cash assistance from UNHCR.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

According to [OCHA Situation Report](#), the conflict in Tigray has displaced an estimated 2.1 million people in Tigray region. UNHCR is working to significantly scale up IDP response operations while undertaking Protection and Camp Coordination and Camp Management cluster leadership responsibilities.



Protection: The UNHCR IDP Protection and Solutions Strategy for Tigray has been finalized, and includes key components of IDP returns and advocacy plans on protection. As Cluster lead, UNHCR will enhance external protection reporting and maintain a strong focus and advocacy, with local authorities, for the needs of persons of concern - to ramp up programmes to combat gender-based violence and enhance child protection services, protection mainstreaming and pursue security/civilian and humanitarian character of IDP sites.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) trainings are ongoing for social workers and health service providers from hospitals and other health facilities across Tigray, addressing gender-based violence in emergencies (GBViE). Dignity kits are being distributed, and a safe house and four safe spaces have been set up in IDP sites for women and girls.

Messages on Emergency Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) in Tigray have been prepared by UNHCR, UNMAS and UNICEF, and the Protection Cluster is organizing training sessions with IDPs.



Shelter and Non-food Items: All 12 UNHCR trucks that had been sent from Addis Ababa, via Semera have reached Mekelle. The trucks were carrying CRIs for some 7,750 Households. UNHCR Addis Ababa Office is working to dispatch additional CRIs to the region. Procurement of 50,000 additional kits for distribution to 250,000 individuals is underway.

5,000 household kits for 28,000 refugees have been dispatched from Addis Ababa to Dabat. Additional 15,750 CRI kits (for 78,750 individuals) are currently being distributed to IDPs.

UNHCR is prepositioning CRIs for 10,000 Households in various locations through Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM). The distribution will be done after assessment through UNHCR partners or joint assessment with RRM in different locations in Mekelle and Shire areas.

UNHCR, through its partner ANE, is conducting a distribution of CRIs in close collaboration with the Government representatives in Debark including ARRA and the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) authorities. The exercise which commenced on 11 August is targeting some 2,000 IDP households.

Sudan Response

As of 12 August, UNHCR and the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) verified the arrival of some 942 individuals who had fled the Gondar area in Ethiopia's Amhara region to Taya village, Basundah locality, Gedaref State. The group has since been transferred by local authorities to a school compound in Basanga village (some 25 km from the border) to ensure their safety. Joint registration with COR was conducted at the household level for the group, which also received tokens to receive assistance.

Following an assessment mission by UNHCR, COR and several partners, support across critical sectors has been significantly scaled up. A primary health care unit managed by MSF in Basanga village is now functional. It currently operates 7 days a week and is staffed with 4 medical staff and 3 refugee volunteers. Sanitation promotion and clean up campaigns to improve refugees' awareness of good hygiene practices are also ongoing. Through MSF and Mercy Corps, approximately 18,000 litres of water have been provided to refugees. WFP food distributions, which started on 7 August, are complemented by hot meals provided by Muslim Aid.

Life-saving supplies, including CRIs such as jerrycans, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats and soap have been delivered on site and distributed. 503 clothing kits, prioritizing women and people with specific needs (PSNs), including people with disabilities and the elderly, have been distributed so far as well as 159 dignity kits to women of reproductive age. Nevertheless, several gaps remain: currently 2 emergency latrines are being constructed and work is underway to construct new latrines. Improving the provision of emergency latrines will be critical to reducing the likelihood of waterborne diseases.

On 2 August, a multi-functional team carried out a mission to Um Algura locality, in Aj Jazirah State, to view a site proposed by the government to accommodate non-Tigrayan new arrivals. A second inter-agency assessment, led by UNHCR and COR, was carried out on 7 August. Several partners joined, including ALIGHT, DRC, Mercy Corps, MEDAIR, NRC and Plan International. Fau 5 – a former refugee camp which closed in 2018 – is located some 180 km from Gedaref town (3 hours via road). The site is currently used for farming and grazing by the host community and about 1,200 refugees who still reside in the area. Initial assessments indicate the site has a capacity to accommodate up to 20,000 individuals although extensive rehabilitation on infrastructure is required.



Protection: Community Based Protection Networks are established in Um Rakuba and Tunaydbah and members are provided with training on GBV and SEA to lead awareness raising through focus group discussions and outreach throughout camps. A network of partner-run Women's Centres are also established – two in Um Rakuba and three in Tunaydbah - and provide safe spaces for women and girls. Women's empowerment programming is offered as well as provision of psycho-social support, linkages to available support systems from other women in the communities and various awareness GBV raising activities.

GBV and PSEA capacity building continues to be provided to partners and staff, including a recent Accountability to Affected People & Gender Equality training conducted in August 2021 for the Protection Working Group.

GBV case management services are offered by IRC and ALIGHT and all available multi-sectorial assistance is offered to all survivors including: health (as well as SRH services), legal aid, including facilitating incident reporting to police, psycho-social support, cash assistance, NFIs and shelter, child protection services, durable solutions and women's empowerment programming. The Protection Desks manned by ALIGHT and UNHCR are established in both camps to receive individual protection cases including GBV and refer them to the appropriate service provider(s) upon the consent of GBV survivors.

UNHCR has prioritized the improvement of the Best Interest Procedures (i.e. Child Protection case management) as a means to enhance prompt identification of children at heightened risk, appropriate alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), family tracing and reunification, birth registration. Jointly with its partners, the strengthening of community-based child protection mechanisms in the camps has been a key focus to support the identification of vulnerable children and information dissemination. Owing to the scarcity of education opportunities, youth-targeted programming also stands out as a pivotal area of work to foster community participation and mitigate adverse effects on children's protection and wellbeing.

Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) have been set up by partners in Um Rakuba (5) and in Tunaydbah camp (4). They provide recreational and empowerment activities for boys and girls, ensure outreach on sexual and reproductive healthcare and other types of awareness activities.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: As of 14 August, approximately 624 out of 1,312 semi-permanent latrines were completed in Tunaydbah and 407 out of 931 completed in Um Rakuba. Latrine coverage in Tunaydbah stood at 1:16 and 1:20 in Um Rakuba. The aim is to ensure a 1:20 coverage – the SPHERE minimum standard in post-emergency settings – in both locations by September. While the cumulative figures for latrines often fluctuate since they are continuously decommissioned, dislodged or might be in need of repairs/replacing due to adverse weather, the aim is to replace all emergency latrines with semi-permanent latrines by the end of the rainy season in October. The average water supply in all sites was approximately 20 l/c/d, which is the SPHERE minimum standard.

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