

**ETHIOPIA  
EMERGENCY  
SITUATION (TIGRAY),  
UNHCR REGIONAL  
APPEAL**

January - June 2021



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*Left: An Ethiopian refugee and her child collect mats at a transit site in Hamdayet, Sudan.*

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*Cover image: An Ethiopian refugee who lives with her husband, their son, and their daughter, in a shelter in Um Rakuba camp, Sudan. She is a volunteer teacher in the camp.*

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# Overview

## Priority populations targeted for assistance

**100,000**ETHIOPIAN REFUGEES IN  
EASTERN SUDAN**80,000**ERITREAN REFUGEES IN  
TIGRAY REGION,  
ETHIOPIA**650,000**ETHIOPIAN IDPs IN  
TIGRAY REGION,  
ETHIOPIA**\$98.9 million**TOTAL REQUIREMENTS  
(Ethiopia \$49.6 million; Sudan  
\$49.3 million)

There is a full-scale humanitarian crisis underway in and around Ethiopia's Tigray region since armed conflict broke out there in early November 2020, and a six-month State of Emergency was declared by the Government. The situation regarding forcibly displaced people is complex and overlapping, with refugees fleeing abroad, mostly into neighbouring Sudan; refugees from Eritrea within Tigray affected; and an increasing population of internally displaced people within Tigray and into other areas of Ethiopia.

As of 21 December, more than 52,000 Ethiopian asylum-seekers had crossed into East Sudan, almost all from Tigray. These refugees require essential life-saving assistance and services at reception/transit centers, and timely onward transport of new arrivals from reception centres to camps is urgent in order to better guarantee their physical safety, to address congestion and overcrowding, and to reduce risks related to gender-based violence and communicable diseases.

Within Tigray itself, which had a pre-conflict population of some six million people, conditions are daily becoming more difficult and dangerous, including for some 96,000 Eritrean refugees, most of whom are in four camps and for whom protection and assistance have been seriously disrupted, and for a growing number of internally displaced persons. The updated UN Humanitarian Response Plan for Northern Ethiopia estimates that 2.3 million people might be affected by the conflict within Tigray region and across regional borders into Amhara and Afar.

The blockage of air and road access to Tigray, as well as the regional communication black-out, has significantly affected humanitarian operations and monitoring capacity, and made real time assessments of humanitarian needs all but impossible. However, it is clear a multisectoral response is needed for forcibly displaced people across Tigray, including for basic needs such as food security, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, emergency shelter and infrastructure.

Key protection interventions are also urgently needed for, for example, the prevention of, risk mitigation and response to gender-based violence and family separation. Special attention is required for persons at heightened protection risk, including young children, women and the elderly, persons with specific needs and persons with disabilities.

As the protection lead agency with commitments towards IDPs, returnees and host communities as people of concern, UNHCR will work on mitigating the effects of armed conflict on the civilian population, ensuring a protection lens and adherence to humanitarian principles, as well as the application of the principle to “do no harm” in its activities and advocacy, and that civilians have access to assistance and services in a safe, equitable, accessible, and dignified manner.

The overall situation is rapidly evolving, and priority needs and assistance strategies will depend largely on the security situation and logistical challenges, on risk management, and on coordination with UNHCR partners and

stakeholders in what is a complex humanitarian and operational environment.

**To deliver life-saving assistance and protection to 100,000 Ethiopian refugees expected to seek refuge in Sudan; to an estimated 80,000 of the 96,000 Eritrean refugees in Tigray; and to 650,000 IDPs— a number which includes the old case load and those who may be newly displaced within Tigray—UNHCR is appealing for \$98.9 million for the first six months of 2021. This includes \$81.5 million of new supplementary needs in Ethiopia and Sudan and \$17.4 million of re-prioritized requirements from the ExCom-approved budget for Ethiopia for 2021.**



# Ethiopian new arrivals | as of 20 December 2020

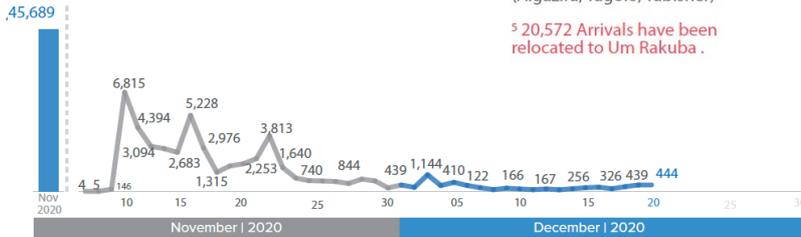
**Total New Arrivals From Ethiopia <sup>1</sup>**



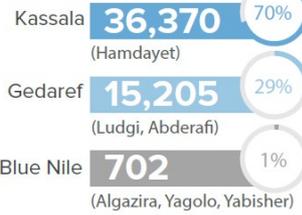
**52,277**  
Individuals

<sup>1</sup> Since 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2020.

**Daily Arrival Trends**



**Per State**



<sup>5</sup> 20,572 Arrivals have been relocated to Um Rakuba .

**Arrivals average per day <sup>2</sup> (since 10<sup>th</sup> Nov)**

**1,271**

<sup>2</sup> Arrivals average since beginning of Nov 1,188.

**Estimated Demographic Data<sup>3</sup>**



31% Children (0 - 17 yrs)



64% Adults (18-59 yrs)

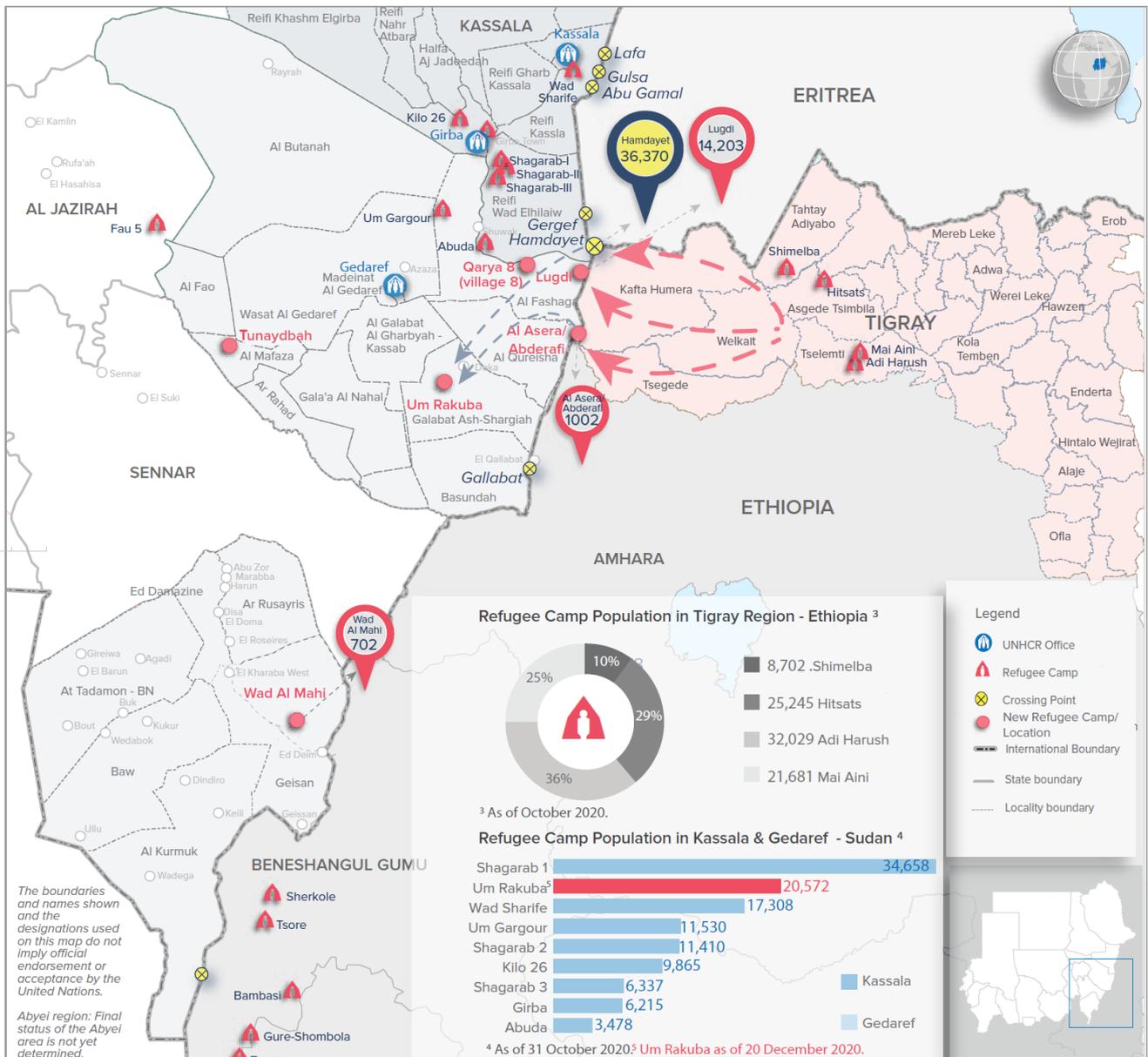


5% Elderly (+60 yrs)

36% Female

64% Male

<sup>3</sup> Population distribution statistics are based on the ongoing household registration (11,000 HH) conducted by UNHCR and COR at registration centers.



The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.  
Abyei region: Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

# UNHCR's response to date

**Sudan** | The borders remain open for refugees and UNHCR and partners have full access to border points, with the Government granting prima facie status to all Ethiopian refugees arriving in Sudan related to the Tigray situation. UNHCR and the Sudanese Government's Commissioner for Refugees (COR) are screening and registering new arrivals, and temporarily sheltering them in transit centres located near entry points. Water and meals are provided, as well as health screening including for COVID-19.

Protection teams are identifying persons at heightened risk and referring them to specialized services, including pregnant women, persons with disabilities, unaccompanied children and older persons. Counselling and health services are available for survivors of gender-based violence.

UNHCR and authorities are relocating refugees to a new refugee camp at Um Rakuba, 70 km from the border, where over 20,000 people have been settled so far. Additional sites are being identified.

An Inter-Agency Refugee Response Plan was issued in November 2020 with 30 UN and NGO partners (see Coordination section on p.18 for full details of the inter-agency regional response to the emergency).

**Ethiopia** | For nearly six weeks, UNHCR and humanitarian partners have had no access to populations in need within Tigray. As of October 2020, some 96,000 Eritrean refugees

were registered in Tigray, mainly in four refugee camps. There were also 8,424 Eritrean refugees officially residing outside of camps benefitting from the Government's Out of Camp Policy. To date, only WFP was able to access two of the Eritrean refugee camps in Tigray in Mai Aini and Adi Harush on 15 December, and provided food assistance for 35,000 refugees for one month. For the remaining two camps in Tigray, a security assessment is underway before assistance can be delivered. In addition, UNHCR and partners reached about 5,000 IDPs in Shire with water, high energy biscuits, clothes, mattresses, sleeping mats and blankets, from pre-existing stocks in the area.

**Djibouti and Eritrea** | No new refugee arrivals have been reported. However, UNHCR and the Government have registered more than 200 Ethiopians of Tigray origin who are stranded in Djibouti. In Eritrea, there have been reports of refugees arriving and possible internal displacement along the border with Ethiopia. These reports however cannot be verified as access to the border areas is restricted.

Scenario planning and preparation for potential refugee movements into both Djibouti and Eritrea are ongoing, with UNHCR advocating borders remain open. A regional contingency plan is being updated and UNHCR country operations are stepping up emergency relief preparedness as the situation evolves.

## For more information

Global Focus is UNHCR's main operational reporting portal for donors and other key partners. The site provides an overview of the protection risks that refugees and other populations of concern to UNHCR face across the world, as well as regularly updated information about programmes, operations, financial requirements, funding levels and donor contributions.



[Global Focus Ethiopia Emergency situation page](#)

# Urgent needs

**Sudan** | Urgent assistance is required for 100,000 refugees expected to arrive by June 2021. This assistance will be required across all sectors, but most particularly protection, education, health, WASH, shelter and core relief items, and logistics. Should efforts to relocate refugees away from the border not keep up with the pace of the influx, additional assistance services at reception and transit sites may be provided. Development of the new sites where refugees are being settled requires significant resources in all essential sectors.

**Ethiopia** | In Tigray, UNHCR plans to assist 80,000 of the estimated 96,000 Eritrean refugees in the next six months. Given disturbing if still unconfirmed reports of Eritrean refugees being killed, abducted and forcibly returned to Eritrea, Eritrean refugees in camps in Tigray will be affected in different ways by the conflict. However, some 30,000 refugees are expected to be compelled to move within Ethiopia, with it likely that 15,000 refugees will be displaced within the region, moving to safer locations or camps; and an additional 15,000 will be displaced in other parts of Ethiopia, including to Addis Ababa, to which there are increasing reports of refugees arriving through the city of Gondar in the Amhara region south of Tigray.

UNHCR is working with the Ethiopian Government’s Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) to establish a protocol for verification and assistance to these refugees, whether still in camps, on the move in Gondar, or in Addis Ababa. It is important to note as well that, since the change in the Government’s asylum policy for Eritreans earlier in the year, Tigray also hosts a number of Eritrean asylum-seekers who have not had the opportunity to apply for asylum, and who remain undocumented and unregistered.

In camps in Tigray and other locations within Ethiopia, a multi-sectoral response is needed to respond to the urgent needs of refugees and IDPs. This needs to include basic assistance such as food, health and nutrition, WASH, emergency shelter and infrastructure. Given the critical protection aspects to the crisis, it needs as well to include key protection interventions such as prevention of, risk mitigation and response to gender-based violence, and access to reception facilities with special attention to persons at heightened protection risk such as young children, women and the elderly, persons with specific needs and persons with disabilities.



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Ethiopian refugees wait to receive a World Food Programme distribution at the Um Rakuba camp in Al Qadarif state, Sudan.



UNHCR registration staff, talks to an Ethiopian refugee from Humera, at Um Rakuba camp in Al Qadarif, Sudan.

## Protection

**Sudan** | At the border points and reception centres in Hamdayet and Um Rakuba urgent protection assistance needs to include: border monitoring and initial refugee registration at household level by COR and UNHCR; child protection, including identification of unaccompanied and separated children and family reunification; referral pathways and support for survivors of gender-based

**Ethiopia** | UNHCR will ensure provision of basic protection services to displaced populations in Tigray, with key protection concerns following the impact of the conflict including prevention of, risk mitigation and response to gender-based violence physical violence, family separation, the needs of unaccompanied and separated children and psychosocial distress and trauma.

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