

# Ethiopia – Tigray Crisis

APRIL 28, 2021

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>6</b> <b>MILLION</b> Estimated Population of Tigray Region <i>GoE – 2017</i>	<b>4.5</b> <b>MILLION</b> People in Tigray Requiring Humanitarian Assistance <i>UN – March 2021</i>	<b>4</b> <b>MILLION</b> Estimated Number of People in Urgent Need of Food Assistance <i>Food Security Cluster – January 2021</i>	<b>1.1</b> <b>MILLION</b> People Displaced Within Tigray, Afar, and Amhara by the Crisis in Tigray <i>IOM – March 2020</i>	<b>63,000</b> Ethiopian Refugees Arriving in Eastern Sudan Since November <i>UNHCR – April 2021</i>
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- Increased insecurity and ongoing communications disruptions continue to hinder humanitarian response efforts in Tigray. The DART and USG leadership continue to express concern regarding reports of protection violations, as well as advocate that the GoE take steps to increase humanitarian access and allow the importation of communications equipment.
- The crisis in Tigray had displaced at least 1.1 million people throughout Tigray and into neighboring Afar and Amhara regions as of late March, according to IOM.
- Through the USAID/BHA-supported, CRS-led JEOP, REST had reached more than 1.5 million people in Mekele and five of Tigray’s six zones with emergency food assistance as of April 18.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the Tigray Response in FY 2021 and FY 2020	USAID/BHA <sup>1,2</sup>	\$265,102,970
	State/PRM <sup>3</sup>	\$17,135,000 <sup>4</sup>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$282,237,970<sup>5</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)  
<sup>2</sup> USAID/BHA FY 2020 funding includes emergency food assistance from the former Office of Food for Peace and non-food humanitarian assistance from the former Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance.  
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM). In addition, State/PRM provided \$22,633,000 toward the Tigray response in the region.  
<sup>4</sup> Funding in this fact sheet includes assistance to refugees residing in Tigray, which is also reported in the U.S. Government (USG) Ethiopia fact sheet as part of the Ethiopia Complex Emergency.  
<sup>5</sup> This total includes \$326,361 in FY 2020 supplemental funding through USAID/BHA for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) preparedness and response activities.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Deteriorating Security in Tigray Disrupts Humanitarian Efforts

Nearly six months after the outbreak of fighting between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), and other armed group elements in northern Ethiopia's Tigray Region, escalating insecurity and communications disruptions continue to exacerbate humanitarian needs and hamper access to crisis-affected populations. Active hostilities have been reported across all of Tigray's six zones in recent weeks, while volatile security conditions have rendered some previously accessible *woredas*—or districts—inaccessible.

Additionally, despite recent Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and Government of Eritrea announcements detailing the imminent or ongoing withdrawal of Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) troops from Tigray, their presence in the region reportedly remains unchanged, with credible reports emerging of EDF actors donning ENDF uniforms to enable their continued presence, according to an April 15 statement issued by U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield. EDF elements have inhibited relief activities and committed human rights violations in Tigray, according to international media.

Limited communications capabilities throughout Tigray also continue to hinder the coordination of humanitarian response activities and the expansion of humanitarian assistance in areas beyond urban centers and main roads, where humanitarian needs are likely greatest. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Ethiopia and USG leadership continue to engage the GoE on allowing the importation of emergency communications equipment for use by humanitarian actors.

### IOM Identifies Nearly 1.1 Million IDPs Across 171 Sites

As of late March, the crisis in Tigray had displaced nearly 1.1 million people in Tigray and neighboring Afar and Amhara regions, according to assessments conducted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at 178 sites across the three regions. Approximately 1 million people are internally displaced within Tigray, while more than 45,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 19,000 IDPs were sheltering in Afar and Amhara, respectively. More than 445,000 IDPs were sheltering in Shire town, located in Tigray's North Western Zone, alone, the majority of whom were displaced from North Western and Western zones, according to IOM. In addition, approximately 130,000 IDPs and 100,000 IDPs were found to be sheltering in Central Zone's Adwa and Eastern Zone's Adigrat towns, respectively.

While the assessments were able to reach 171 IDP sites in the most recent round, nearly double the 88 sites reached during the previous assessment in February, many areas in Central, Eastern, Southern, and North Western zones remain inaccessible for humanitarian actors due to insecurity. Amid elevated levels of humanitarian need across the region, IOM found that 60 displacement sites surveyed within Tigray had not received emergency food distributions since November. Ongoing access constraints, limited resources, and increased numbers of individuals arriving in towns such as Adwa and Shire have led to comparatively low levels of assistance being provided to date across much of Tigray.

### USG Continues High-Level Advocacy on Access, Protection Issues

On April 23, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced that Jeffrey Feltman will serve as the U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa. Special Envoy Feltman will assist in elevating USG diplomatic and advocacy efforts related to the crisis in Tigray, among other issues throughout the Horn of Africa region. Special Envoy Feltman's appointment follows continued efforts by the USG to signal concern

regarding the deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation in Tigray. On April 15, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield raised the issue of the ongoing crisis in Tigray at a meeting of the UN Security Council (UNSC), calling for a cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of EDF troops and Amharan regional security forces from Tigray, as well as emphasizing the need for civilian protection amid reports of human rights violations—including gender-based violence (GBV)—perpetrated in Tigray by parties to the conflict. Subsequently, on April 22, the UNSC issued a statement calling for unfettered humanitarian access in Tigray and expressing concern regarding reports of GBV and other protection violations. In addition, during meetings in Ethiopia’s capital city of Addis Ababa and visits to Tigray’s regional capital city of Mekele, members of the DART continue to advocate for unhindered humanitarian access and enhanced humanitarian coordination in the region.

### **Crisis in Tigray Disrupts Agricultural Livelihoods, Compounds Needs**

The crisis in Tigray has resulted in severe disruptions to agricultural livelihoods across the region, with ongoing hostilities causing widespread damage to household agricultural supplies and livestock herds and disrupting critical services, such as animal health clinics and seed distribution systems, according to humanitarian organizations. Overall, more than 1 million farmers in Tigray are in need of agricultural inputs, such as seeds and tools, relief actors report. Despite the widespread needs, ongoing access constraints are inhibiting agriculture and livelihoods response efforts.

Urgent support is required to enable farmers to meet the upcoming deadline for planting staple cereal crops, though decreased access to agricultural land and inputs will likely undermine crop cultivation and the 2021 harvest, according to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET). USAID/BHA partners are expanding emergency agriculture assistance in response to compounding needs among populations in Tigray, procuring seeds to allow farmers to plant before the onset of the June-to-September *kiremt* rainy season.

### **Refugee Needs in Tigray Increase Ahead of Kiremt Rains**

Humanitarian actors continue to provide emergency services to Eritrean refugees sheltering at Adi Harush and Mai Aini refugee camps, located in Tigray’s North Western Zone; however, a scale-up of assistance is required before the *kiremt* rainy season to address anticipated increases in shelter and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) needs. For example, existing emergency shelters at the camps are only suitable for short-term accommodation of refugees under dry conditions, with additional new long-term shelters urgently required for refugees, many of whom relocated to Mai Aini and Adi Harush as a result of the crisis in Tigray, according to State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

### **More Than 63,000 Refugees Flee Tigray Into Eastern Sudan**

As of April 24, more than 63,000 individuals had fled Ethiopia into neighboring areas of eastern Sudan’s Gedaref and Kassala states as a result of the crisis in Tigray, according to UNHCR. With State/PRM support, UNHCR continues to engage national and local authorities, as well as other implementing partners, to monitor the needs of refugees fleeing the crisis in Tigray and provide life-saving assistance to new arrivals. As of early April, the UNHCR Regional Appeal for the Ethiopia Emergency Situation (Tigray)—which covers the period from January to June 2021—had received approximately 47 percent of its \$99 million request. The appeal, which is incorporated into the country-level refugee response plans for 2021, covers anticipated needs for refugee and IDP assistance in both Ethiopia and Sudan.

## KEY FIGURES



**1.5 Million**

People in Tigray reached with USG emergency food assistance via the JEOP to date



**27,000**

Children whose daily needs can be met by UNICEF HEBs



**49**

MHNTs operating in Tigray with USAID/BHA support

## U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### FOOD SECURITY

In response to acute food needs across Tigray, USAID/BHA is supporting the Catholic Relief Services (CRS)-led Joint Emergency Operations Program (JEOP), as well as the UN World Food Program (WFP) and humanitarian partners, to provide emergency food assistance—including commodities such as U.S.-sourced cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil—to vulnerable people in the region. Through the JEOP, Relief Society of Tigray (REST) had reached more than 1.5 million people in Mekele, Shire, and 10 *woredas* across five of Tigray's six zones with two-month food rations since the beginning of the conflict, as of April 18. Due to increasing food needs among crisis-affected populations, the JEOP caseload in Tigray now includes clients of the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP), a GoE social protection program targeting food-insecure households.

### NUTRITION

With more than \$18 million in FY 2021 funding, USAID/BHA supports six partners in their efforts to prevent and treat malnutrition across Tigray. Using a community-based approach, USAID/BHA partners promote recommended infant and young child feeding practices through one-on-one counseling and group education to manage wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition. Additionally, with redirected FY 2020 funding, USAID/BHA partner the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is distributing nutrition commodities—including quantities of High Energy Biscuits (HEBs) and ready-to-use therapeutic foods sufficient to meet the daily needs of up to 27,000 children younger than five years of age for two weeks—to crisis-affected populations in Tigray. In addition, UNICEF and other partners supported the Tigray Regional Health Bureau through strengthening static health facilities and Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNTs), admitting more and 3,400 children with wasting—a life-threatening form of malnutrition—for treatment since February. By mid-April, USAID/BHA partner WFP and its sub-partners had also reached more than 51,000 children and pregnant and lactating women with nutrition assistance.

### HEALTH

The USG supports six partners providing critical health care services in Tigray through community health facilities and mobile health units. Four USAID/BHA partners are supporting nearly 50 integrated MHNTs throughout the region, which provide critically needed health and nutrition services to remote and hard-to-reach areas. MHNTs serve an essential function in a region where a majority of health facilities have been damaged and looted and where ongoing insecurity continues to impede crisis-affected populations' access to health services. Additionally, partners are providing urgently required medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, and personal protective equipment throughout the region. To mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on populations in Tigray, USAID/BHA partners are training local

health care workers in infection prevention and control methods and strengthening community health coordination. With State/PRM support, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has distributed essential medicines and other medical supplies to violence-affected health facilities in Tigray, as well as in northern Amhara Region, and has also supported people displaced by the conflict in Tigray. State/PRM additionally supports UNHCR to provide health assistance to refugees in Tigray, including those sheltering at Adi Harush and Mai Aini.



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Child-friendly spaces established with USAID/BHA support

## PROTECTION

In response to protection needs resulting from the conflict in Tigray, USAID/BHA supports FHI 360, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and World Vision, which conduct programs as humanitarian access and security conditions permit. With USAID/BHA support, partners are expanding GBV case management support in the region, training social workers and community-based case workers, providing dignity kits to GBV survivors, and establishing child-friendly spaces among other activities. IRC is scaling-up its protection services in Shire with USAID/BHA support, including by establishing GBV and child protection referral pathways with service providers and disseminating information on sexual exploitation and available protection services to 1,600 IDPs sheltering in the town. In addition, State/PRM supports UNHCR to provide protection and other multi-sector assistance to refugees and IDPs.



1,500

Rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting airlifted by USAID/BHA in coordination with IOM to Ethiopia to support needs in Tigray

## SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

With more than \$14 million in FY 2021 dedicated to shelter and settlements assistance, USAID/BHA supports crisis-affected populations in Tigray—as well as in Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions—through implementing partners CRS, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, IOM, Samaritan’s Purse, and World Vision, as well as the IOM Rapid Response Fund. USAID/BHA, in coordination with IOM, recently airlifted 1,500 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting to Ethiopia. Partners are also distributing relief commodity kits—including bed mats, blankets, and wash basins—to recently displaced individuals, among other activities. In addition, State/PRM supports UNHCR to provide shelter assistance to refugees and IDPs in Tigray.



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IDP sites in Mekele reached by FHI360 with WASH assistance

## WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM fund the provision of critical WASH assistance in Tigray. USG humanitarian partners are distributing WASH supplies and other relief commodities to crisis-affected and displaced populations, as well as delivering equipment to support the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure damaged by the conflict, constructing or rehabilitating water supply systems in 30 communities, and providing handwashing facilities in IDP sites and health facilities. USAID/BHA partner FHI 360 is providing latrine cleaning materials and conducting hygiene promotion trainings for water management committee members—in six IDP sites in Mekele, and is providing water trucking to two of the six sites. USAID/BHA-supported

water trucking services are assisting up to 94,000 people in Eastern Zone, while IRC has initiated water trucking services in and around Shire. Meanwhile, through the USAID/BHA-supported, UNICEF-led Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), CRS initiated water trucking services for 25,000 people in Eastern Zone’s Edaga Hamus town in early March. Through the RRM, CRS has reached an estimated 28,000 people with hygiene promotion campaigns.

## CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Following weeks of escalating tensions between regional and federal authorities, clashes erupted between the TPLF and the ENDF in several locations across Tigray on November 4. Although the GoE declared victory against the TPLF on November 28, security conditions remain volatile across Tigray, with active conflict continuing to endanger populations in affected areas. Insecurity and its effects on livelihoods, markets, and the availability of services have generated and exacerbated humanitarian needs among local populations in the region, endangering and displacing populations within Tigray, into other regions of Ethiopia, and into adjacent areas of eastern Sudan.
- On November 17, 2020, Michael A. Raynor—U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia until January 2021—redeclared a disaster for Ethiopia for FY 2021 due to the continued humanitarian needs resulting from the complex emergency—including the conflict in Tigray—and the impact of ongoing climate, conflict, food insecurity, and health shocks on vulnerable populations. Separately, on October 16, 2020, Ambassador Raynor redeclared a disaster for Ethiopia due to the sustained widespread impacts of desert locust infestations in the country.
- On March 1, 2021, USAID activated a DART to lead USG humanitarian response efforts to the crisis in Tigray. USAID also stood up a Washington, D.C.-based Response Management Team to support the DART.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY RESPONSE IN FY 2021<sup>1,2</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
CRS	Food Assistance—57,120 Metric Tons (MT) of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$29,992,763
	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Central, Eastern zones	\$5,000,000
FHI 360	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Central, Eastern, North Western zones	\$5,999,048
GOAL	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Mekele, Central, Eastern, South Eastern zones; Afar Region	\$3,000,000
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Tigray-wide	\$8,000,000
IRC	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$4,860,000
REST	Food Assistance—Transportation	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$570,000
Samaritan’s Purse	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	North Western Zone	\$5,000,000

UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	Mekele, North Western Zone	\$300,000
WFP	Food Assistance—91,052 MT of Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP)	North Western, Southern zones	\$100,000,000
	Nutrition, Logistics Support	Tigray-wide	
World Vision	Health, Nutrition, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Mekele, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern zones	\$5,131,897
	Program Support		\$220,260
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$168,073,967</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
ICRC	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$4,640,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$12,495,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$17,135,000</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY RESPONSE IN FY 2021</b>			<b>\$185,208,967</b>

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY RESPONSE IN FY 2020

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
CRS	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers, 33,690 MT of U.S. In-Kind Food Aid	Mekele, Eastern, North Western zones	\$68,000,000
	Health, WASH	Tigray-wide	\$215,250
Ethiopian Red Cross Society	Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Western Zone	\$695,341
iMMAP	HCIMA	Mekele	\$47,405
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Mekele, Central, North Western zones	\$1,118,911
IRC	Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$579,783
	Nutrition	Mekele	\$42,823
Pathfinder International	Health	North Western, Western zones	\$111,111
REST	Agriculture, Food Assistance—51,770 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid, Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Central, Eastern, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$17,838,987
UNICEF	Nutrition	Tigray-wide	\$379,392
WFP	Food Assistance—LRIP	North Western Zone	\$8,000,000
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$97,029,003</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY RESPONSE IN FY 2020<sup>3</sup></b>			<b>\$97,029,003</b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY RESPONSE IN FYs 2020–2021</b>			<b>\$282,237,970</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of April 15, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated value of food assistance and transportation costs at time of procurement; subject to change.

<sup>3</sup> This total represents funding previously reported on the USG Ethiopia FY 2020 Fact Sheet #4 and East Africa FY 2020 Development & Disaster Risk Reduction Fact Sheet, both dated September 30, 2020. This funding was redirected to address new humanitarian needs stemming from the conflict in Tigray.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)