



ETHIOPIA



UNFPA Ethiopia Response to the Tigray Crisis

Situation report #1

16—31 January 2021

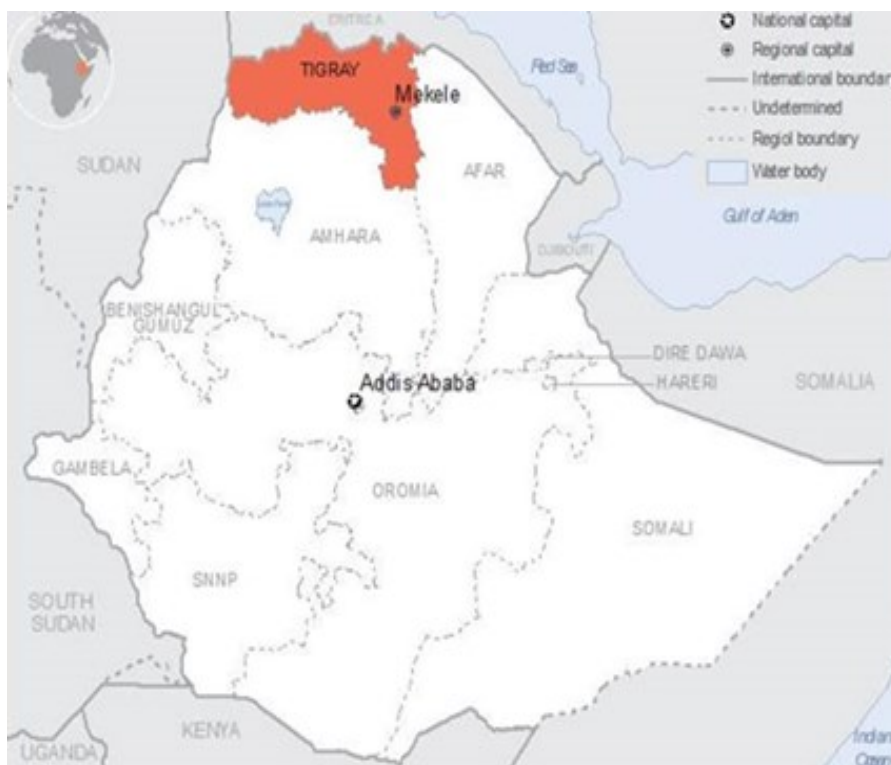
SITUATION OVERVIEW ¹

The security situation in the Tigray region remains unstable and unpredictable. Fighting continues to be reported mainly in Central, Eastern, North Western, South and South Eastern parts of the region.

The situation is particularly volatile in rural areas where large numbers of people are believed to have fled.

According to field reports, movements outside main roads are highly insecure. Humanitarian assets have also been misappropriated, including the vandalism of two refugee camps in North Western Tigray.

The access constraints due to the ongoing insecurity continue to challenge the urgent scale-up of humanitarian assistance and prevent the population from accessing life-saving support. Although cargo carrying humanitarian commodities have been increasingly allowed to move into the region, most of the critical staff that are needed to scale up the response and distribute and monitor its distribution have not been able to access the Region. Despite the progress in granting clearance for cargo movements, critical humanitarian staff deployment submitted to the federal Government have not been granted and are pending clearance for several weeks.



Electricity, banking, telephone and public transportation services are slowly being restored but are highly limited and remain accessible only in major towns. On 19 January, electricity was restored in Adigrat, Adwa and Aksum Towns, while phone services were restored in Adigrat. Electricity, telephone and banks have already been restored in south and western Zones and Mekelle Town. Internet connection remains switched off, severely affecting operations of partners. Public transport is functioning along the Alamata-Shire-Adigrat road.

High level advocacy visits

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi and Under Secretary-General of the Department of Safety and Security Mr. Gilles Michaud conducted a mission to Ethiopia from 28-31 January 2021. The focus of both visits was the current situation in Tigray. They met with key stakeholders from the Government and bilateral partners in Addis Ababa and also went on a one-day mission to Tigray. Mr. Grandi went to Eastern Tigray to engage with refugees in some of the camps. Mr. Michaud went to Mekelle and engaged with the interim administration on safety and security measures as well as with UN staff on the current situation.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-tigray-region-humanitarian-update-situation-report-25-january-2021>

HUMANITARIAN OVERVIEW

The humanitarian situation remains extremely concerning each passing day with limited access to food, healthcare and other basic services and commodities. As of end of December 2020, there are at least 222,413 IDPs within the region of Tigray, while another 63,600 people have been displaced into and within Amhara and Afar regions.

The situation in Mekelle is said to have stabilised, however fighting is on-going in the outskirts of the city and the northern and central parts of Tigray and around Shire. While the humanitarian partners recognise the gradual resumption of basic services, such as telecommunication, electricity and baking services, in some urban areas of Tigray like Mekelle, the rest of the region is still facing a dire humanitarian situation and the response is largely inadequate.

The security situation in Metekel Zone of Benishangul Gumuz Region (BGR) has been gradually deteriorating since 2019, and more intensely in recent months due to the conflict in Tigray region. As a result, more than 101,000 people were displaced as of 4 January 2021 from Bullen, Dangur, Dibate, Guba, Mandura and Wombera woredas. The majority of the IDPs came from rural areas to towns, while some fled to the neighbouring Amhara Region (Chagni town and Guangua woreda of Awi Zone). The IDPs are sheltered in public spaces, including schools and meeting halls, while others have set up temporary make-shift shelters, some are staying with relatives and others are out in the open. Due to the increasing tension in the area and on-going fighting between BGR and armed groups, further displacement is expected in surrounding towns and woredas.

It's estimated that the evolving situation in the Tigray region could bring an additional 1.2 million people to the targeted 1.98 million previously identified persons of concern for multi-sector assistance in Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions in the Humanitarian Preparedness Plan.

In addition to the needs of internally displaced persons, Ethiopia is host to more than 96,000 Eritrean refugees in four refugee camps in Tigray. Basic services are still functioning. However, due to security concerns, the number of staff servicing the camps has been reduced. There are also concerns for the 6,500 Eritrean refugees in Shimelba camp who are close to the areas of conflict.

Movement restrictions due to insecurity, lack of fuel and a communication blackout continue to affect assessment of needs and the delivery of humanitarian supplies to beneficiaries.



Of the 1.2 million population in need of humanitarian assistance in the current conflict, partners estimate that 280,551 are women of reproductive age (WRA) and 44,888 are currently pregnant, while 6,733 could experience obstetric complication and might need Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) services to deliver safely. The number of WRA who could need clinical management of rape (CMR) services as a result of sexual violence in the conflict is estimated 5,611 while a total of sexually active men who use condoms is projected at 224,441.

Based on the recent interagency multi-sectoral initial rapid assessment (MIRA) led by partners for Tigray and Afar regions, the humanitarian situation is deteriorating particularly around Shire, in the North-West, and several border areas with Eritrea. Women and girls are among the most vulnerable. Loss of loved ones, family separations, emotional and psychosocial distress and lack of access to health services and other social services as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, and now the conflict, have had and continue to have a major impact on their well-being.

Overall, protection of civilians is critical. Of particular concern in recent days is the alarming increase in reports of sexual violence and abuses in Tigray region, including rape cases. Most of the victims claim that the attack was perpetrated by “men in uniform”, including sometimes in exchange for basic commodities. Reports of forced displacement and forced return were also received. Verification of these allegations, and the gauging of the full scale of the problem is significantly hampered by the restricted access and the collapse of the health system.

The lack of basic medical supplies has so far limited or made impossible the provision of health and post-trauma interventions to the victims. In addition to protection and SGBV services, food and other basic humanitarian assistance, there is a critical need to scale up psychological support to especially children who have suffered trauma.



UNFPA RESPONSE: Meeting SRH & GBV Needs

200 women and girls in much need of menstrual hygiene supplies in the Tigray region received dignity kits distributed by the Federal Ministry of Health



A team of internal surge experts participated in the Joint UN Assessment Mission to Gondar, Amhara Region to assess the sexual and reproductive health and protection needs (Gender-based violence (GBV), Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) and Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)) of the populations affected by the Tigray crisis and establish partnerships to ensure delivery of services

The shelter/NFI cluster in Gondar, Amhara Region received training on GBV & PSEA integration and risk mitigation by UNFPA staff, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM)



UNFPA RESPONSE: COORDINATION & PARTNERSHIPS

UNFPA is in the process of establishing a partnership with Save the Children International to provide Reproductive Health Kits for clean delivery and maternal health services through their mobile and fixed clinic services to affected populations in Tigray (Mekele and Axum).

UNFPA is operationalizing the global MoU between UNHCR and UNFPA at the country level to guide our joint response to the crisis by signing a letter of agreement and proceeding with the delivery of sexual and reproductive health kits and GBV kits to affected populations in Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions.

UNFPA continues to work with the Government of Ethiopia, UN agencies, local and international humanitarian NGOs to address the immediate sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence (GBV) and prevention response needs of women and girls affected by the Tigray Crisis.

UNFPA maintains active engagement in the health, gender-based violence and other relevant cluster coordinating mechanisms to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence interventions are prioritized and integrated into the Tigray response.

UNFPA is co-leading Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Area of Responsibility together with the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth (MoWCY) to ensure effectiveness and cohesion of GBV in emergency-related information, planning and response.

Sub-national AoRs have been (re)activated in Amhara, Tigray, and Afar Regions and are supported by the national AoR. UNFPA has hired additional GBV national staff to support coordination across the regions, and will deploy an international GBV Specialist to Mekelle to support AoR coordination once access has increased.



UPCOMING RESPONSE

- ➔ Equip health facilities with Emergency Reproductive Health Kits, Dignity Kits and PPEs in the Tigray, Afar, Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz regions for provision of SRH and GBV services,
- ➔ Deploy midwives, SRH and GBV expertise and community volunteers to fast-track the SRH and GBV responses
- ➔ Strengthen care for GBV survivors through comprehensive service provision, including GBV case management, Clinical Management of Rape, MHPSS, PSEA and provision of emergency materials including dignity kits
- ➔ Update safe and dignified referral mechanisms, mapping of available services and promotion of GBV standard operating procedures
- ➔ Increase community engagement for SRH and GBV prevention and response through awareness-raising on available services and supporting community-based protection networks as first-line responders
- ➔ Establish women centres and safe spaces for women and girls to meet and access information and services including empowerment programs and vocational/ life skills training
- ➔ Capacity building of service providers and sensitization of community on SRH, GBV and harmful practices
- ➔ Continue strengthening of government coordination mechanisms and systems through the establishment of sub-regional forums
- ➔ Strengthen data collection and information management for a more evidence-based response



Prepositioned kits

- 35,400 dignity kits
- 54,500 PPEs
- 1,437 reproductive health kits

FROM THE FIELD

“As fighting came close to our house, my safety and that of my baby became my utmost priority.

We had no choice but to run for our lives. I had to leave everything behind: my belongings, my jewellery, and my livelihood that gave me some independence and strength: my cooking set.

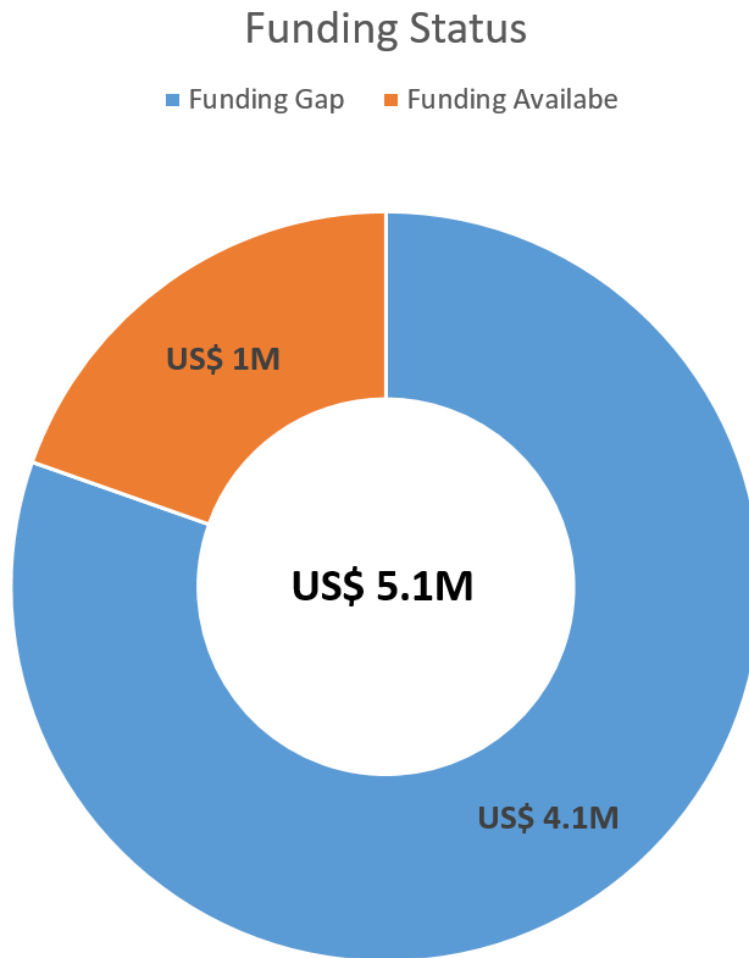
I only managed to bring with me two dresses and some underwear, as well as the little money we had kept at home”



Hiwot, 24 year-old pregnant woman from Tigray Region*

**name changed for protection purposes*

RESOURCE MOBILISATION



With these resources, UNFPA will support availability and access to sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services and information to:

112,300	25,432	5,611	50,000
women, girls, men and boys	pregnant women within the conflict zone	survivors of sexual violence expected to seek clinical care	women and girls to be receiving dignity kits



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