

Ethiopia – Tigray Crisis

JUNE 16, 2021

SITUATION AT A GLANCE



- A famine may already be occurring in Tigray, according to the UN and USAID. A new IPC analysis indicates that more than 350,000 people are facing Catastrophe levels of acute food insecurity, with the situation expected to further deteriorate in the coming months.
- Insecurity and continued delays, searches, and stoppages by armed actors at checkpoints throughout Tigray continue to disrupt attempts to reach the region’s most-affected populations.
- USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced \$181 million in additional funding to respond to the crisis; the USG continues to lead advocacy efforts to increase humanitarian access and scale up the response.



TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING For the Tigray Crisis Response in FY 2021 and FY 2020	USAID/BHA ^{2,3}	\$446,612,011
		State/PRM ⁴
	Total	\$463,747,011⁶

¹ The recent decrease in estimated arrivals compared to the 63,110 reported as of April 30, 2021, reflects newly available individual-level, rather than household-level, data as of May 31.
² USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)
³ 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.
⁴ U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM). In addition, State/PRM provided \$23,803,000 toward the Tigray response in the region, bringing the total U.S. Government (USG) funding to nearly \$488 million.
⁵ Funding in this fact sheet includes assistance to refugees residing in Tigray, which is also reported in the USG Ethiopia fact sheet as part of the Ethiopia Complex Emergency.
⁶ This total includes \$326,361 in FY 2020 supplemental funding through USAID/BHA for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) preparedness and response activities.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

IPC Status in Tigray May–June 2021	
Phase 5	352,896 people in Catastrophe
Phase 4	1,768,694 people in Emergency
Phase 3	1,939,897 people in Crisis
Phase 2	1,127,067 people in Stressed
Phase 1	577,360 people Minimally Food Insecure

Famine May Already Be Occurring in Tigray

Nearly 353,000 people in assessed areas of northern Ethiopia’s Tigray Region are experiencing Catastrophe—IPC 5—levels of acute food insecurity at the household level, while nearly 1.8 million more people are currently facing Emergency—IPC 4—levels of acute food insecurity, according to an updated Ethiopia IPC analysis made public on June 10.⁷ The analysis projects that the number of people in Tigray facing Catastrophe will increase to 401,000 in the July-to-September period. This new report, which was unilaterally released by the IPC Global Platform despite objections by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE), reflects the highest number of people facing Catastrophe in the world in the past decade.

Based on the IPC data and other available information, USAID believes that famine may already be occurring in Tigray, threatening the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Moreover, the July-to-September period is the typical Tigray lean season, the period between harvests when household food stocks are lowest, compounding the adverse effects of insecurity and the COVID-19 pandemic on food security, health, and nutrition conditions among vulnerable populations in

Tigray. The June-to-September rainy season is likely to further complicate humanitarian access and delivery of assistance at scale in the coming months, even if access impediments imposed by armed actors diminish, according to USAID analysis. In a June 10 EU- and USG-convened donor roundtable focused on the Tigray crisis, UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock stated that famine conditions are currently present in Tigray.

The USG is increasing advocacy efforts to avoid more preventable deaths. On June 10, the USG and EU issued a joint statement calling for a ceasefire in Tigray; adherence to international humanitarian law by all parties to the conflict; immediate, unimpeded, and safe humanitarian access; a withdrawal of Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) from Ethiopia; and a scaled-up humanitarian response.

USAID Announces \$181 Million in New Humanitarian Funding for Tigray

On June 9, USAID Administrator Samantha Power announced more than \$181 million in additional USAID/BHA funding to respond to the critical needs of crisis-affected populations in Tigray. This assistance will address food insecurity and wasting—the deadliest form of malnutrition—by providing nearly 100,000 metric tons (MT) of food, sufficient to feed 3 million people for nearly two months, as well as specialized nutritional commodities and fertilizers, seeds, and tools for farmers to replant crops intentionally destroyed by armed actors. The new funding also includes dedicated support for protection services, including case management for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), safe

⁷ The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-partner initiative that developed a standardized scale to classify the severity and magnitude of food insecurity. The IPC scale, which is comparable across countries and time, ranges from Minimal—IPC 1—to Famine—IPC 5—for acute food insecurity. A Famine—IPC 5—classification applies to a wider geographical location, while the term classification of Catastrophe—also IPC 5—refers to a household. A household in Catastrophe has an extreme lack of food at the household level even with full employment of coping strategies. Famine is determined when more than 20 percent of households in an area are experiencing Catastrophe, when global acute malnutrition levels exceed 30 percent, and when the crude mortality rate exceeds two people per 10,000 persons per day.

spaces, programs to reunite separated households, psychosocial support services for women and girls, and training for social workers and community case workers. Finally, the assistance will enable additional health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) support, critically needed to repair damaged or destroyed facilities and infrastructure and restore critical services.

The USG supports 20 partner organizations actively providing humanitarian assistance to populations affected by the crisis in Tigray in Ethiopia and neighboring countries and has provided a total of nearly \$488 million since November 2020, making the USG the largest humanitarian donor to the response.

Continued Access Incidents, Insecurity Hinder Response

Ongoing hostilities and unpredictable delays, searches, and stoppages by armed actors at checkpoints throughout Tigray's Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, and Southern zones continue to hinder efforts to reach populations in need, particularly in rural areas, according to the UN.

In North Western Zone, relief actors report ongoing movement denials by armed actors at the Amhara Special Forces-controlled Emba Madre checkpoint, located along a critical supply route between May Tsebri and Shire towns. Additionally, six non-governmental organization (NGO) staff members returning from providing humanitarian services in Tanqua Melashe *woreda*, or district, on June 1 were detained at a military compound in Central Zone, interrogated, and assaulted, the UN reports. In a separate incident, an international NGO truck carrying food and relief supplies was seized by reported EDF elements, and its drivers were detained and abused by local police. The contents of the truck and the vehicle itself were reportedly confiscated by military personnel, according to the UN.

Many recent access-related incidents have occurred in the areas of Tigray facing the highest levels of acute food insecurity. Notably, more than 90 percent of the population estimated to be facing Catastrophe, or nearly 327,000 people, is currently located in Central and North Western zones, significant proportions of which were classified by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as hard-to-reach as of May 31.

GoE Announces Plans for IDP Relocations and Returns

The GoE has announced plans to proceed with a phased return and relocation plan for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in various parts of the country ahead of the June-to-September rainy season. The GoE is prioritizing IDPs in Shire, given that many IDPs are sheltering in schools and the Shire campus of Axum University, hindering the resumption of educational activities. Indeed, on June 12, local authorities reportedly enforced the relocation of up to 9,000 IDPs from Axum University to nearby IDP sites, including the new Five Angels IDP site. The UN and humanitarian actors have raised concerns regarding security concerns and a lack of adequate services in some planned sites for relocation or return. Humanitarian organizations continue to call on the GoE to ensure all returns or relocations are safe, dignified, voluntary, and informed; UN leadership in Tigray are advocating for their inclusion on planning committees to ensure future IDP returns adhere to international standards.

Humanitarian organizations are supporting efforts to prepare relocation sites in coordination with the GoE. State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and various partners have completed construction of more than 90 percent of planned shelters at Five Angels, while 85 percent of planned shelters are completed at Seba Kare site in Tigray's regional capital city of Mekele, expected to host up to 19,000 individuals. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) is closely tracking plans for IDP relocation and monitoring progress at the sites, including through several recent visits to Seba Kare.

KEY FIGURES



3.6 Million

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



27,000

Children whose daily needs can be met by UNICEF HEBs



53

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 Operation (JEOP), as well as the UN World Food Program (WFP) and other 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. Combined, the JEOP and WFP had reached nearly 3.6 million people across Mekele and five of Tigray's six zones with food rations from late 2020 to early June 2021. The JEOP caseload in Tigray includes clients of the Productive Safety Net Program, a GoE social protection program targeting food-insecure households.

NUTRITION

With nearly \$24 million in FY 2021 funding, USAID/BHA supports 10 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 sessions to manage wasting. Additionally, with 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 ages five years and younger for two weeks—to crisis-affected populations in Tigray. In addition, UNICEF and other partners support the Tigray Regional Health Bureau through strengthening fixed-location health facilities and mobile health and nutrition teams (MHNTs), admitting more than 3,400 children with severe wasting—a life-threatening form of malnutrition—for treatment since February.

HEALTH

The USG supports 10 partners providing critical health care services in Tigray through community health facilities and mobile health units. Nine USAID/BHA partners are supporting more than 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 the 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, and are supporting the operations and rehabilitation of more than 300 health facilities. 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 crisis in Tigray. Additionally, State/PRM supports UNHCR to provide health assistance to refugees in Tigray, including those sheltering in North Western Zone’s Adi Harush and May Ayni camps.



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USG-supported partners providing dedicated protection services

PROTECTION

In response to protection needs resulting from the crisis in Tigray, the USG supports nine partner organizations conducting protection programs as humanitarian access and security conditions permit. Partners are expanding GBV case management support in the region, training social workers and community-based case workers, providing dignity kits—which contain items to address the specific needs of women and girls—to GBV survivors, and establishing child-friendly spaces, among other activities. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is scaling up its protection services in Shire, 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 ICRC and UNHCR to provide protection and other multi-sector assistance to crisis-affected 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 through implementing partners CRS, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Samaritan’s Purse, and World Vision, as well as the IOM Rapid Response Fund. USAID/BHA, in coordination with IOM, airlifted 1,500 rolls of heavy-duty plastic sheeting to Ethiopia in April, sufficient to support the shelter needs of more than 18,000 crisis-affected individuals. Partners are also distributing relief commodity kits—which include 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 FHI 360 with WASH assistance

WASH

USAID/BHA and State/PRM partners are distributing WASH supplies and other relief commodities to crisis-affected and displaced populations in Tigray, as well as delivering equipment to support the rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure damaged during the crisis, 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 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.

CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Following weeks of escalating tensions between regional and federal authorities, clashes erupted between the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian National Defense Force 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 CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2021^{1,2}

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
CARE	Agriculture	Eastern, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$9,175,461
CONCERN	Health, Nutrition	South Eastern Zone	\$800,000
CRS	Food Assistance—156,370 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$179,064,696
	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
International Medical Corps (IMC)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Central, North Western zones	\$4,000,000
iMMAP	Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA)	Tigray-wide	\$87,480
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Tigray-wide	\$8,000,000
IRC	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$4,860,000
OCHA	HCIMA	Mekele, North Western Zone	\$300,000
Relief Society of Tigray (REST)	Food Assistance—Transportation	Mekele, Central, Eastern, North Western, South Eastern, Southern zones	\$570,000
Samaritan’s Purse	Health, Nutrition, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	North Western Zone	\$5,000,000
Save the Children Federation (SCF)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Central, Eastern, North Western zones	\$5,000,000

UNICEF	Health Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Tigray-wide; Afar, Amhara regions	\$8,500,000
UN World Health Organization (WHO)	Health, HCIMA	Tigray-wide; Afar, Amhara regions	\$1,316,955
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
	Airlifted Relief Commodities		\$1,103,766
	Program Support		\$501,800
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$347,411,103
STATE/PRM			
ICRC	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$4,640,000
UNHCR	Multi-Sector Assistance	Tigray-wide	\$12,495,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING			\$17,135,000
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2021			\$364,546,103

USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2020

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
USAID/BHA			
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, North Western zones	\$218,112
IOM	Shelter and Settlements	Mekele, Central, North Western zones	\$1,118,911
IRC	Protection, WASH	North Western Zone	\$604,492
	Food Assistance—1,159 MT of U.S. In Kind Food Aid	East, Mekele, South Eastern zones	\$2,019,312
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
TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING			\$99,200,908
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FY 2020³			\$99,200,908

TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE TIGRAY CRISIS RESPONSE IN FYs 2020–2021			\$463,747,011
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¹ Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of June 9, 2021.

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

³ 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)