Beat: News

Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update

OCHA Situation Report

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HIGHLIGHTS

* More than 65,500 MT of food brought into Mekelle between 1 April and 6 June by the main food partners through 18 humanitarian convoys via the Semera- Abala-Mekelle road.

* 4,485 displaced and returnee households in North Shewa, North Wello and Wag Hemra zones in Amhara Region received emergency shelter and non-food items.

* 243 IDPs from North and South Wollo and Oromia Special zones returned to eight different destinations in Oromia, with Debre Birhan serving as the collection point.

* Latest nutrition data in Afar indicate that admissions of severely malnourished children increased by 28 per cent compared to the same time in April last year.

Situation Overview

The situation in northern Ethiopia remains generally calm but unpredictable. In Tigray, some locations, including in parts of Central, Eastern and Western zones continue to be hard to reach for partners. Security incidents in Sheraro disrupted partners' humanitarian operations, while many have resumed operations. Similarly in Amhara, Abergele, Adi Arekay, Tsagibji, six kebeles in Zequala, two kebeles in Sekota Zuria and one kebele in Waja are hard to reach areas. On 3 June, a joint rapid assessment and response mission was conducted to Nuraqua Town, Abergele Woreda in Wag Hemra Zone, Amhara Region. This is the first time since December 2021. The mission mainly assessed the security and humanitarian access situation and health concerns in the town. The mission also delivered four medical kits (medicine and renewable equipment) and two malaria kits to Nuraqua Health Centre. As a follow-up, the planning of an inter-agency and multi-sector needs assessment is ongoing to inform and scale-up the response to the internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other vulnerable groups in the town and surrounding areas.

In Afar, a Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) delegation mission to Semera was conducted on 6 June where the delegation met with high-level regional government officials and UN/NGO representatives and interacted with IDPs.

Meanwhile, humanitarian supplies continue to arrive in Tigray Region via the Semera-Abala-Mekelle road since 1 April. Between 1 April and 6 June, more than 65,500 MT of food have been brought into Mekelle, Tigray by the main food partners through 18 humanitarian convoys. Of the more than 65,500 MT of food brought in and based on the reports received to date, at least 14,700 MT of food have been distributed to more than 907,000 people in the region as of 1 June. This is in addition to food assistance provided for refugees in Northwestern Zone. The rest of the completed and ongoing distribution is awaiting updates from the field with some delays due to communication challenges.

There was also more than 4,900 MT of ES/NFI, more than 3,800 MT of nutrition items, more than 2,400 MT of WASH items, more than 400 MT of health items, 360 MT of protection items, 280 MT of education and 80 MT of agriculture items brought into Mekelle between 1 April and 6 June. An additional 1,250 MT of mixed cargo also carried food and NFIs into Mekelle. Humanitarian supplies also continued to be airlifted from Addis Ababa to Mekelle, Tigray. During the reporting week, approximately 11 MT of health (7.4 MT) and nutrition (3.6 MT) cargo were airlifted on behalf of three partners. Despite this positive progress, significant gaps remain to address the vast humanitarian needs in Tigray, primarily fuel shortage. Considering confirmed distributions, ongoing distributions and confirmed dispatches (but not yet distributed) food partners reported that, as of 9 June, at least 16,000 MT of food commodities remained in Mekelle as partners are unable to dispatch them to various woredas due to lack of fuel (at least 135,000 liters of fuel

required). This stock is enough to serve around 950,000 people with common food baskets.

Meanwhile in Amhara, IDPs continue to suffer from overcrowded and sub-standard living conditions in IDP sites, while reports of new arrivals are received. Overall, there are an estimated 1.3 million IDPs across the region, the majority in protracted displacement from Oromia and other regions. For instance, in Debre Birhan, currently hosting more than 20,000 IDPs, there are reports of a continuous IDP influx from Oromia Region due to insecurity. Authorities in Debre Birhan are planning to return the IDP to selected areas in Oromia that are considered “safe and secure”, on a voluntary basis. So far, 243 IDPs from North and South Wollo and Oromia Special zones were returned to eight different destinations in Oromia, with Debre Birhan serving as the collection point. The authorities plan to return an additional 4,000 IDPs. However, the majority of the IDPs prefer not to return to their places of origin in Oromia due to security concerns.

Return operations are also ongoing in Tigray Region with 2,645 displaced households (5,278 individuals) returned from Adigrat to their woredas of origin with the support of local authorities and partners. All returnees received cash for transportation, core relief items and protection counselling from partners. Similarly, in Afar, local authorities-led IDP returns continued. The first phase of these returns is targeting IDPs from Abala residing at Logia, Semera, Dubti, Guya and Harsuma IDP sites. The exact number of those who have returned is not yet known, however, it is estimated that approximately 450 households have returned from Harsuma. Remaining IDPs in Harsuma have been reportedly dismantling and packing their temporary shelter in preparation for their return. Meanwhile, in Afar, discussions are ongoing to plan the return of IDPs in Dubti site. Improved security conditions, including the issue if unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and the need for the rehabilitation of social services in the return areas were highlighted by IDPs during consultations to support their return.

Overall, most of the areas of return across northern Ethiopia have been severely impacted by the conflict with lack of adequate basic facilities. There is the potential need for humanitarian assistance to continue in areas of return until access to basic services is restored.

Across northern Ethiopia, children’s schooling continues to be affected by the impact of the conflict. An estimated 1.4 million children in Tigray are entering their third year without access to education. Similarly, an estimated 700,000 students in Amhara are out of school with 493 schools in North Gondar and North Wollo zones still closed, and an additional 97 schools sheltering IDPs and/or being used by armed forces in North Wello, North Gondar and Wag Hemra zones. In Afar, 245 schools in conflict-affected areas remain closed and five schools are currently sheltering IDPs, affecting the schooling of more than 53,000 children.

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