

Understanding humanitarian concerns across the country

OVERVIEW

A range of factors, including conflicts and recurrent drought, flooding, and pest invasion, drive humanitarian needs in Ethiopia. Nearly all regions in Ethiopia are experiencing some form of conflict, intercommunal tension, or violence, with hotspots in Benishangul Gumuz, northern Ethiopia, and Oromia. This is due to competing claims over resources, land rights, administrative boundaries, and political and ethnic claims. Drought in the southern and southeastern regions of the country, recurring flooding across the country, and pest infestations are also driving humanitarian needs.

People in Ethiopia face multiple and complex crises, resulting in an estimated 25.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022 (OCHA 02/12/2021). There were over 4.2 million IDPs across the country as at September 2021 – double the figure at the end of 2020 (IOM 13/12/2021). There are also increased rates of food insecurity, which has reached the highest levels since 2016 (OCHA 06/07/2021).

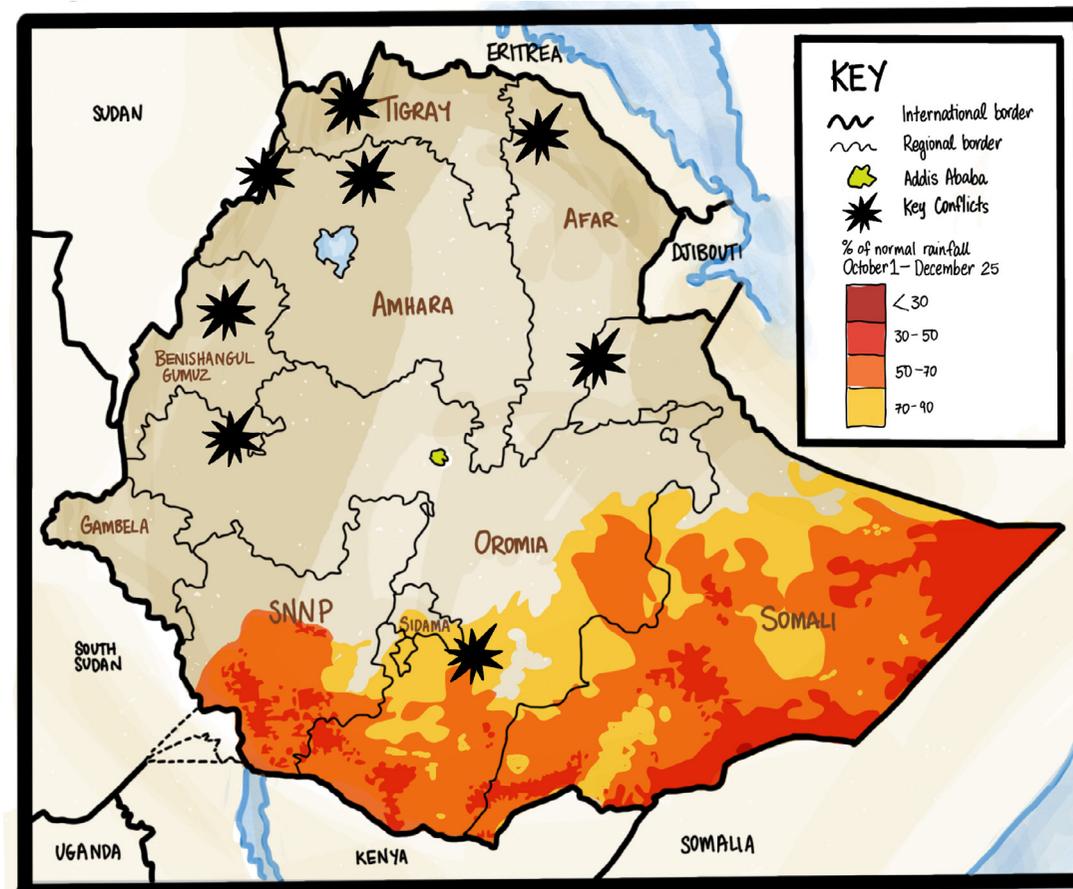
About this report

Aim: The report provides an overview of the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia, highlighting the key crises, critical needs, and underlying issues. It also describes the operational environment and national and international capacities to respond. **The report aims to provide a country-level perspective to understand critical humanitarian concerns going into 2022.**

Methodology: Secondary data review of public sources.

Limitations: There are information gaps given communication blackouts, the lack of access in parts of the country, and the current conflict and insecurity. There is an imbalance in available information, as most publicly available information is focused on the crisis in northern Ethiopia. Crises presented in this report are selected based on ACAPS' analysis to highlight specific concerns and key humanitarian needs.

Key humanitarian crises: conflict and drought



Disclaimer: The events portrayed on the map are based on available information at the time of publication and locations on the map are specific to details included in the report. The boundaries, names, and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by ACAPS. In November 2021, the South West Ethiopia Peoples' region was officially inaugurated, comprising several zones formerly part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) region (Ethiopian Monitor 31/10/2021 and 23/11/2021). Given that the South West Ethiopia Peoples' region was formed only recently, this report presents its humanitarian situation as part of the SNNP region.

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INFORMATION GAPS

- The inability to access certain areas to conduct surveys limits the ability to measure the severity of the humanitarian situation, including the severity of the flooding beyond July 2021 and the desert locust situation.
- There is a lack of data on IDPs in Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, and Tigray because of insecurity.
- Recent food security data is lacking because no IPC analysis has been undertaken since mid-2021. Anecdotal evidence indicates increased food insecurity.
- Diseases including but not limited to COVID-19 and cholera are likely underreported given access constraints and surveillance difficulties.
- The drivers of needs are interconnected, and identifying an individual cause of humanitarian needs is difficult given the complexity of the situation.

Critical humanitarian needs

People in Ethiopia have **increasing food needs**. They have been experiencing the highest levels of food insecurity since 2016. Needs have especially increased in areas with conflict or drought. The **continued increase of food prices** has also worsened this situation across the country.

There are **high protection needs, especially in conflict-affected areas** where attacks, mass killings of civilians, and sexual and gender-based violence continue to be reported. There is a risk of unsafe returns for IDPs.

The need for **nutrition assistance** increased in 2021, with more cases of severe acute malnutrition recorded than in 2020 and 2019. Cases are particularly high in areas with drought or conflict.

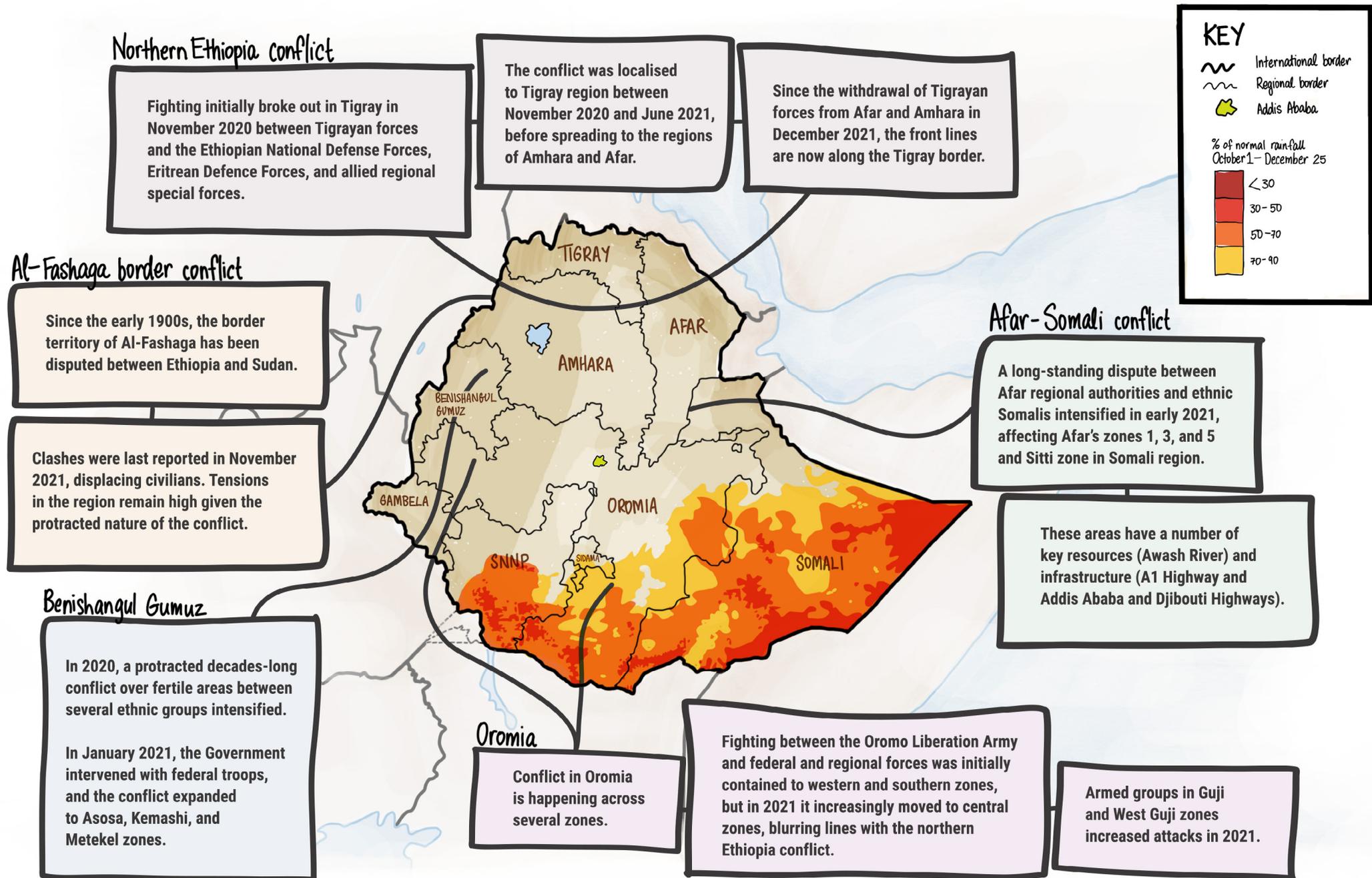
Lack of medical supplies and the destruction and looting of health facilities have **decreased healthcare access** amid widespread, unmet **medical** needs.

Water needs are high in drought-affected areas.

Children are missing out on **education** because many schools are still closed as a result of the conflict (as in Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, and Oromia) or because schools host IDPs (as in Tigray). More and more children are dropping out of school because drought forces their families to relocate.

The number of IDPs in 2021 has risen compared to 2020 (at least 4.2 million between August–September 2021 compared to 1.8 million in the same period in 2020) **resulting in needs for food, emergency shelter and NFIs**, and, in particular, WASH. There are also 1.5 million IDP returnees between August–September 2021 who may be needing shelter kits or facing food shortages or barriers to accessing land for cultivation.

KEY CRISES IN ETHIOPIA



Conflict-related crises

In 2021, conflict remained one of the main drivers of needs across Ethiopia. The loss of livelihoods; increased rates of food insecurity; the disruption of schooling; the reliance on host communities; a high need for mental health, sexual, and gender-based violence support; and a potential protracted displacement situation are some general humanitarian needs that conflict drives in Ethiopia. A key impact of conflict on the population is displacement. According to the latest available national IDP survey, conflict accounted for 85% of all internal displacement as at September 2021. For an overview of IDP and returnee figures per region, see the [Annex table on page 12](#). The number of IDPs in the country has doubled from 2.1 million in December 2020 to 4.2 million in September 2021, largely because of the intensification of conflict and violence. In conflict areas, establishing the number of IDPs remains difficult. For example, in northern Ethiopia, and Benishangul Gumuz. In Oromia, half of the zones were inaccessible for surveys (IOM 13/12/2021).

Key conflicts include:

- **The northern Ethiopian conflict** has accounted for more than 50% of the total IDP caseload across the country as at September 2021, with the conflict displacing more than 2.1 million people (IOM 13/12/2021). There is increased food insecurity across northern Ethiopia, with destroyed land and an inability to harvest significantly reducing the yield from the 2020 and 2021 Meher harvest seasons (World Peace Foundation 06/04/2021; Tigray Bureau Of Agriculture and Rural Development 02/2021). 9.4 million people require food assistance in northern Ethiopia (OCHA 20/01/2022). Food distributions in Tigray are sporadic and severely reduced partly because of a humanitarian blockade that prevents the entry of goods (UN 23/11/2021; FEWS NET 14/10/2021). According to anecdotal evidence, Tigray also has high rates of malnutrition. Quantifying the cases remains difficult as SMART surveys cannot be conducted (UNICEF 21/12/2021). The virtual collapse of the health system in northern Ethiopia caused by the lack of medicine, the destruction of facilities, and staff shortages also means that those in need of treatment are likely not receiving it, including victims of sexual and gender-based violence (OCHA 09/12/2021; BMJ Global Health 23/11/2021). In Tigray, 3.9 million people need health assistance (OCHA 09/12/2021).
- **The conflict and subsequent needs in Amhara and Afar is not only limited to the conflict in Tigray.** In the first half of 2021, violence between Amhara and Qemant communities and intercommunal violence in North Shewa and Oromia special zone resulted in displacement in Amhara. As at 18 November 2021, five million people were expected to be in need of food assistance in Amhara, but understanding whether this was because of the conflict in Tigray or other conflicts in the region is difficult (OCHA 18/11/2021). Substantial market interruptions and disrupted livelihoods mean the situation is likely to persist.
- **In Afar, protracted interethnic conflict between Afar and Somali communities** displaced over 100,000 people in the first six months of 2021, with gradual returns recorded in the second part of 2021 (OCHA 30/07/2021). People in Afar also face acute food shortages and increased rates of malnutrition as a result of active conflict and disruptions to livelihoods (FEWS NET 15/12/2021).
- **Large parts of Oromia are affected by conflict and violence**, including disputes around resources and land in the east of the region and fighting between the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) in the south and west of the region (OCHA 30/12/2021). In the Guji and West Guji zones, areas previously accessible have been cut off, displacement continues, schools remain closed, and conflict has weakened government structures (OCHA 15/10/2021; UNICEF 10/08/2021). Violence related to attacks affects the four Wellega zones (East, Horo Gudru, Kelem, and West Wellega) (ACLEED accessed 21/01/2021). Protection needs are high across Oromia given the scale and reach of violence, including the killing and abduction of civilians by the OLA and unverified reports of forced conscription by the ENDF (ACLEED accessed 08/12/2021; HRW 10/06/2021; Addis Standard 03/12/2021). An estimated 1.38 million people in West Hararge and 1.43 million people in East Hararge need food assistance, with both zones receiving inconsistent levels of humanitarian support (OCHA 09/09/2021).
- **The conflict in Benishangul Gumuz**, which was initially contained in Metekel zone, expanded to other parts of the region in 2021, particularly Kemashi and Asosa zones (OCHA 19/11/2021). Internal displacement within Benishangul Gumuz and to western Oromia and Awi zone in Amhara continues, with reports of repeated displacement. This situation severely affects livelihoods. For example, the inability of farmers to access their land as a result of conflict or displacement leads to a decline in agricultural activities (FEWS NET 15/12/2021). Civilians also continue to be killed or kidnapped (The Reporter 06/11/2021; The Conversation 16/03/2021). Large parts of Benishangul Gumuz remain inaccessible, limiting understanding of the scale of the IDP population and the overall situation (OCHA 30/12/2021).
- **A long-standing border conflict with Sudan**, which last erupted again in November 2021, continues to cause instability in the Al-Fashaga region (AP News 28/11/2021).

Natural hazards

Recurring drought, flooding, and pest infestations, including desert locust invasions, are among the main natural hazards that contribute to increasing humanitarian needs (particularly food needs) across Ethiopia. The frequency and impact of droughts have increased since the 1970s. Seasonal and flash floods have also increased in frequency over the past decades (WB 06/2020).

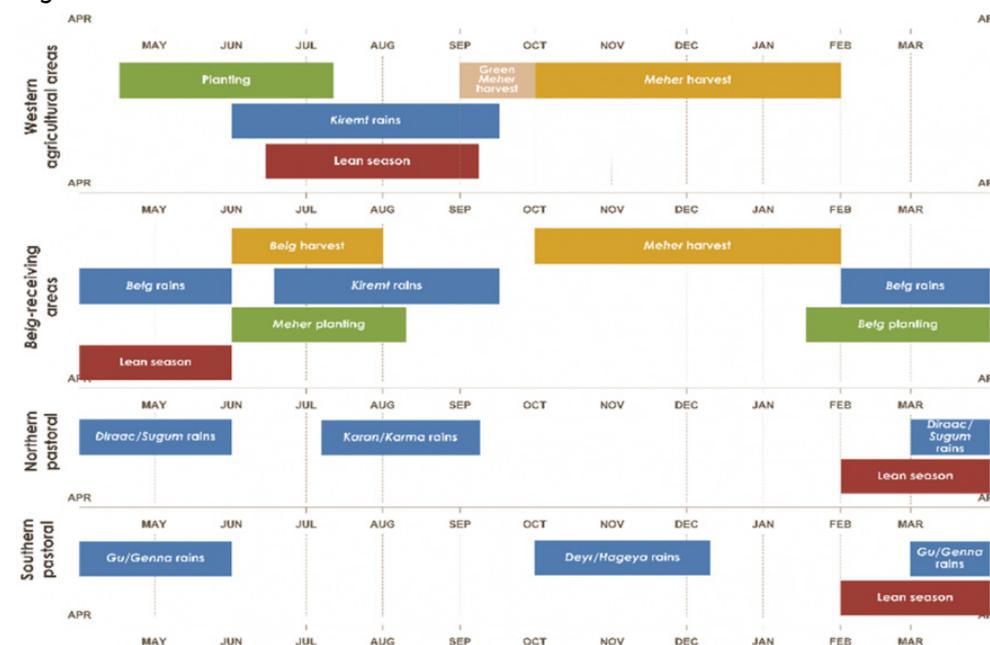
Drought

Drought mainly affects the southern pastoral areas of Oromia (especially Borena zone), Somali region (especially Afder, Dawa, and Liben zones), and some woredas in SNNP region (OCHA 17/01/2022; The Reporter 15/01/2022; Addis Standard 15/01/2022). These areas usually receive *Gu* and *Genna* rains (March–June) and *Deyr* and *Hageya* rains (October–December) (FEWS NET 15/12/2021; WFP 06/12/2021). Similar to many areas in the Horn of Africa, rains failed between October–December 2021, resulting in the third below-average rain season in a row (FEWS NET 29/12/2021; Earth Observatory 06/01/2022; WFP 20/01/2022). Average regional temperatures during this period were the hottest since 1981 and above-average temperatures are likely to persist between January and March (WFP 20/01/2022). Affected areas in Ethiopia are currently experiencing a third drought in just over a decade (FEWS NET 22/12/2021; FEWS NET 15/12/2021). The 2022 *Gu* rainy season (March–June) is forecasted to be below average as well (FEWS NET 15/12/2021; OCHA 03/01/2022). A typical calendar of the rainy seasons is provided in Figure 1.

Drought is a key driver of increased food insecurity in the country. Over 6.4 million people are estimated to need food assistance because of drought in southern and southeastern areas of Ethiopia in 2022 (OCHA 03/01/2022). Water sources and pasture lands are depleted, vegetation conditions are poor, livestock deaths are unusually high, food production is declining, and livelihood losses are increasing (FEWS NET 29/12/2021; WFP 20/01/2022). The upcoming lean season (February–April) will further increase humanitarian needs in southern and southeastern Ethiopia (WFP 20/01/2022).

The dry conditions contribute to increased malnutrition in Somali and Oromia regions (OCHA 17/01/2022). For example, in Borena (Oromia region) and Dawa (Somali region) zones, the production of milk, an important source of nutrition for children in pastoralist communities, has declined by about 80% compared to normal years (FEWS NET 22/12/2021; FAO 11/2021). In Somali region, a screening indicated a proxy global acute malnutrition rate of 18% in December 2021 (OCHA 03/01/2022).

Figure 1. Seasonal calendar



Source: FEWS NET 15/12/2021

The drought has affected the livelihoods of an estimated four million people. An estimation from December 2021 reports between 170,000-220,000 livestock deaths, reducing baseline herd sizes by half with another two million livestock at risk of dying (OCHA 17/01/2022; WFP 20/01/2022). Pastoralist communities depend on livestock as their primary source of livelihood and are especially hit by livestock loss, declining livestock prices, and lower milk production (FEWS NET 22/12/2021; FAO 11/2021). Agropastoral communities also face crop failure and reduced agricultural production. In southern parts of Oromia, 70% of the harvest was lost in 2021. There is a high need for agricultural support, including the provision of animal feed, to mitigate livestock loss (OCHA 03/01/2022).

Communities have high needs for water trucking for livestock and human consumption (OCHA 03/01/2022; WFP 20/01/2021). In East Bale zone, for example, over 150,000 people need emergency water trucking (OCHA 17/01/2022).

The drought is displacing pastoralist and agropastoralist communities, as they are forced to move to find pasture and water for livestock. If rains fail for multiple seasons in a row, livestock loss often exhausts coping strategies, and pastoralist communities are displaced as they have to seek assistance (FIC 03/12/2021). At least 7% of IDPs (more than 307,000

people) identified between August–September 2021 were displaced as a result of drought, mostly in Afar, Oromia, and Somali regions (IOM 13/12/2021). By January 2022, over 17,000 households in Somali had relocated with their livestock to find water and pasture (OCHA 17/01/2022). The total number of people who have been displaced by the current drought remains unknown (OCHA 03/01/2022).

Children drop out of school because drought forces pastoralist families to move with their cattle. In Borena zone, for example, an estimated 11% of students who had registered for classes in 2021 were out of school by the end of the year (FAO 11/2021; UNICEF 05/01/2022).

Research also points to linkages between climate-induced food insecurity and increased conflict, as through increased resource competition. This connection raises concerns for areas where drought and existing conflict overlap – for example, in West Guji zone, where drought- and conflict-related displacement leads to competition over water (CGIAR 31/10/2021; WASH Cluster 13/12/2021).

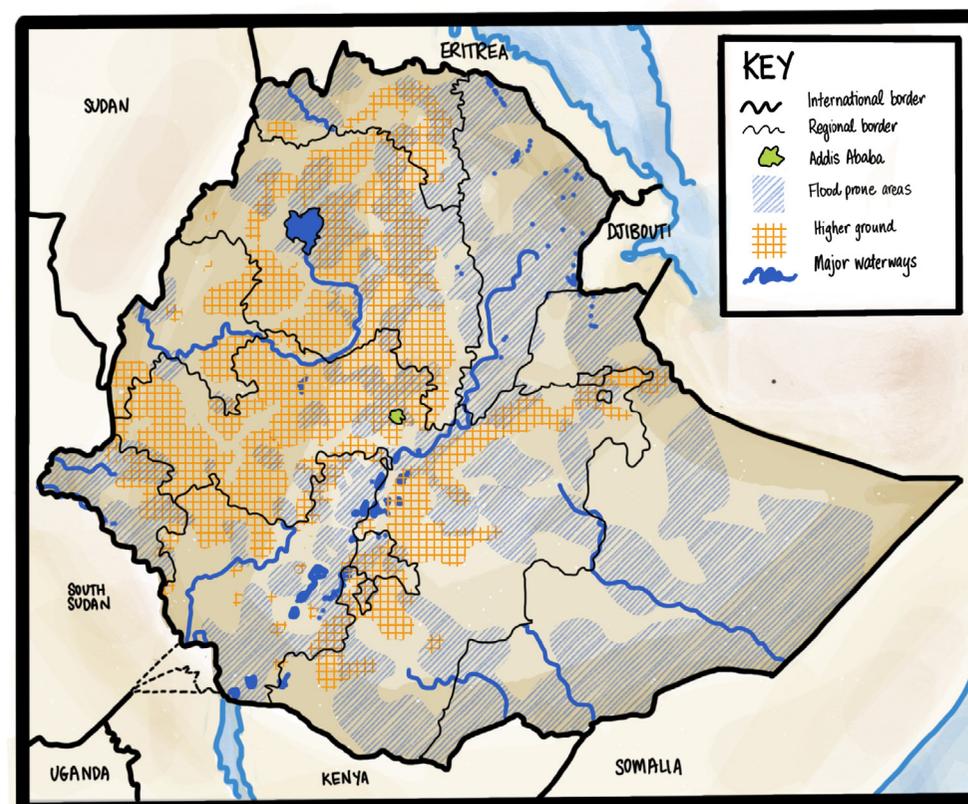
Floods

The risk of flooding in Ethiopia increases during the two main rainy seasons: the shorter *Belg* rains (February–June) and the longer *Kiremt* rains (June–September) (OCHA 05/03/2021). Following heavy rainfall, overflowing rivers predominantly cause floods (NDRMC 05/05/2020). Lowland areas along major bodies of water (along the Wabe Shebelle and Genale Rivers in Somali region, along the Omo River in SNNP region, along the Awash River in Afar and Oromia regions, along the Baro, Gilo, Alwero, and Akobo Rivers in Gambela region, and near Lake Tana in Amhara region) are particularly prone to large-scale flooding, while flash floods following intense rainfall affect highland areas (including the Awash River Basin and the Rift Valley) (NDRMC 05/05/2020 and 31/05/2018; GFDRR 01/04/2021; WMO and GWP 12/2003).

Floods displaced over 200,000 people across seven regions (Afar, Amhara, Gambela, Harari, Oromia, SNNP, and Somali) between April–July 2021 (OCHA 06/07/2021 and 08/09/2021). At least 28 people died during this period because of flooding. There is no updated figure available that includes the full extent of flood-related displacement during the Kiremt rains. Overall, seasonal flooding (139,000 IDPs) and flash floods (120,000 IDPs) combined accounted for around 6% of all IDPs identified between August–September 2021, including new and protracted displacement. Regions where flash and seasonal floods were key drivers of displacement were SNNP (33% of IDPs), Afar (25% of IDPs, including those displaced by the northern Ethiopia crisis), and Gambela (24% of IDPs) (IOM 13/12/2021).

Floods also affected food security and livelihoods, as over 18,000 hectares of crop loss and over 23,000 livestock deaths were recorded between April–July 2021 (OCHA 08/09/2021). As *Kiremt* rains continued beyond July, the overall impact of the floods in 2021 is likely higher.

Flood-prone areas in Ethiopia since the 1960s



Sources: Mamo et al. 2019; NDRMC 04/06/2020

Pest infestations

Since June 2019, **Ethiopia has been facing a desert locust invasion** – the worst in 25 years – damaging crops and reducing livelihoods and food availability (OCHA 05/03/2021; IOM 30/06/2021). The locust invasion contributed to the increase of humanitarian needs in 2021 (for instance, in Somali region), but there is a lack of information on the extent and severity of the impact (WB 05/2021; OCHA 20/12/2021 and 16/08/2021). In late December 2021, swarms were located in southern (SNNP and Oromia regions) and northeastern Ethiopia, on the border between Somali region and Somalia (FAO 23/12/2021). Proper locust monitoring is impossible in areas in northern Ethiopia affected by conflict (FAO 14/12/2021). Other pests, such as **fall armyworms**, have caused a localised need for assistance (for instance, in SNNP region) towards the end of June 2021 (OCHA 15/07/2021).

Displacement into Ethiopia

Ethiopia as a major refugee-hosting country

By the end of 2021, **Ethiopia was hosting over 800,000 refugees and asylum seekers from 19 countries** – the majority from South Sudan and Somalia (UNHCR accessed 07/01/2022; UNHCR 20/12/2021 and 30/11/2021). Since encampment is the main policy approach, most refugees (91%) live in over 20 camps in border areas across five regions. The remaining refugees live outside of camps, mostly in Addis Ababa where there are around 71,000 refugees (8.7%) (UNHCR 23/12/2021 and 20/12/2021; WB 26/10/2021; ODI 28/10/2021). Gambela region hosts the largest number of refugees (43.2%), followed by Somali (26.9%) and Benishangul Gumuz (8.7%). For an overview of refugee figures per region, see the Annex table on page 12.

Refugee arrival numbers slightly increased in 2021 compared to the previous year. Between January–November 2021, over 16,000 refugees arrived in Ethiopia, mostly from Somalia and South Sudan. The majority arrived between March–May and September–December (UNHCR accessed 07/01/2022 and UNHCR 29/12/2021). Fewer refugees arrived in 2021 and 2020 (10,100 arrivals) than in 2019 (96,800 arrivals) (UNHCR accessed 07/01/2022). Some refugees from South Sudan have also returned to their country of origin because of concerns over growing insecurity in Ethiopia (UNHCR 23/12/2021).

The current northern Ethiopia crisis makes the number of Eritrean refugees in Tigray difficult to determine, and it remains under verification in January 2022 (UNHCR accessed 07/01/2022). Based on food collections, UNHCR estimates a baseline of around 60,000 refugees in Tigray prior to the crisis (UNHCR 26/10/2021). The current number of refugees is unclear. This lack of data is partly because the Refugees and Returnees Services, previously known as the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, is no longer present in Tigray as a result of the conflict. With its withdrawal from the area, the risk increases that asylum seekers and refugees are not registered, making them not entitled to assistance (OCHA 31/10/2021). The Eritrean Defence Forces forcefully returned an unknown number of Eritrean refugees to Eritrea (EHRC and OHCHR 03/11/2021; HRW 16/09/2021). An estimated 30,000 Eritrean refugees from Tigray have fled to Addis Ababa since the conflict began (UNHCR 23/12/2021).

Main challenges for refugees

Refugees have limited access to services. The current food baskets only meet 60% of the minimum standard of 2,100 kcal per person per day. Across the camps, only 44% of the refugees have access to adequate shelter and only 40% of refugees have access to adequate sanitation facilities (UNHCR 19/01/2022). **Refugees face particular obstacles to achieving economic inclusion.** Among these obstacles are special work permit regulations; the lack of access to land; and requirements to live in a camp. Until recently, the out-of-camp (OCP) status was only granted to Eritrean refugees. Refugees who do not benefit from an OCP status have **limited freedom of movement.** In rural areas where refugees live, economic opportunities are also often lacking, while in urban areas such as Addis Ababa, refugees encounter labour markets with high unemployment rates (ODI 28/10/2021; CGD and RI 15/06/2021; CGD and RI 15/06/2021). There are concerns that refugees with OCP status face particular challenges in accessing services (CGD and RI 15/06/2021; CGD and RI 15/06/2021).

In Pagak, Gambela region, the relocation of refugees from South Sudan is on hold. Many refugees from South Sudan are stuck at a local reception centre, where they lack access to food and other essential services (MSF 09/04/2021). By the end of December, there were around 9,000 refugees in need of relocation (UNHCR 28/10/2021 and 29/12/2021). **In Somali region, an unknown number of refugees needed relocation** to the five camps in Melkadida area as at late December 2021. They remained at the reception centre of Dollo Ado (UNHCR 29/12/2021).

The protection needs of refugees in Tigray have increased. Various armed actors have been targeting Eritrean refugees in Tigray since the conflict began with attacks, killings, sexual and gender-based violence, and the looting and destruction of camps (EHRC and OHCHR 03/11/2021). Most recently, air strikes in the Mai Aini camp in Tigray on 5 January 2022 killed three refugees (UNHCR 05/01/2022; ODI 28/10/2021). There are also **concerns that refugees in Afar could get caught in the crossfire.** There were around 54,000 refugees registered before November 2020, many of them living in a camp near the Afar-Tigray regional border (UNHCR 26/10/2021).

Overall relations between refugees and host communities in Ethiopia are positive, especially since both have common historical ties or speak the same language. An exception is Gambela region, where historical tensions between ethnic groups affect relations (WB 26/10/2021; ODI 28/10/2021). As most information focuses on the refugees' situation in Gambela, northern Ethiopia, and Somali regions, refugee needs in other areas are underreported.

COMPOUNDING ISSUES

Political instability

Since his appointment in 2018, Abiy Ahmed has implemented a number of economic and political reforms in a historically ethnic-federal state (Al Jazeera 02/04/2018; ICG 04/09/2009). With over 80 ethnic groups, 115 million people, and the dominance of the Tigray People's Liberation Front from 1991–2018 in a four-party coalition as part of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, a smooth transition was expected to be difficult (WB accessed 11/01/2022; ICG 04/09/2009).

In 2021, over 190 protests were recorded across Ethiopia, compared to 79 in 2020 (ACLED accessed 11/01/2022). Protests were on both pro- and anti-government sides, indicating the scale of competing claims across the country and how political tensions manifest themselves beyond armed conflict (Fana BC 22/11/2021; Africa News 25/11/2021; The Ethiopian Herald 28/11/2021). Long-standing ethnic questions and tensions remain unresolved, including the degree of representation of ethnic groups at a national and regional level, administrative and regional boundaries, and where government budgets should be prioritised (Accord 02/2017; ICG 04/09/2009; The Washington Post 04/11/2020). In December 2021, the Government established a national dialogue commission to provide a platform for inclusive dialogue and address some of these long-standing issues (AP News 29/12/2021). Both the Tigray People's Liberation Front and the OLA were not included in the commission, in part because of their designation as 'terrorist organisations' by the Ethiopian Government (Al Jazeera 01/05/2021).

Since 2 November 2021, the government-imposed State of Emergency strengthened its control on information. Communication blackouts and the arrest of political figures, journalists, civil society actors, and civilians, the majority of which are Tigrayan, are likely to reduce the space for dialogue and affect ethnic divisions and social fragmentation (Addis Standard 02/11/2021; CPJ 15/12/2021; The Economist 14/12/2021; AP News 11/11/2021).

Economic turmoil

Increased cost of living

Ethiopia has been recording high inflation (over 10%) since 2018, and in October 2021 it stood at 34.2% year-on-year (WB accessed 10/01/2022; Reuters 16/12/2021 and 11/11/2021). **Household purchasing power continues to weaken**, and the monthly inflation of food items in September 2021 stood at 42% – the highest in ten years after a record 8.1% increase in June 2021 (WFP 30/11/2021). Prices of staple foods are high and continue to rise, including a 49% increase of bread and cereal prices (FEWS NET 29/12/2021; WFP 30/11/2021).

The depreciation of the national currency (Ethiopian birr) is a major driver of the increasing cost of living, as the cost of bulk imports and raw materials unavailable in the country continues to increase (WFP 30/11/2021; FEWS NET 29/12/2021; FSNWG 30/07/2021; FAO 09/12/2021). A key reason for continued inflation is the restriction on foreign exchange (LSE 29/06/2018). Amid the pandemic, forex regulations on priority items have constrained the import of medical supplies and drugs, leading to shortages in 2020 with continued impact in 2021 (OCHA 08/2020; Addis Fortune 08/05/2021; UNCDF 02/06/2021).

People in Ethiopia are also recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 and the loss of livelihoods. An estimated 2.4 million jobs were lost in 2020, and the number of people living below the poverty line increased by five million (from 26 million in 2019 to 31 million by the end of 2020) (OCHA 05/03/2021). In 2021, the economic shock of COVID19 continued and reduced the country's growth, export, import, and public revenue on a macroeconomic level, with annual growth projected at 2% compared to 10% before the pandemic (IMF 12/10/2021). Despite this setback, the overall job and income loss is expected to have been less severe than in 2020. Continued inflation means that more people live hand-to-mouth as average salaries stay the same, affecting people's ability to react to shocks (UNCTAD 24/12/2021).

Decline in remittances

Remittances declined to USD 3.6 billion during the 2020–2021 fiscal year, partly because of the global implications of the COVID-19 pandemic (ICG 10/07/2020; MPI 05/10/2021). Prior to the pandemic, remittances from Ethiopia's diaspora typically totalled USD 5–6 billion per year and represented 35% of the country's imports (ICG 10/07/2020). One possible reason for this decrease is the telecommunication blackout and freezing of bank accounts in Tigray, which cut off the regional banking system from the federal system and prevented remittances from being sent to Tigray (Al Jazeera 23/09/2021; Reuters 17/11/2021; Addis Fortune 01/09/2021).

Health concerns

Communicable diseases throughout Ethiopia remain a concern as a result of poor WASH facilities, low literacy rates, and congested living spaces (Health Cluster 22/12/2021). Cholera outbreaks are a particular concern because the fatality rate is high for untreated cases (WHO 05/02/2021). The risk for outbreaks increases after flooding, especially during *Kiremt* rains (IFRC 04/2021; OCHA 06/07/2021). A cholera outbreak in Oromia and Somali regions that started in August 2021 has led to over 580 cases and seven associated deaths as at 11 December (WHO 02/01/2022).

Other health concerns in Ethiopia include malaria, measles, polio, yellow fever, and typhoid (Health Cluster 11/08/2021). A **measles outbreak** has led to 2,800 cases in 2021, including four deaths. Ten cases of polio were also reported in 2021, compared to 38 in 2020 (WHO 02/01/2022). As at October, there has been a confirmed **yellow fever** outbreak, but no recent updates are available (Health Cluster 22/12/2021). In relation to **COVID-19**, as at 16 January, there have been 457,322 cases and 7,147 deaths since the start of the pandemic (WHO 16/01/2022). Conflict and access constraints likely mean that COVID-19 cases are underreported, and the Government has struggled to secure vaccines (WB 30/03/2021; The Conversation 21/09/2021). As at December 2021, 1.4% of the population has been fully vaccinated; among them, around 3,720 refugees (Reuters accessed 13/01/2022).

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Humanitarian access and response constraints

Access of people in need to services

Insecurity constrains people's access to essential services and humanitarian assistance (OCHA 30/07/2021 and 12/01/2022). Those affected include refugees in camps in Tigray and Afar who have been temporarily cut off from assistance because of insecurity; IDPs in southern Oromia residing with host communities and not receiving any humanitarian assistance; and IDPs in Benishangul Gumuz, including Metekel and Kemashi zones, unable to access health services (UNHCR 26/10/2021; OCHA 26/08/2021, 25/10/2021, and 12/01/2022; UNICEF 01/09/2021). Air strikes continue to kill and displace civilians in northern Ethiopia and prevent their freedom of movement, including to access humanitarian services (UNICEF 09/01/2022; RI 09/01/2022).

Populations in rural areas often lack access to humanitarian assistance. In areas where public services are suspended, such as in Benishangul Gumuz, access to humanitarian services is particularly vital (OCHA 12/01/2022).

Access to public services remains a major impediment in conflict-affected areas, particularly in northern Ethiopia. Approximately 100 incidents of looting/vandalism/occupation of public services and infrastructure were recorded countrywide in 2021 (OCHA 30/07/2021 and 12/01/2022). The looting and destruction of health facilities are common, especially in Afar, Amhara, and Tigray (EHRC and OHCHR 03/11/2021; Devex 18/01/2022; IMC 17/12/2021; OCHA 12/01/2022). Only 40 of 224 health centres in Tigray were functional in June 2021, and medical equipment is lacking (EHRC and OHCHR 03/11/2021; ICRC 18/01/2022). In Afar, only 94 of 414 health facilities are functional. In Amhara, over 500 health facilities have been damaged or looted as at 13 January 2022 (OCHA 13/01/2022). The destruction of facilities and medicine shortages lead to a price increase, substantially limiting universal access (Hindawi 16/03/2021; BMC 05/07/2021; MSF 15/03/2021; IOM 13/12/2021). In addition, schooling has stopped for over a year in certain areas of northern Ethiopia, affecting millions of children (OCHA 06/01/2022). This is due to looting and damage to schools, presence of unexploded ordonnances and IDP collective sites being established in schools (OCHA 06/01/2022). Other affected services include telecommunications and WASH (OCHA 06/01/2022).

Access of humanitarian responders to the affected population

- **Insecurity and hostilities affecting the delivery of humanitarian assistance**

Among the main hindrances to humanitarian response across the country are violence and conflict, which lead to blocked access from certain areas, movement restrictions, and threats to humanitarian staff and goods (OCHA 30/07/2021 and 22/11/2021). The most affected areas include East and West Wellega zones in Benishangul Gumuz, Guji zone in Oromia, Kemashi zone, Metekel zone, most of northern Ethiopia, and border zones of Somali and SNNP region (OCHA 30/12/2021). In 2021, 2,326 access incidents were recorded as caused by active hostilities, security operations, and intercommunal violence impeding humanitarian operations, with more than 60% of the incidents happening since July (OCHA 05/03/2021, 30/07/2021, and 12/01/2022). These incidents accounted for 67% of all access constraints in 2021 (OCHA 30/07/2021 and 12/01/2022). Air strikes, particularly in northern Ethiopia and especially Tigray, have also limited the movement of humanitarians and in some cases have resulted in the suspension of humanitarian delivery (DW 10/01/2022).

- **Violence against humanitarian personnel, facilities, and assets**

Given active conflict and insecurity, there is also concern over the safety of humanitarian aid workers. There is continued evidence of arrests, detentions, and killings of humanitarian workers, with the total number of humanitarian staff killed continuing to increase, particularly in Tigray (Al Jazeera 09/11/2021; MSF 07/07/2021; UNCT 01/09/2021). Aside from direct violence, other security incidents have included threats, intimidation, harassment, the confiscation of aid items and equipment, and the looting of supplies. Of all reported incidents, 70% have been in northern Ethiopia (OCHA 12/01/2022). Humanitarian staff is often relocated as a result of insecurity, but relocations are sometimes blocked, with the risk that rest and recovery for staff are delayed or stopped altogether (OCHA 02/11/2021).

- **Bureaucratic and administrative impediments at the country level**

Three international NGOs were suspended in 2021. The Government ordered the Norwegian Refugee Council, Médecins Sans Frontières - Holland, and Al Maktoum Foundation to suspend operations in Ethiopia on 30 July 2021 (AP News 03/08/2021). The suspension of Médecins Sans Frontières - Holland was not lifted until 5 November 2021. It took until the end of the year for the suspension of the Norwegian Refugee Council to be lifted (NRC 05/01/2022; Devex 05/11/2021). The suspensions affected operations in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambela, Oromia, SNNP, Somali, and Tigray regions and Addis Ababa city (DW 03/08/2021; NRC 04/08/2021). Even when reinstated, it takes time for humanitarian organisations to provide the same level of support as compared to pre-suspension, and they will be under high levels of scrutiny. This scrutiny has increased since the countrywide State of Emergency on 2 November 2021, which gives the state extraordinary powers, including the suspension of organisations for not registering communication equipment (Addis Standard 02/11/2021; OCHA 12/01/2022).

The Government regulates NGOs and INGOs through the Proclamation to Provide for the Registration and Regulation of Charities and Societies (CSP). Implemented since 2009, the CSP requires registration with the Agency for Civil Society Organizations (ACSO) and a government letter of recommendation and approval; according to the CSP, the Government may terminate any organisation. Any NGO receiving over 10% of international funding is also practically prohibited from engaging in any human rights and advocacy activity (ICNL14/01/2022; Cunningham 2018). The CSP is currently under review, with ACSO working on new directives. In September, ACSO also announced strict punitive measures for organisations involved in what it considers activities threatening Ethiopia's sovereignty (Addis Standard 14/09/2021).

Suspended visa services resumed in late August 2021, but obtaining a visa may remain a challenge for international aid workers. Visa-on-arrival services have been suspended since 19 June 2021, while e-visa services were resumed in August (UK Government accessed 18/01/2022; OCHA 26/08/2021). In June, the Government of Ethiopia agreed to extend NGO visas to three months – an improvement from the original 30 days – but it is unclear if this is being implemented (OCHA 10/06/2021). Short-term extensions have been an issue for international staff, resulting in constant turnover (OCHA 06/05/2021). Other bureaucratic requirements, including the authorisation for convoys, are being blocked and remain a major challenge for the delivery of humanitarian assistance (OCHA 12/01/2022).

- **Operational constraints**

Extreme logistical challenges caused by a blockade limit operational capacity in Tigray (OCHA 12/01/2022). Limited cargo and staff movement into Tigray has resulted in the lack of relief items, fuel, and cash needed to sustain operations. The response capacity has been so limited that operations such as food dispatches and critical nutrition can only happen in certain areas and at a small scale (OCHA 13/01/2022). Operational constraints related to remoteness exist in other parts of the country (OCHA 25/10/2021).

Humanitarian capacity

Household coping capacity

Using savings, selling livestock, and receiving support from relatives or friends are the most common coping mechanisms at the household level to deal with the three most prevalent shocks: illness of a household member, price increases for food items, and drought according to the central statistics agency's latest socioeconomic survey 2018/19. The same survey found that over 20% of households did not have the option of using any coping mechanisms at all, indicating low resilience levels in a significant part of the population (CSA 24/02/2021). Repeated disasters and protracted displacement situations erode household coping capacity (OCHA 05/03/2021). There is a limited understanding of under which conditions certain strategies are used and the extent to which specific coping strategies are being used over others and why.

Households in rural areas with high food insecurity may rely on the Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP). PSNP recipients receive either transfers conditional upon engagement in public works (usually between January–June when food insecurity is higher) or, in special cases, unconditional direct support (cash transfers, vouchers, or food transfers) (Pearson et al. 08/2016; FDRE MOA 12/2014). With food prices increasing, there is a risk that the purchasing power of PSNP wages will decrease (as it happened, for instance, in 2008) (Save the Children UK 2009). Recipients in northern Ethiopia are unlikely to receive distributions in 2022 because of access constraints (FEWS NET 22/12/2021).

Host communities are an important support system for IDPs in Ethiopia, particularly northern Ethiopia. Most commonly, they provide food and shelter with most relations deemed positive (IOM 13/12/2021). Given limited resources and the humanitarian situation countrywide, some host communities end up turning to humanitarian assistance (OCHA 20/01/2022). In northern Ethiopia, there were reports of IDPs leaving host community areas to collective IDP sites where assistance is more readily available (OCHA 06/01/2022).

National capacity

The PSNP, established in 2005, is a key element of the Government's response to the chronic and transitory food insecurity of households in rural areas (FIC 04/2020; Pearson et al. 08/2016; GoE MOLSA 01/2016). A new fifth phase of the PSNP was launched in March 2021 aiming to reach nine million people yearly (Addis Standard 29/03/2021).

Despite the existence of disaster response mechanisms and institutions, the national capacity to respond to humanitarian needs remains limited (FAO 06/2021). Disaster preparedness in the country is generally weak given that strategic plans are not available in all woredas, early warning systems are not standardised across the country, and there are limited capacity and funding (EC 09/2018; FAO 06/2021).

As at July 2021, there were 2,953 civil society organisations registered in Ethiopia. 2,460 of them were local organisations, while 422 were foreign-founded (ICNL 14/01/2022).

International capacity

Prior to November 2020, 53 implementing humanitarian partners were active within the humanitarian cluster system, including UN organisations, INGOs, and NGOs (OCHA 15/07/2020). Up-to-date 3W information is not available for most clusters.

ANNEX: OVERVIEW OF THE LATEST AVAILABLE KEY FIGURES PER REGION

REGION	TOTAL POPULATION 2022 (PROJECTED, OCHA)	TOTAL IDPS (IDENTIFIED AUG–SEP 2021, IOM)	REFUGEES (AS AT 30 NOV 2021, UNHCR)	IDP RETURNEES (IDENTIFIED AUG–SEP 2021, IOM)
Addis Ababa	3,773,999	(5,853) ²	71,433	NA ⁴
Afar	1,989,996	255,769	55,640	15,556
Amhara	22,530,515	542,300	NA ³	218,409
Benishangul Gumuz	1,187,997	(4,978) ²	71,288	2,297 ⁴
Dire Dawa	521,000	2,491	NA ³	530
Gambela	492,002	34,321	353,179	9,197
Harari	270,000	3,125	NA ³	1,000
Oromia	39,075,002	506,133	4,037	653,549
Sidama	3,987,457	6,531	NA ³	25,935
Somali	6,355,003	871,176	219,724	392,286
SNNP and South West Ethiopia Peoples' region	16,704,094 ¹	203,506	4,938	224,822
Tigray	5,649,586	1,814,284	36,821 ³	NA ⁴
Total	102,536,651	4,250,467	808,530	1,543,581

Sources: OCHA accessed 21/01/2022; IOM 13/12/2021; UNHCR accessed 21/01/2022

¹ 13,250,646 people for SNNP region and 453,448 for South West Ethiopia Peoples' region.

² Combined figures of Site Assessment (SA) Round 27 (August–September) and Emergency Site Assessment Round 8 (July–September). Addis Ababa was not included in SA 27, while the figure for Addis Ababa was based on the number of IDPs identified in Round 25 (March–April) and for Benishangul Gumuz in Round 26 (June–July). Insecurity and inaccessibility limited data collection for SA 27 and 26, particularly in parts of Afar, Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, and Oromia.

³ NA = not available. The number of Eritrean refugees in Tigray is under verification. Not all Eritrean refugees who have fled from Tigray to Addis Ababa have been identified yet (UNHCR 23/12/2021).

⁴ Addis Ababa, Benishangul Gumuz, and Tigray are not included in the Village Assessment Survey Round 10 (August–September). The figure for Benishangul Gumuz is from Round 9 (June–July).