

SITUATION OVERVIEW The humanitarian situation in Tigray remains extremely concerning, while reports of intensified fighting and lack of assistance in rural areas continue to drive displacements of people across the Region. Aid workers received reports of children hungry and weak particularly from those fleeing areas that are currently hard to reach, as many faced four months without assistance after their harvests were burnt, livestock slaughtered, and property looted. The security situation remains fluid, and access to some previously reachable locations around Mekelle and in southern Tigray have not been possible for the past three weeks. The presence of various armed forces on the ground and shifting line of control pose serious challenges to partners' operations. Overall, continued power cuts, disruptions in communications and banking services are significant impediments to the scale-up of humanitarian efforts. Interruptions of basic services also add significant strain to people impacted by the conflict and power cuts are further jeopardising people's access to clean water and their ability to mill the grain received as humanitarian assistance. People in Tigray and humanitarians on the ground continue to report serious violence against civilians, including extrajudicial killing, rapes and other forms of gender-based violence, as well as random house searches, widespread looting of private and public property and destruction of farming equipment, allegedly by various armed actors. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, in a statement published on 4 March, informed that her office has been able to corroborate information about some of the incidents that occurred in November last year, indicating indiscriminate shelling in Mekelle, Humera and Adigrat town, and reports of grave human rights violations and abuses including mass killings in Axum, and in Dengelat in central Tigray by Eritrean armed forces. Rights groups released different reports on massacres of civilians, including the latest one by Human Rights Watch on 5 March. According to the UN Human Rights body, a preliminary analysis of the information received indicates that serious violations of international law, possibly amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, may have been committed by multiple actors in the conflict, including the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, Eritrean armed forces, and Amhara Regional Forces and affiliated militia. Separately, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission expressed concerns about the recent arrests, and subsequent release, of journalists and media workers in the Region, a sign of a prevailing intimidating media environment. Looting of humanitarian supplies and destruction and vandalization of different humanitarian infrastructure have also been reported by national and international organizations, including the UN, operating in Tigray. At least 85 incidents of looting of humanitarian vehicles have been documented, and many health centres, water points, warehouses and offices have been looted or vandalized. As internal displacement continues to be reported across the Region, including of people trying to reach towns where assistance is being delivered, aid organizations highlighted the pressing need to assist and protect displaced people in major cities, including Mekelle and Shire. Thousands of people who have been sheltering in schools and universities, already living in extremely concerning conditions, are facing the prospect of relocation within one month due to back-to-school plans. Humanitarian partners are facing significant difficulties in identifying suitable alternative sites for displaced people and are stressing the urgent need to provide emergency shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as supporting the management of settlements. The situation is also critical for thousands of Eritrean refugees previously hosted in the closed Hitsaats and Shimelba camps. Nearly 6,000 of them arrived in Mai Aini and Adi Harush sites, while many more are in Shire and Sheraro waiting to be relocated to camps. According to Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs, Mai Aini and Adi Harush refugee camps have now reached their maximum capacity. Efforts by the local authorities and humanitarian partners to identify suitable sites are ongoing. With many areas of Tigray having not received vital assistance since the conflict started

four months ago, the rising needs have vastly outstripped the preliminary response plan that was developed by the humanitarian community in the first weeks of the conflict. Several critical humanitarian clusters, including shelter, protection and education, report that the resources received are inadequate for the dire needs, even in areas that are currently accessible. Given the volatile security situation and evolving access opportunities, humanitarians are calling on the international community to increase its funding.