



UNOG Bi-weekly press briefing Ethiopia Update - OCHA UNHCR OHCHR WFP 24NOV2020

24-11-2020 | Edited News

Shotlist

1. Exterior wide shot, Palais des Nations flag alley, nations' flags flying, a cloudy day.
2. **SOUNDBITE (English) — Jens Laerke, spokesperson for OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs): “We have finalised a humanitarian preparedness plan intended to help two million people with assistance in Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions. That includes existing humanitarian caseloads that we’re already helping and an additional 1.1 million people expect it to be in need of assistance as a result of this conflict. To support this plan about \$76 million will still be needed to finance it.”**
3. Exterior medium shot, Palais des Nations flag alley and building, nations' flags flying.
4. **SOUNDBITE (English) — Babar Baloch, spokesperson for UNHCR (Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees): “The number of Ethiopian refugees streaming into eastern Sudan has now surpassed 40,000 since the crisis began with more than 5,000 women, children and men fleeing the ongoing fighting in Tigray region over the weekend.”**
5. Exterior wide shot, Palais des Nations flag alley, nations' flags flying.

6. **SOUNDBITE (English) — Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights): “The highly aggressive rhetoric on both sides regarding the fight for Mekelle is dangerously provocative, and it risks placing already vulnerable and frightened civilians in grave danger. The High Commissioner fears that such rhetoric will lead to further violations of international humanitarian law. The High Commissioner expresses alarm at reports of a heavy buildup of tanks and artillery around Mekelle, which is the capital city of Tigray province following the government's issuance of a 72 hour ultimatum.”**
7. Exterior wide shot, Palais des Nations flag alley, road sign in foreground and nations’ flags flying to rear.
8. **SOUNDBITE (English) — Tomson Phiri, spokesperson for WFP (World Food Programme): “The World Food Programme is alarmed at growing numbers of people in need of humanitarian assistance in both Ethiopia and Sudan because of the conflict in the Tigray region of Northern Ethiopia. On Sudan's border with Ethiopia the humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating as the influx of people continues. Needs remain very high and will likely overwhelm the response.”**
9. Exterior wide shot, building, Palais des Nations.
10. **SOUNDBITE (English) — Tomson Phiri, spokesperson for WFP (World Food Programme): “We have dispatched enough food to feed 60,000 people for one month. However, the food had to be borrowed from ongoing programs elsewhere in the country. We literally robbed Peter to pay Paul, and the continued influx of new arrivals will strain our ability to respond to existing humanitarian needs in Sudan, as the country's dealing with multiple crises throughout the country.”**
11. Exterior wide shot, garden and UN flag flying, Palais des Nations.

Story

UN “extremely concerned” at worsening humanitarian situation in Ethiopia’s Tigray region

The United Nations expressed alarm on Tuesday about the conflict in Ethiopia’s Tigray region, where a communications blackout is making it hard to assess and cope with what is thought to be a growing humanitarian emergency.

“We remain extremely concerned about the safety of civilians in Tigray region in Ethiopia, especially the more than half a million people who remain in the regional capital Mekelle, including 200 workers”, Jens Laerke, spokesperson for UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), told a regular UN briefing of journalists in Geneva.

“We have finalised a humanitarian preparedness plan intended to help two million people with assistance in Tigray, Afar and Amhara regions. That includes existing humanitarian caseloads that were already helping and an additional 1.1 million people expected to be in need of assistance as a result of this conflict. To support this plan about \$76 million will still be needed to finance it.”

Babar Baloch, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that almost 3,000 people were fleeing across the border every day.

“The number of Ethiopian refugees streaming into eastern Sudan has now surpassed 40,000 since the crisis began with more than 5,000 women, children and men fleeing the ongoing fighting in Tigray region over the weekend.”

Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), said that High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet was worried that hostilities in Mekelle seriously imperilled civilian lives.

“The highly aggressive rhetoric on both sides regarding the fight for Mekelle is dangerously provocative, and it risks placing already vulnerable and frightened civilians in grave danger. The High Commissioner fears that such rhetoric will lead to further violations of international humanitarian law. The High Commissioner expresses alarm at reports of a heavy build-up of tanks and artillery around Mekelle, which is the capital city of Tigray province, following the Government's issuance of a 72 hour ultimatum”, Ms. Shamdasani said.

Humanitarian aid in Sudan would be severely stretched by the growing refugee numbers, World Food Programme (WFP) spokesperson Tomson Phiri said.

“The World Food Programme is alarmed at growing numbers of people in need of humanitarian assistance in both Ethiopia and Sudan because of the conflict in the Tigray region of northern Ethiopia. On Sudan's border with Ethiopia the humanitarian situation is rapidly deteriorating as the influx of people continues. Needs remain very high, and will likely overwhelm the response”, Mr. Phiri told the briefing.

“We have dispatched enough food to feed 60,000 people for one month. However, the food had to be borrowed from ongoing programmes elsewhere in the country. We literally robbed Peter to pay Paul, and the continued influx of new arrivals will strain our ability to respond to existing humanitarian needs in Sudan, as the country's dealing with multiple crises throughout the country”, he added.