European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Ethiopia

Introduction

Ethiopia faces widespread humanitarian needs due to a multitude and, at times, an overlap of crises, mostly the result of inter-communal and ethnic conflicts, and climate shocks. Ethiopia also hosts the second largest refugee population in Africa, with a majority of refugees dependent on humanitarian aid.

What are the needs?

Outbreaks of violence continue to push people to flee their homes; others have to escape because of extreme weather. At the end of 2019, there were multiple clashes between state security forces and armed groups, causing thousands of people to flee. Humanitarian access in several areas remains a challenge.

Since April 2019, the authorities have put forward a return plan for internally displaced people, sometimes to areas where security, reconciliation and rule of law are not yet in place. The EU continues to advocate that all returns should be voluntary, safe, informed, and dignified, in line with international principles and standards.

Ethiopia suffers from food shortages due to the effects of drought. Increasingly frequent and severe droughts do not allow people to recover, while natural hazards, such as flash floods and landslides, take away lives and livelihoods. Ethiopia is also one of the countries in eastern Africa grappling with swarms of desert locusts that are destroying crops and pastures.

There are more than 740,000 refugees in Ethiopia, mostly from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, and Sudan most of whom rely on humanitarian aid to meet their basic needs. Cholera and other epidemic outbreaks remain a major public health threat, mainly due to poor living conditions, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, and poor health and hygiene practices. They add significant pressure on a fragile health system that already has limited capacity to deal with shocks.
How are we helping?

EU-funded humanitarian action in Ethiopia focuses on addressing the most urgent humanitarian. In 2019, the EU allocated €51 million to help people in need in Ethiopia.

The EU supports the provision of live-saving assistance to internally displaced people uprooted by violence or natural disasters. The EU provides protection, food aid, safe water, shelter, basic essential items, nutritional assistance and healthcare, disease prevention, and education.

EU humanitarian aid also contributes to helping refugees in Ethiopia. One of the priority actions is the creation of a protective environment for the most vulnerable refugees, such as unaccompanied minors. In addition, the EU funds food assistance, including the use of e-vouchers that refugees can exchange for fresh food at markets. EU humanitarian support also provides shelter, access to safe water and sanitation, the detection and treatment of malnourished children and mothers, and primary education for refugee children.

The EU also provides emergency assistance and dignified shelter to the most vulnerable unaccompanied children among the Ethiopian deportees from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Communities prone to drought or floods suffer significant losses of livestock and setbacks in their livelihoods. For this reason, EU funding in the south and southeast of Ethiopia also focuses on emergency response actions that can be deployed quickly to respond to emerging needs. EU-funded aid organisations have helped regional and local authorities in the establishment of emergency rapid response teams to address the cholera outbreak in 2019.

In response to the current desert locust swarms infesting countries in the region, including Ethiopia, the EU mobilised €11 million in humanitarian and development funding to support the international effort in eastern Africa to tackle the pest outbreak.