

ETHIOPIA BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

In the first half of 2022, the humanitarian needs remained unfortunately immense in Ethiopia. As part of our neutral and impartial humanitarian response, we have adopted a countrywide approach to address the most urgent needs in conflict affected regions including Amhara, Afar, Somali, Oromia, as well as Tigray. In all of these regions, we work closely with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society, our privileged partner. In order to carry out our humanitarian mission, we also maintain a dialogue with all parties to the conflict and other actors, as it is crucial for our acceptance and access to affected people and to have a constructive exchange of views on humanitarian issues, including on the need to respect international humanitarian law.

During this six-month period, we were able to organise more than sixty flights to Mekelle and seven land convoys, delivering much needed humanitarian assistance in Tigray, including medical supplies. Meanwhile, we continued our important humanitarian response in other regions such as Amhara, Afar, Oromia and Somali. For instance, more than 65,000 households have received assistance from the ICRC with seeds that was complemented by cash for agricultural supplies such as fertilizers and tools.

In the following pages, we invite you to discover our water system rehabilitation programme in Lalibella. In the Oromia region, our multi-purpose cash assistance helps families affected by conflict to meet their basic needs and rebuild their lives.

You will also learn how, with the aim of protecting the pastoralist and semi-pastoralist communities' livestock, more than 1.6 million domestic animals in the three regions of Afar, Oromia and Somali were vaccinated against common animal diseases. Furthermore, 20,000 pastoralist households in Somali and Oromia regions received two rounds of animal feed to protect their livestock from the impact of the drought. Wolde tells the terrible story of how his car was hit by an explosion on the road on his way home from work, leaving him with an amputated leg. Sexual violence is never the survivor's fault. Unfortunately, many survivors are ashamed to seek medical attention for fear of being stigmatized by the community. You will learn more about our response for ending this stigma.

Enjoy your reading!

Nicolas Von Arx
Head of Delegation



Families rebuild lives with ICRC cash assistance

Families trapped in violent conflicts often find themselves in extremely difficult living conditions. They struggle to get their lives back after displacement or when their assets are lost. With multi-purpose cash assistance from the ICRC, the most affected families are rebuilding their lives in the Oromia region.

Efrem Mulugeta, from Eysho in Kellem Wellega, was displaced by conflict and lost his assets in the process. And when he returned home, everything needed to start over again.

“I did not see any future to feed my family. I could not afford seeds and tools for farming anymore because of the conflict,” said Efrem.

The 42-year-old father of six says the ICRC cash assistance came as a huge relief for his family and other members of the community. He is a shining example of how a cash grant can help families affected by conflict to meet their basic needs and rebuild their lives.

“After receiving the cash, we used it to buy clothes, cover our family’s most urgent needs and for farming activities. We were able to farm our land for the first time in two years because we could afford seeds and tools,” he said.

In Eysho, 1,882 families – including Efrem’s – have received 100 kilograms of wheat seeds and a cash grant to buy fertilizer and farm inputs. Efrem’s farm is flourishing. And he is confident to harvest enough to feed his family and sell the surplus.

In Kellem Wellega, the ICRC has assisted 5,145 families in the districts of Hawa Galan and Seyo with cash to help them start over. The families also received wheat, beans, and sorghum seeds.

As part of a nationwide assistance operation, ICRC is providing support to farmers, in close collaboration with the Ethiopian Red Cross Society and local authorities. More than 65,000 families in Oromia, Amhara, Somali and Tigray regions should receive seeds and cash or fertilizer by the end of 2022. So far, nearly 2,000 metric tons of sorghum, maize, teff, wheat and haricot beans have been distributed across Ethiopia.





Addressing water scarcity to meet growing needs

The Amhara region is facing serious water scarcity that has limited the access of millions of people to safe water for drinking, and for practicing basic hygiene at home, in schools and in healthcare facilities. Water supplies in the region have been inadequate due to conflict-related disruptions that led to collapsed infrastructure and distribution systems.

Aberash Mamo is a 42-year-old mother of three. She said that taps have run dry in her community for nearly one year, since armed groups attacked her town.

“I have to wake up as early as 2am to go to the river and queue for 12 hours to fetch water,” she said. “We only have access to clean and safe water once in nine days, when the trucks fill the water tanks. I have to wait for Fridays to get it.”

At her home in the town of Lalibela, Aberash collects and fills her water containers with rainwater, saying that the scarcity is increasingly denying her family access to safe water and sanitation.

At least 77,000 residents and displaced people are affected by the water shortage in Lalibela because of disruption in the electrical system used to generate water, but Aberash is hopeful that the solar-powered pump project in the town by ICRC will come as a relief.

Some 800,000 people are also affected by the water problem in Gondar. Among them are tens of thousands of registered displaced persons. Their arrival has put pressure on available water resources.

“The daily demand is 70,000 cubic metres, but current production is 13,500 cubic metres,” said Workneh Ayal, General Manager of Gondar Water Utility, adding: “We appreciate ICRC’s support because they provided chemicals and three generators at a very critical time. They generate 900 KW per day.”

At the Gondar University Hospital where ICRC is rehabilitating and expanding the emergency unit to meet growing needs, doctors say they have had to cancel emergency surgeries because water is not available.

“Because of this water problem, we are referring patients to other hospitals, including in Bahir Dar. The day before yesterday, almost all emergency surgeries were cancelled. We can’t do elective surgeries because of this interruption,” explained Dr. Sewbesew Yitayih, the Chief Clinical Director at the hospital.

ICRC is providing support by repairing existing water systems, donating water pumps, generators, fittings, drilling and repairing boreholes among others, to ensure that people have access to clean and safe water across the region.



Our efforts to restore livelihoods of communities

More than 1.6 million domestic animals belonging to violence-affected pastoral and semi-pastoral communities in the three regions of Afar, Oromia and Somali were vaccinated against common animal diseases with the support of the ICRC and its government partners.

Camels, cattle, goats, donkeys and sheep were among the herds vaccinated against anthrax, blackleg and pasteurellosis, which are three major animal diseases killing livestock.

“The vaccination campaign ran from January to March 2022 and benefited more than 70,000 households in the districts of Meyumuluke, Qubi and Lagahida (Somali region), Kumbi and Meyumuluke (Oromia region) and Mile, Dubti, Asaita and Afambo (Afar region),” explains Charu Chandra, deputy coordinator of the ICRC’s economic security programme.

“I am not sure our animals would survive without the vaccination and other services provided by the Red Cross,” said Siyad Mahamud, a resident of Qubi district. The communities face frequent ethnic violence that costs many lives and displaces dozens of others. In addition, the three diseases are killing a significant number of their livestock, on which they depend heavily for survival, negatively impacting their lives.

“It is with the aim of protecting the communities’ livestock that the ICRC has been implementing this programme for the past five years, helping

them to strengthen their livelihoods,” said Charu Chandra. In addition to vaccination, the ICRC has also set up four veterinary pharmacies capable of providing veterinary medicines in a sustainable manner in the five districts of Meyumuluke, Qubi, Lagahida, Kumbi and Meyumuluke.

“We appreciate the presence of the ICRC in our area, the only humanitarian organization operating in these regions,” said Hussien Abdi Bile, deputy head of the Erer zone in Somali region, adding: “We are pleased with its support to communities that have been heavily affected by the recent violence”.





A man wishes to walk and work again

“We have already provided our services to 591 victims of explosive remnants of war over the last year. With the number of patients currently registered and given the capacity of the physical rehabilitation centers, it can take up to 11 months to serve the existing list. We are expanding our services to step up support while prioritizing delicate cases such as spinal cord injured patients,” explains Venkatakannan Packirisamy, ICRC’s Physical Rehabilitation Project Manager in Ethiopia.

Wolde Gabriel moves around on a wheelchair. He was not born with a disability. But on 4 January 2022, his car was struck by an explosion on the road as he returned from work in the town of Dabagna in Tigray region. The incident left him with amputated legs.

“I was driving back to Shire, accompanied by my cousin. I had also taken two passengers. We help each other when there is no public transport,” says Wolde. “Suddenly, there was a loud bang in the engine. I thought it was a burst tyre. When I tried to get out of the car, I saw my legs. My God! What a shock! My left leg was only held together by a piece of skin. The other leg was riddled with metal shards.”

Civilians suffer brutal and deadly strikes as a direct consequence of the armed conflict in Northern Ethiopia, with many having lifelong disabilities.

“My cousin still has metal in his legs and is partially deaf. The passengers in the back seat fared better,” says Wolde. He believes their car was “hit by drone fire or ran over a landmine”.

Violence is disrupting the lives of millions in the region and causing immense suffering. The situation is worse for people with physical disabilities resulting from the war.

Wolde receives rehabilitation care, including a below-the-knee prosthesis, at the Mekelle Orthopedics and Physiotherapy Centre supported by ICRC. Across Ethiopia, 4,124 physically challenged persons have benefitted from our physiotherapy and mobility services in 2022.

“I was lucky in my misfortune; I am still alive. I hope to be able to start working again soon,” says Wolde.

Needs in Tigray and across Ethiopia are soaring. Violence makes reaching people with humanitarian assistance – especially those with physical disabilities – even more difficult. Many hospitals, roads, communication lines, homes and livelihoods have been destroyed. ICRC continues to provide technical and material support such as wheelchairs, crutches, prosthetic, and orthotic devices to those who need it most.



Sexual Violence is never the survivor's fault

Sexual violence is one of the biggest problems affecting families during armed conflict. Survivors can live with stigma for the rest of their life, with serious consequences for their physical and mental health. All too often, it happens to women. In Ethiopia, people who have experienced sexual violence are more likely to face stigma, harassment, and exclusion from their communities.

“Some say I deserved it because I was helping the military. They say if I had stayed home, then I would have been safe. It hurts when they say that” says one survivor.

In these communities, sexual violence is a taboo. Often, women who survive it are rejected and abandoned by their husbands and families. And they have to show incredible resilience by rising above such difficult situation to break the cycle of stigma.

“It is very hard for us to move around freely because of something we had no control over,” narrates the survivor.

The prevailing stigma means many survivors cannot open up to seek life-saving care. Often, it remains hidden. Many cases are not reported. Like many victims of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas, the survivor says she was gang-raped, and her three-year-old son watched it happen.

“After one guy finishes, another one will follow. They played with me like a toy. The ground I fell on had thorns, so it hurt. They had their way with me. It is very hard to speak about,” she explains emotionally.

She was going to the market when it happened, and the rapists also extorted money from her. She says despite what happened, she did not tell her story or seek medical assistance for fear of ridicule. She felt ashamed. But her worst fear became a reality when her story eventually came out.

“I did not say anything after they raped me. No one in my home knew. Somehow people found out and now I have become the laughingstock of my town,” she says, adding: *“our society needs to be educated on matters like this.”*

The ICRC works in a range of ways to prevent and adequately respond to sexual violence in armed conflict; supporting victims and creating awareness among different members of the society so that they can help survivors recover by being kind and respectful to them, helping them to access medical care and always assuring them that it was never their fault. In Ethiopia, ICRC supports 13 One Stop Centers, 6 safe houses and 8 hospitals in conflict affected areas with medicines, basic materials, dignity kits, food, rents, and capacity building.

Our Humanitarian Response



Emergency Needs

- **121,848** persons provided with essential households
- **54,500** persons benefited with food assistance



Rebuilding Lives and Livelihoods

- **66,564** persons provided with multi-purpose cash assistance to help rebuild their livelihoods
- **1.6** million domestic animals vaccinated
- **4,626** persons received index-based livestock insurance
- **390,870** persons provided with seeds or cash for agro activities
- **119,448** pastoral households received livestock feed



Supporting Health Services

- **76** medical facilities supported with supplies
- **6,250** war wounded supported
- **140,313** consultations held at the primary health level
- **5,892** persons provided with physiotherapy and mobility services



Improving Access to Water

- **10,000** persons serviced by water-trucking and storage tanks
- **96,515** tons of chemicals donated to water plants
- **2,774,137** million individuals in urban and rural areas as well as places of detention benefited from improved/ rehabilitated water facilities
- **451** handpumps installed and regularly maintained
- **6** health care facility or IDP camps supported with generators and batteries
- **1,040** persons provided with access to sanitation facilities, including in detention



Ensuring Respect and Dignity of Detainees

- **34** places of detention visited
- **21,407** detainees provided with assistance



Reconnecting and Reuniting Families

- **187** persons sought by their family members were located
- **116,133** phone calls and oral messages facilitated between family members separated by conflict and violence



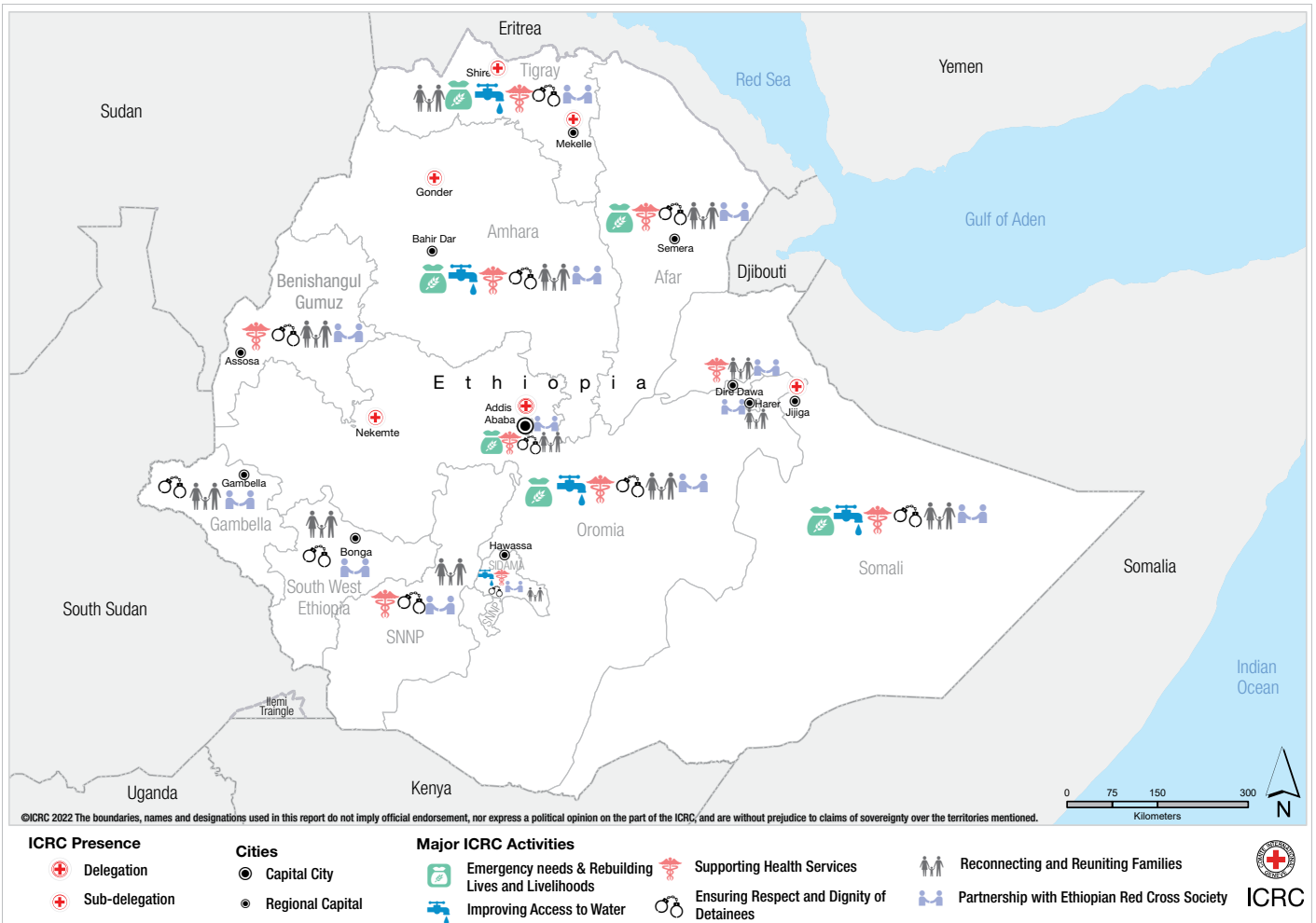
Partnership with Ethiopian Red Cross Society

- **34** ERCS branches supported with ambulance services that have serviced **56,855** individuals
- **39** ERCS branches provided with different supports, including refilling of First-Aid kits



Improving Knowledge and Respect for Humanitarian Law

- **802** people from local and regional authorities, community and religious leaders, journalists sensitised to IHL and the mandate and activities of the ICRC/ERCS.
- Trained and engaged **914** officers, senior ranks of armed, police and security forces, on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Right Law.



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Addis Ababa delegation
International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)
Bole Sub-City, K. 12/13 H.No 498
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
T +251 (0)11 647 83 00
www.icrc.org
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