

UK announces humanitarian assistance for 150,000 women and children suffering drought and conflict in Ethiopia

- Minister for Development Vicky Ford uses a two-day visit to Ethiopia to urge for peace and pledge more support to victims of the drought affecting 24 million already vulnerable people
- support will provide hundreds of thousands of severely malnourished children, mothers and survivors of sexual violence with medical treatment, water, sanitation, basic education and mental health support
- Minister Ford will urge for an end to fighting for the sake of civilians, particularly in the north, facing violence and starvation

UK aid will help to protect women and children from the devastating impacts of violent conflict and the worst drought in 40 years in Ethiopia, Minister for Development Vicky Ford announced today [19 October] during a visit to the country.

With 24 million people affected by the drought in Ethiopia, the Minister will visit a UK-supported hospital where severely malnourished children under 5 receive life-saving treatment. The Minister will also visit a UK-funded school where children are able to get back to learning and receive mental health support after experiencing conflict and drought.

A new £14 million UK funding package is expected to reach up to 150,000 people with comprehensive health, water sanitation, hygiene and nutrition services; 50,000 people with emergency financial support and 20,000 pupils with emergency education. The funding will also protect children from violence and exploitation and provide women subject to sexual violence with mental health support.

Minister Ford made the announcement while on a two-day visit to Ethiopia to raise awareness of the impact of drought and armed conflict. She will meet with members of the Government of Ethiopia and will urge for an end to the ongoing conflict in Tigray, in northern Ethiopia, which has resulted in awful violence against civilians. The Minister will also address the conflict-related sexual violence suffered by women and girls in the region.

This is part of a wider £156 million UK commitment to humanitarian support for crises in East Africa this year.

Minister for Development, Vicky Ford said:

Ethiopia faces multiple pressing crises, including a catastrophic drought which has affected 24 million people. The escalation of fighting in northern Ethiopia has made an already dire situation

even worse and left many extremely vulnerable, including women and girls.

We are a committed, long-standing partner to Ethiopia. We continue to provide life-saving healthcare, nutrition and water, which will be boosted by the £14 million funding which I have announced today.

We will continue to stand by the Ethiopian people and to call for peace. I urge the international community to act now to prevent the desperate humanitarian situation from deteriorating.

In the last 18 months, the UK has committed over £75 million of humanitarian aid to Ethiopia. This new funding brings this figure to nearly £90 million.

Last year in Ethiopia, UK funding provided nutritious food for over 200,000 malnourished women and children, provided emergency health supplies for 1 million people, provided clean water to over 200,000 people; and child protection services to over 40,000 children affected by conflict.

- the humanitarian context across the region is challenging with more than 68 million people facing high levels of food insecurity
- Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia are all at risk famine
- conflict, climate extremes including flooding and drought and the key drivers of suffering in the region. The poorest communities in East Africa are also bearing the brunt of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine which has contributed to price inflation for staple goods
- the UK aims to allocate £156 million in humanitarian support across East Africa in financial year 2022 to 2023