

UK provides almost £30 million to humanitarian catastrophe in northern Ethiopia

The Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has announced an additional £29m of humanitarian aid to people affected by the catastrophic conflict in northern Ethiopia.

The announcement marks World Food Day today [16 October] and increases the UK's commitment to the crisis to more than £75m – making the UK the second largest donor.

The Minister is also calling on all parties in Ethiopia to urgently agree a ceasefire to allow humanitarian aid through and for the Ethiopian Government to lift the de facto blockade of humanitarian relief into the Tigray region. The people of Tigray need 500 trucks of critical assistance per week, but less than 10% of this has been met since June.

The conflict has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with the UN estimating that 5.5 million people face acute food insecurity. Over 400,000 people in northern Ethiopia are experiencing famine-like conditions – more than in all of the humanitarian crises in the rest of the world combined.

Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, said:

The Ethiopian people are facing a humanitarian catastrophe and are in urgent need of support.

This pledge will provide vital food, water and healthcare to the hundreds of thousands of people facing famine in northern Ethiopia.

This is a man-made crisis. I urge all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire to allow humanitarian aid to reach starving people.

The new funding comes as the UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, recently concluded his third visit to Ethiopia since the start of the conflict in November 2020, where he pressed for improved humanitarian access to the areas affected by conflict.

Special Envoy Nick Dyer said:

On my third visit to Ethiopia since the start of the Tigray conflict, I saw a further deterioration of the crisis and the conditions for humanitarian operations.

We are pleased to provide more funding but humanitarian agencies

need access into all areas where people are in need now, so that lives can be saved and catastrophic famine avoided.

The conflict in northern Ethiopia has spread beyond the borders of Tigray now, so we are expanding UK funding to reach those in urgent need in Afar and Amhara.

The funding will be delivered by UN agencies and NGOs, including the WFP, UNICEF, and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund. Our partners expect to deliver lifesaving nutrition treatment for more than 100,000 malnourished children, and 27,000 pregnant and new mothers.

The pledge will also deliver clean water and sanitation for 26,000 people and provide services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence for almost 3,000 women and children.

It will also support people who have been forced to flee their homes by the spread of conflict across northern Ethiopia, providing shelter, healthcare, and support to children who have been separated from their families and to survivors of sexual violence.

Notes to editors:

- Ethiopia is now one of the most dangerous countries in the world for humanitarians with 23 aid workers killed in Tigray since the start of the conflict.
- The UK led a joint statement at the Human Rights Council on 4th October, signed by 43 partners, calling on the Ethiopian Government to reverse their decision to expel seven senior UN officials on 30th September.
- The UK's Ambassador for Human Rights raised the urgent need for unfettered humanitarian access at the Human Rights Council earlier this month and the former Foreign Secretary raised the UK's concerns over the conflict in a call with Prime Minister Abiy in August.