

Debate Pack

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Humanitarian situation in Sudan, Ethiopia and Tigray

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1

Background

A Westminster Hall debate on the humanitarian situation in Sudan, Ethiopia and Tigray has been scheduled for Wednesday 3 November 2021, from 2.30-4:00pm. The debate has been initiated by Jeremy Corbyn MP.

Summary

Both Sudan and the Tigray region of Ethiopia have significant humanitarian challenges, including high numbers needing food assistance and many being internally displaced.

For Sudan, this means primarily addressing the legacy of conflicts [in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile](#), and the [civil war in South Sudan](#). These have resulted in a high level of internal displacement. In May 2020, the UN Refugee Agency said 1.6 million displaced people [were still unable to return to Darfur](#) due to its continuing insecurity. The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) estimates [around 29% of the Sudanese population—13.4 million—will need humanitarian assistance in 2021](#), 4.1 million higher than in 2020. This is the highest reported number in need for the last decade.

Recent events such as [heavy rains](#) and [conflict in the neighbouring Ethiopian region of Tigray](#) have also impacted on Sudan.

The paper also describes the recent political instability in Sudan, where in October General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan [took control of the government](#) from a [civilian/military transitional council](#). Burhan says he [intends to appoint a Prime Minister](#) to rule alongside the military. The overthrow has been [met by street protests](#), and there are reports these have been put [down violently by security forces](#). The [United Kingdom](#), [European Union](#), [United States](#), and [African Union](#) have called for the establishment of a civilian-led transitional authority.

In Ethiopia, [fighting broke out in Tigray in November 2020](#) following [growing divisions](#) between the Ethiopian Federal Government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. While Government forces [initially captured the capital of Tigray, Mekele](#), they have now been pushed back and the conflict has [spread to neighbouring provinces](#).

Ongoing fighting has [limited the delivery of humanitarian aid](#)—on 28 October, the UNOCHA said the UN Humanitarian aid service had suspended all flights to Mekele due to air strikes and concerns for the safety of aid workers in the region. The UN Secretary General has described the 400,000 acutely-food insecure people in Tigray as living in [“famine-like conditions”](#) and warned that [100,000 children face life-threatening acute malnutrition](#) in the next 12 months.

The [UK and others](#) have raised concerns [regarding the lack of humanitarian access to northern Ethiopia](#) over the past year.

2

Sudan

2.1

Humanitarian situation

Legacy of past conflicts

Sudan experiences several humanitarian challenges, which include addressing the legacy of the [conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile](#), and the [civil war in South Sudan](#).¹

Sudan is classed by the UN as a [least developed country](#). In 2021, it had a Gross National Income of US\$ 1,582, compared to an average of US\$ 6,666 in all developing countries.² Darfur has experienced a serious humanitarian crisis since 2003—in May 2020, the UN Refugee Agency said 1.6 million displaced people [were still unable to return to the region](#) due to its continuing insecurity.³

The UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) estimates [around 29% of the Sudanese population—13.4 million—will need humanitarian assistance in 2021](#), 4.1 million higher than in 2020. This is the highest reported number in need for the last decade.⁴

In 2020, the Juba Peace Agreement was signed to bring to an end 17 years of conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan and the Blue Nile.⁵ However, there is some [continuing violence](#) from groups [that did not accept the Agreement](#).⁶

Blockade of Port Sudan

The situation in Sudan has been worsened by a blockade of Port Sudan, one of the country's main ports. In [September and October 2021](#), members of the Beja tribes have blocked roads to protest for greater political power and improved economic conditions in the region.⁷

On 8 October, the UK, US, and Norway—which together form the Troika, who witnessed the Juba Peace Agreement in 2020—said it [“strongly supported”](#)

¹ Commons Library, [Sudan: December 2017 update, December 2017](#); [South Sudan: A decade of independence](#), July 2021

² UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, [Least developed country status: Sudan](#), accessed 1 November 2021

³ UN Refugee Agency, [Sudan's internally displaced yearn for real peace to go home](#), 4 May 2020

⁴ UNOCHA, [Sudan humanitarian needs overview 2021](#), December 2020

⁵ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan signs peace deal with rebel groups from Darfur](#), 31 August 2020

⁶ Crisis Group, [The rebels come to Khartoum: How to implement Sudan's new peace agreement](#), 23 February 2021

⁷ Reuters, [Sudan running out of essential medicine, fuel and wheat due to port blockade](#), 4 October 2021; The Conversation, [Blockade of Port Sudan: What's behind it and what can end it](#), 6 October 2021

[the efforts of the then-Sudanese government](#) to end the ongoing blockades by entering into a dialogue with the protesters.⁸

Internal displacement and refugees

As of September 2021, Sudan hosted around 1.1 million refugees and has 3 million internally displaced people.⁹ Internal displacement is due to previous civil wars, the conflict in Darfur, and the result of flooding.¹⁰

The conflict in Tigray in neighbouring Ethiopia has impacted on Sudan—over [60,000 fled to Sudan](#) between the beginning of the Tigray conflict in November 2020 and January 2021.¹¹ There are also around [785,000 refugees from South Sudan](#) in the country.¹²

Other humanitarian needs

On 27 September 2021, the [UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs](#) said that in Sudan 314,000 had been affected by heavy rains and flash floods, and there were 9.8 million people who are severely-food insecure. This was expected to fall to 6 million after the 2021/22 harvest.¹³

In June 2021, UN agencies were able to reach conflict-affected communities in areas of South Kordofan and the Blue Nile [for the first time in ten years](#).¹⁴

Updates on the situation in Sudan can be found on [Reliefweb: Sudan](#).

2.2

Political instability in October 2021

Overthrow of President Bashir, 2019

In 2019, [following several months of protests against the Sudanese President](#), Omar al-Bashir, the Sudanese army announced they had forcibly removed him from power. Bashir had been in office since 1989.¹⁵

⁸ US Department of State, [Troika statement on the situation in Eastern Sudan](#), 8 October 2021

⁹ UN Refugees Agency, [Sudan](#), September 2021, p1

¹⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, [Sudan](#), accessed 29 October 2021

¹¹ UN, [Many Tigray refugees entering Sudan with nothing but their clothes: UN Refugee Agency](#), 18 January 2021

¹² UN Refugee Agency, [Sudan](#), September 2021, p1

¹³ UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs, [Sudan](#), updated 27 September 2021

¹⁴ World Food Programme, [UN agencies in Sudan reach conflict affected areas \[...\]](#), 13 June 2021

¹⁵ Commons Library, [Military coup in Sudan](#), April 2019; [Political situation in Sudan](#), June 2019

Establishment of civilian-military transitional government, 2019-2021

In August 2019, a [power-sharing agreement was reached](#) between the Sudanese military and civilian protesters, setting out a three-year transitional period led by a civilian/military governing council.¹⁶ Abdalla Hamdok was appointed Prime Minister.¹⁷ Elections were [planned to take place by 2023](#).¹⁸

The period between the overthrow of al-Bashir and the agreement was not without violence, however. In June 2019, security forces had [used force against protesters](#), killing several dozen people and likely injuring hundreds.¹⁹

Failed coup attempt, September 2021

In September 2021, Prime Minister Hamdok announced the Government had [successfully thwarted a coup attempt](#) by civilian and military supporters of the previous president, al-Bashir.²⁰ The UN Secretary General condemned the attempted coup and called on all parties to [commit to the peaceful transition of power](#).²¹

According to the [Reuters news agency](#), some in the military have been “unnerved” by calls for the extradition of Bashir and other military personnel to appear before the International Criminal Court. They are wanted for alleged war crimes in Darfur.²²

Successful coup and arrest of Prime Minister, October 2021

A month later, on 25 October, the Sudanese military, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, [took control of the Government](#).²³ Hamdok was detained, and subsequently released to be detained at home.²⁴ Other ministers, political figures, and activists have also been arrested.²⁵ Ambassadors from the UK, EU, Germany, France and the UN have [visited Hamdok since his arrest](#).²⁶

¹⁶ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan protest leaders, military sign transitional government deal](#), 17 August 2019

¹⁷ Commons Library, [June 2019 massacres in Sudan and the UK's support for Sudan's democratic transition](#), October 2020

¹⁸ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan coup: Which constitutional articles have been suspended](#), 26 October 2021

¹⁹ Reuters, [Sudan sit-in bloodshed cripples uprising](#), 10 June 2019

²⁰ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan's PM says coup plotters were military, non-military](#), 21 September 2021

²¹ UN, [Condemning attempted coup d'état in Sudan \[...\]](#), 29 September 2021

²² Reuters, [Analysis: Sudan coup drama lays out bare distrust between civilian, military leaders](#), 8 October 2021

²³ BBC News, [Sudan coup: Military dissolves civilian government and arrests leaders](#), 26 October 2021

²⁴ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan: Abdalla Hamdok returned to home, remains under guard](#), 27 October 2021

²⁵ AP, [Sudan arrests three coup critics as pressure mounts on military](#), 28 October 2021; The Guardian, [Violent abductions target Sudanese civilians in aftermath of coup](#), 28 October 2021

²⁶ BBC News, [Western envoys meet ousted Sudan PM in Khartoum](#), 28 October 2021

According to the 2019 transitional agreement, General Burhan was [due to step down as chairman of the military-civilian council](#) in November 2021, paving the way for greater civilian control. He and his military officers may also be fearing an investigation for any role they may have played in the violent response to the June 2019 protests.²⁷ In recent months, there have also been [growing protests against Hamdok](#) in response to Sudan's economic problems, which may also have encouraged General Burhan to act.²⁸

Burhan has denied this is a coup, stating that the country has “started a path towards the state of peace and freedom.” He has, however, declared a state of emergency and proposes to appoint his own sovereign ruling council, in breach of the constitutional document previously agreed.²⁹ On 29 October he said would [appoint a Prime Minister](#) to rule alongside the military within a week.³⁰

The coup has been met by protests, including in the capital, Khartoum. Security forces had reportedly [used tear gas and rubber-tipped bullets to disperse protesters](#).³¹ From 25 to 29 October, France 24 reported at least 8 people were been killed and 170 wounded.³² Three protesters were killed during [nationwide protests](#) on 30 October.³³

International reaction

On 27 October, the African Union [suspended Sudan from the organisation](#), calling for the establishment of a civilian-led transitional authority.³⁴ The UN Security Council has called for “utmost restraint” and called on the Sudanese military authorities [to restore the civilian-led transitional government](#).³⁵

On 25 October, in response to an Urgent Question, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Minister, Vicky Foxcroft, [said the UK condemned the arrest of the civilian members](#) of Sudan's transitional government and was concerned of reports of shooting at protesters.³⁶

The Sudanese military have reportedly removed the American, EU, Qatari, Chinese and French ambassadors [from their posts](#) after they rejected the

²⁷ BBC News, [Sudan coup: why the army is gambling with the future](#), 27 October 2021; France 24, [Sudan's army releases results of investigation into killing of two protesters](#), 16 May 2021

²⁸ AP News, [Explainer: How months of tensions led to Sudan's coup](#), 26 October 2021

²⁹ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan coup: Which constitutional articles have been suspended?](#), 26 October 2021

³⁰ ABC News, [Sudan coup leader says he will appoint new premier within a week](#), 29 October 2021

³¹ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan: Security forces fire tear gas to disperse protesters](#), 24 October 2021; France 24, [Sudan's capital rocked by fresh street clashes as UN slams coup](#), 28 October 2021

³² France 24, [Sudanese vow to keep up protests after deadly clashes](#), 29 October 2021

³³ Al-Jazeera, [Three shot dead during nationwide protests against Sudan coup](#), 30 October 2021

³⁴ Al-Jazeera, [African Union suspends Sudan over coup](#), 27 October 2021

³⁵ UN Security Council, [Security Council press statement on Sudan](#), 28 October 2021

³⁶ HC Deb, [25 October 2021](#), c51

military takeover.³⁷ The [European Union](#) and [US have](#) called for a civilian-led transitional government.³⁸

In response, the US has [paused US\\$ 700 million in aid](#) to Sudan.³⁹ The World Bank has also [paused all funding](#) to Sudan.⁴⁰ The UK was also due to start the process of forgiving around £861 million in debt to Sudan.⁴¹ The FCDO has said it is considering its position in light of October's events.⁴²

Both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates provided substantial financial aid to Sudan following the formation of the transitional government in 2019.⁴³ Analysis published by the [Washington Institute](#) and [Crisis Group](#) suggest the US and others could use their leverage with the Gulf states, as well as Egypt, to encourage the Sudanese military leadership to change course.⁴⁴

2.3

UK aid to Sudan

UK bilateral Official development assistance (ODA) to Sudan has grown over the past five reported years. From 2015 to 2020 the UK provided £504 million to Sudan, including £249 million for humanitarian purposes.

ODA refers to aid intended to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Such assistance must be reported to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. ODA classed as humanitarian assistance involves the provision of material aid (e.g. shelter, food) to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity in the aftermath of crises and disasters.⁴⁵

Total spending was highest in 2020, at £139.2 million—2.5 times higher than 2015. ODA for humanitarian purposes was highest in 2019, at £55.7 million. From 2019 to 2020, Sudan saw the second-highest country-specific increase in bilateral ODA, becoming the tenth-largest recipient of UK bilateral ODA in 2020.⁴⁶

³⁷ Al-Jazeera, [Sudan army sacks six envoys as coup condemnation grows](#), 28 October 2021

³⁸ European Council, [Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Sudan](#), 26 October 2021; US Department of State, [The US condemns action against Sudan's civilian-led transitional government](#), 25 October 2021; White House, [Statement by President Biden](#), 28 October 2021

³⁹ AP News, [US condemns Sudan coup, suspends \\$700 million in aid](#), 25 October 2021

⁴⁰ World Bank, [World Bank Group paused all disbursements to Sudan on Monday](#), 27 October 2021

⁴¹ PQ 56689 [[Overseas aid: Sudan](#)], 15 October 2021

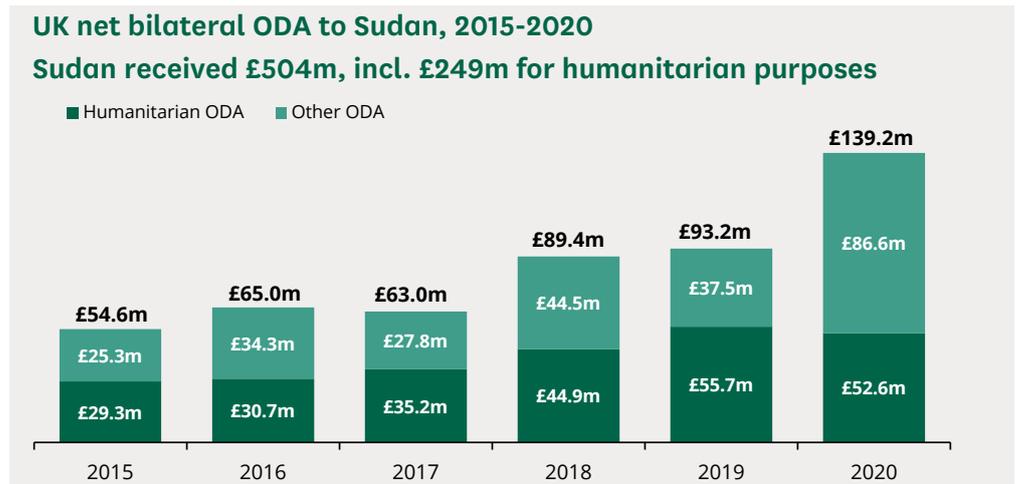
⁴² HC Deb, [25 October 2021](#), c54

⁴³ Middle East Political Science, [The great game of the UAE and Saudi Arabia in Sudan](#), 2020

⁴⁴ Washington Institute, [In Sudan, the masks come off after a military coup](#), 26 October 2021; Crisis Group, [Reversing Sudan's dangerous coup](#), 26 October 2021

⁴⁵ FCDO, [Final aid spending statistics 2020: Annex 1](#), 29 September 2021, p6

⁴⁶ FCDO, [Statistics on international development: Final UK aid spend 2020](#), 29 September 2021, para 5.1.3.1, fig. 7



Note: UK bilateral aid only. Does not include regional spending or that spent via multilateral sources (e.g. the World Bank). Figures were rounded prior to calculation.

Source: FCDO, [Final aid spending statistics 2020: Table B.2](#), 29 September 2021

In September 2021, the [FCDO said it has allocated](#) £62.2 million in ODA for Sudan in 2021/22, compared to £142.6 million in 2020/21. Note these figures do not include any regional spending and may change.⁴⁷

The UK Government has also made £5 million available for Ethiopian refugees in Sudan as part of its response to the Tigray conflict.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ FCDO, [Annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021](#), 22 September 2021, p260

⁴⁸ PQ 24126 [[Tigray: Refugees](#)], 6 July 2021

3 Ethiopia and the situation in Tigray

3.1 Background to the conflict

From 1991 to 2019, [Ethiopia was ruled by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front](#) (EPRDF). This was led for several years by Meles Zenawi Asres of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).⁴⁹

The TPLF remained a core part of the EPRDF until 2019, when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, appointed the previous year, decided to dissolve and rename the EPRDF as the Prosperity Party. The TPLF [criticised the move and decided to leave national government](#) for the first time since 1991.⁵⁰

This [widening rift between Abiy and the TPLF](#) forms the backdrop to the current fighting in Ethiopia's northern province of Tigray. Following the decision of TPLF to proceed with regional elections against the ruling of the Federal Government to postpone them in response to the pandemic, Abiy declared a state of emergency in the region in November 2020. He accused the TPLF of attacking Ethiopian military forces and [launched a military offensive](#).⁵¹

3.2 Continuing conflict

Fighting has continued, and in June 2021, the [TPLF retook the capital of Tigray](#), Mekele.⁵² TPLF continued to push from Tigray into neighbouring regions, [Amhara](#) and [Arfar](#).⁵³ In October, Crisis Group said the conflict is [likely to worsen](#), with it being likely to spread further across the Tigray region.⁵⁴ On 30 October, it was reported TPLF [had seized Dessie](#), a strategic town in the Amhara region.⁵⁵ In response, the US reiterated its calls for the TPLF to [withdraw from regions neighbouring Tigray](#).⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Council on Foreign Relations, [Ethiopia: East Africa's emerging giant](#), updated 4 November 2020

⁵⁰ Mail and Guardian, [Abiy Ahmed won a Nobel peace prize. Now Ethiopia is on the brink of civil war](#), 4 November 2020

⁵¹ Commons Library, [Ethiopia: Warnings of a "full scale humanitarian crisis" in Tigray region](#), November 2020; Mail and Guardian, [Abiy Ahmed won a Nobel peace prize. Now Ethiopia is on the brink of civil war](#), 4 November 2020

⁵² BBC News, [Ethiopia's Tigray conflict: Street celebrations as rebels seize capital](#), 29 June 2021

⁵³ Reuters, [Ethiopia's Amhara state rallies youth to fight Tigrayan forces as war widens](#), 25 July 2021; Reuters, [Ethiopia's Tigray forces entering neighbouring Afar region](#), Afar says, 19 July 2021

⁵⁴ Crisis Group, [Ethiopia's civil war: Cutting a deal to stop the bloodshed](#), 26 October 2021

⁵⁵ France 24, [Ethiopian forces retreat from strategic town: Residents](#), 30 October 2021

⁵⁶ US Department of State, [Expansion of combat operations in Northern Ethiopia](#), 30 October 2021

Ongoing fighting has [limited the delivery of humanitarian aid](#)—on 28 October, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said the UN Humanitarian aid service had suspended all flights to Mekele due to air strikes and concerns for the safety of aid workers in the region. From 18 to 28 October, no trucks with humanitarian supplies were able to reach Tigray, and, from 1 July to 28 October, [only 15% of the trucks needed were able to enter the region](#).⁵⁷

The Library has published two recent briefings which provide further information: [Ethiopia: Situation in Tigray](#) (June 2021) and [Humanitarian situation in Tigray](#) (September 2021).

3.3 Humanitarian situation in Tigray

Several UN agencies have published situation reports on the situation in Tigray, Amara and Arfar:

- As of 25 October, the [UN Refugee Agency states](#) the conflict has displaced 2.1 million in Tigray, 800,000 in Amara, and 140,000 in Arfar.⁵⁸
- As of 10 October, the [World Food Programme](#) said there were up to 7 million in need of food assistance, including 5.2 million in Tigray.⁵⁹
- As of 28 October, 5.2 million of Tigray's 7.2 million population (72%) were [identified as needing humanitarian assistance](#) by the UN.⁶⁰
- Of the 870,000 targeted people requiring assistance every week in Tigray, the UNOCHA said from 14-20 October, [only 4.4% were able to receive assistance due to lack of fuel](#) (39,000 people).⁶¹
- According to the [Integrated Food Security Phase \(IPC\) Classification](#), which measures food insecurity, an estimated 400,000 in Ethiopia were acutely food insecure in IPC phase 5 (catastrophe) between July and September 2021. This is the highest rating, suggesting at least 20% of households face an “extreme” lack of food and at least 30% of children are suffering from acute malnutrition.⁶² The UN Secretary General has described the 400,000 acutely food insecure as living in “[famine-like](#)

⁵⁷ UNOCHA, [Ethiopia—Northern Ethiopia humanitarian update](#), ‘Situation overview’ updated 28 September 2021

⁵⁸ UN Refugee Agency, [Northern Ethiopia: Update](#), 25 October 2021

⁵⁹ UN, [Tigray: Food aid reaches Afar and Amhara but situation still “dire.”](#) 10 October 2021

⁶⁰ UN, [Ethiopia: Northern Ethiopia humanitarian update](#), updated 28 October 2021; UN Population Fund, [UNFPA Ethiopia response to the Northern Ethiopia crisis](#), 16 to 30 September 2021, p3

⁶¹ UN Population Fund, [UNFPA Ethiopia response to the Northern Ethiopia crisis](#), 16 to 30 September 2021, p3

⁶² IPC, [Ethiopia: Famine review committee confirms very high levels of acute food insecurity and risk of famine in Tigray](#), undated; IPC, [The IPC famine factsheet](#), 11 December 2020

conditions” and warned that [100,000 children face life-threatening acute malnutrition](#) in the next 12 months.⁶³

Further updates on the situation in Ethiopia [can be found on Reliefweb](#).

3.4 UK aid and diplomatic response

The UK and others have raised concerns [regarding the lack of humanitarian access to northern Ethiopia](#) over the past year.⁶⁴ The previous foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, had raised concerns regarding the humanitarian situation within the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy in August 2021.⁶⁵

In October 2021, the UK [led a joint statement](#) at the UN Human Rights Council calling for the Ethiopian Government to reverse its decision to expel seven senior UN officials in late September.⁶⁶ The Ethiopian Government had accused the officials of [“meddling” in the country’s internal affairs](#).⁶⁷

In 2020, Ethiopia was the country that [received the highest amount of UK bilateral ODA](#).

From 2015 to 2020, the UK [committed £1.85 billion on bilateral ODA](#) to Ethiopia, including £532 million for humanitarian purposes. Peak spending was in 2015, when £338.8 million was committed on all subjects. Spending in 2020 represented only 75% of this figure, at £253.9 million. However, humanitarian ODA was highest in 2020, at £103.0 million.⁶⁸

For definitions of ODA and that for provide for humanitarian purposes, see section 1.3., above.

⁶³ UN, [Secretary General’s remarks to the Security Council on Ethiopia](#), 6 October 2021: UN Security Council, [At least 400,000 “living in famine-like conditions” in Ethiopia’s Tigray region \[...\]](#), 26 August 2021

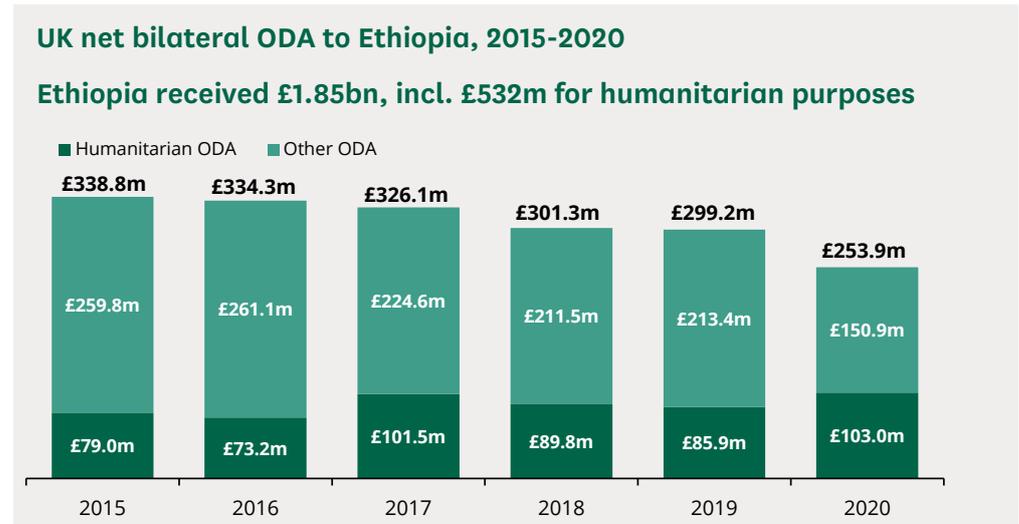
⁶⁴ Center for Strategic and International Studies, [Humanitarian suspensions and the politicisation of aid in Ethiopia](#), 12 August 2021; FCDO, [Humanitarian situation in Tigray: Government response to the International Development Committee](#), 1 July 2021

⁶⁵ PQ 43626 [[Tigray: Famine](#)], 10 September 2021

⁶⁶ FCDO, [UN Human Rights Council 48](#), 4 October 2021

⁶⁷ Reuters, [Ethiopia expels seven UN officials, accusing them of “meddling.”](#) 6 October 2021

⁶⁸ FCDO, [Statistics on international development: Final UK aid spend 2020](#), 29 September 2021, para 5.1.3.1



Note: UK bilateral aid only. Does not include regional spending or that spent via multilateral sources (e.g. the World Bank). Figures were rounded prior to calculation. See section 1.3 for definition of humanitarian ODA

Source: FCDO, [Final aid spending statistics 2020: Table B.2](#), 29 September 2021

In September 2021, the FCDO said it had allocated £107.6 million for Ethiopia for 2021/22, compared to £240.5 million in 2020/21.⁶⁹ Note these figures do not include any regional spending and may change.⁷⁰ In October, the FCDO announced a [further £29 million](#) in additional humanitarian aid to northern Ethiopia.⁷¹

On the situation in Tigray specifically, the Government [provided £75 million](#), from November 2020 to October 2021 (including the additional funding pledged on October).⁷²

⁶⁹ FCDO, [Annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021](#), 22 September 2021, p251

⁷⁰ FCDO, [Annual report and accounts 2020 to 2021](#), 22 September 2021, p260

⁷¹ FCDO, [UK provides almost £30 million to humanitarian catastrophe in northern Ethiopia](#), 16 October 2021

⁷² PQ HL 3008 [[Ethiopia: Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs](#)], 25 October 2021

4 Press and media articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

4.1 Sudan

[Sudan's people have a taste of democracy and free expression. They want more.](#)

Washington Post

Jason Rezaian

1 November 2021

[Sudan coup protesters return to barricades on seventh day of unrest](#)

The Guardian

31 October 2021

[Current unrest in Sudan sparks fears: Humanitarian needs will increase](#)

ReliefWeb

29 October 2021

[Sudan's female activists lead the resistance in wake of military coup](#)

Financial Times

Andres Schipani

29 October 2021

[Sudan on the brink amid scramble for democracy](#)

BBC News Online

Magdi Abdelhadi

20 October 2021

[Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021 \(December 2020\)](#)

ReliefWeb

22 February 2021

4.2

Ethiopia and Tigray

[Ethiopia - Northern Ethiopia Humanitarian Update](#)

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
28 October 2021

[Tigray crisis: How the West has fallen out with Ethiopia's PM](#)

BBC News Online
Farouk Chothia
25 October 2021

[The exemplary U.S. sanctions regime for Ethiopia's Tigray conflict and its limitations](#)

Brookings Institution
Vanda Felbab-Brown
1 October 2021

[Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: What's stopping aid getting in?](#)

BBC News Online
Peter Mwai
3 September 2021

[Ethiopia - Tigray Region Humanitarian Update Situation Report](#)

ReliefWeb
2 September 2021

[The Latest on the Crisis in Ethiopia's Tigray Region](#)

Human Rights Watch
Laetitia Bader and Amy Braunschweiger
30 July 2021

[Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: Fleeing for fear of new ethnic conflict](#)

BBC News Online
Andrew Harding
16 July 2021

[Donors accuse UN of mismanaging Tigray refugee response](#)

The New Humanitarian
Philip Kleinfeld
7 July 2021

[More than 350,000 suffering from famine conditions in Ethiopia's Tigray, says UN](#)

The Guardian
11 June 2021

UN releases US\$65M for humanitarian response in Ethiopia as Tigray crisis worsens

OCHA

6 May 2021

5 Press releases

5.1 Sudan

Military cannot subvert Sudan's democratic transition without consequence

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
27 October 2021

Thank you Madam President and thank you to our briefers USG Lacroix, Special Envoy and His Excellency Thabo Mbeki for your insightful updates and reflections, as well as your combined efforts over the past six months to support peace and UN peacekeepers in the region.

Madam President, firstly the United Kingdom joins fellow Council members in condemning the actions of the Sudanese Military this week to detain civilian members of government and dissolve transitional institutions. We call on the military to course correct and release those detained as well as to refrain from violence allow peaceful protest.

The UK welcomes the decision of the African Union this morning which sends a strong message that the Sudanese military cannot subvert Sudan's democratic transition without consequence.

The United Kingdom is further concerned at the impact these events may have on the situation in Abyei and the already difficult operating circumstances for UNISFA.

This Council has repeatedly welcomed the recent rapprochement between the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan. This welcome shift in bilaterals relations has led to the temporary reopening of border crossing corridors and establishment of free trade zones along the border. We hope that despite the unilateral acts by the Sudanese military in Khartoum, this cooperation will continue.

More broadly while the United Kingdom welcomes efforts to strengthen bilateral relations, it is regrettable that renewed engagement has not translated into tangible improvements in Abyei, where ordinary citizens continue to suffer. We urge both countries to work together to reach a resolution on the final status of Abyei.

Madam President, the United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gok Machar and repeat our condolences at the death of a UNISFA peacekeeper last month.

The members of this Council delivered a unified message on 15 October, reiterating their full support for UNISFA and demanding that the Government of South Sudan facilitate the unimpeded implementation of UNISFA's mandate.

The situation in Gok Machar is another example of the operational challenges UNISFA continues to face in fulfilling its mandate.

There has been limited progress made on the Council's repeated requests to facilitate the operationalisation of Antony Airstrip, the issuing of outstanding visa requests, and the appointment of a civilian deputy Head of Mission. We reiterate our call for both parties to address these longstanding limitations, particularly as we consider the reconfiguration of the peacekeeping Mission in Abyei.

In that regard Mr President, the United Kingdom takes note of the options for reconfiguration proposed in the Secretary-General's strategic review of UNISFA.

We commend the men and women of UNISFA for their ongoing efforts to address the evolving security challenges, including the facilitation of community dialogue and local peacebuilding and women's empowerment initiatives.

The United Kingdom would also like to commend the dedication of Ethiopian peacekeepers in their support to peace and security in Abyei throughout the last decade. It is our sincere hope that the interests of the people of Abyei remain at the forefront of decision-making on the future configuration of UNISFA.

We also call for regional tensions to be resolved through dialogue, and encourage regional partners as well as the UN to ensure current disputes do not damage the effectiveness of UNISFA.

Finally, the United Kingdom urges all parties to fully respect International Humanitarian Law and allow humanitarian actors to deliver aid to those in need in all parts of Abyei, without hindrance.

Thank you Madam President.

Sudan: Troika statement, October 2021

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

26 October 2021

The UK, US and Norway have issued a Troika statement on the military forces detaining Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and condemns the suspension of the institutions of state.

The Troika is deeply concerned about the situation in Sudan and condemns the suspension of the institutions of state, the declaration of state of emergency and the military forces detaining Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok as well as other members of the civilian leadership; we call on the security forces to immediately release those they have unlawfully detained.

The actions of the military represent a betrayal of the revolution, the transition, and the legitimate requests of the Sudanese people for peace, justice and economic development. The right of peaceful protest must be respected; violence and bloodshed must be avoided; we also urge communication networks to be open.

The Troika will continue to support those working for a democratic Sudan with a fully legitimate civilian government; this remains the best guarantee for the long-term stability of the country and the broader region.

We reject attempts to derail the transition toward democratic elections, call for the immediate restoration of the civilian-led government on the basis of the Constitutional Declaration and other foundational documents of the transition.

Sudan's peace process and democratic transition: Troika statement

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

3 October 2021

The United States, the United Kingdom, and Norway (the Troika) commend the Sudanese people as they celebrate the first anniversary of the signing of Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) on 3 October 2020. This historic agreement responds to the Sudanese people's calls for freedom, peace and justice, especially from those affected by conflict across Sudan as part of the democratic transition. We commend the JPA signatories for upholding their partnership but urge them to recommit to implement the agreement in full.

The Troika applaud the strides made in transitional justice as part of the JPA, including co-operation with the International Criminal Court (ICC), commitment to hand over former President Omar Al Bashir and others subject

to international arrest warrants, and progress on establishing the Special Court for Darfur. Due legal process will help to give justice to victims and start the process for reconciliation as part of the JPA and 2019 Constitutional Declaration.

We are however deeply concerned by delays implementing commitments made one year ago. This includes in establishing the Peace Commission, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism, the Transitional Legislative Assembly, and establishing the Darfur Security Keeping Forces and JPA security arrangements. Progress is needed now. We urge all JPA signatories to demonstrate leadership and work together to refocus on implementation to deliver much needed peace and security for ordinary people. Special efforts should be made to meet the ambitious goals set in the Constitutional Declaration and JPA for the involvement of women.

The Troika is also disappointed with the loss of momentum in peace talks with the SPLM-N (Abdelaziz al-Hilu). We urge both sides to return to talks in Juba and negotiate on the basis of the March 2021 Declaration of Principles. The Troika note with concern the growing unrest in Eastern Sudan and condemn actions that threaten Sudan's stability and economy. We encourage all parties to engage in dialogue to address legitimate grievances on the basis of the 2019 Constitutional Declaration and the JPA.

The Troika remain committed to supporting the Government of Sudan and the JPA parties to deliver their vision for lasting peace as part of the democratic transition agreed in 2019. Sustainable peace will require consistent and dedicated Sudanese-led efforts to implement the JPA. Our hope remains that this will be done so in a timely manner so all Sudanese can benefit from equitable development, a new constitution, equal citizenship, and the opportunity to choose a democratically elected government. The Troika looks forward to continuing our support to the parties and all Sudanese in that vision and the realisation of a lasting peace.

5.2

Ethiopia and Tigray

[UK provides almost £30 million to humanitarian catastrophe in northern Ethiopia](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
16 October 2021

The Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has announced an additional £29 million 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 £75 million – 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 World Food Programme (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.

[UN Human Rights Council 48: UK statement for the interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's oral update on human rights in Tigray](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

13 September 2021

Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom is grateful for the High Commissioner's update. We welcome the joint investigation by OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

The conflict in Ethiopia has entered its eleventh month, with both sides continuing to pursue a futile military solution. Over 400,000 people are experiencing famine conditions, yet the Government is presiding over a de facto blockade of Tigray, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front has expanded the conflict into Amhara and Afar states, causing more human suffering.

The UK is concerned by the many reports of brutal and systematic sexual violence, of massacres, of forced displacement of people along ethnic lines, and of the indiscriminate shelling of towns. There has been a growing incidence of hate speech and discrimination. Humanitarian workers have become targets, and 23 have been killed.

If the situation does not improve Ethiopia will be the scene of a human tragedy on a scale unparalleled this century. As a longstanding friend of Ethiopia, the UK calls for the fighting to stop, for unfettered humanitarian access, and for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law to be respected.

The UK welcomes the announcement that a robust report will be issued on 1 November. We call on the High Commissioner to hold an intersessional briefing for Members as soon as possible following the report's publication

followed by a thorough process to enable the full implementation of recommendations.

How does the High Commissioner intend to achieve this?

'Over 400,000 people in Tigray are experiencing famine conditions – more than in the rest of the world combined'

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

26 August 2021

Thank you Mr President. Let me also offer the UK's condolences for all those who lost their lives in today's terrorist attack in Kabul.

I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing. You describe a desperate situation, and it is right this Council considers how it can help. So I would like to make three points in response to what we have heard.

First, all parties must cease hostilities and unfettered humanitarian access must be provided to relieve the toll of this conflict on ordinary Ethiopians.

As the Secretary General told us, over 400,000 people in Tigray are experiencing famine conditions. That is more than in the rest of the world combined.

Only a fraction of the 100 trucks of aid required every day are getting into Tigray. Banking, electricity and communications services remain suspended, posing serious obstacles to humanitarian operations.

The spread of fighting into neighbouring Amhara and Afar states, displacing tens of thousands of civilians, will only extend the human suffering and prolong the conflict. We therefore call on Tigrayan forces to immediately cease fighting in Amhara and Afar.

We reiterate that Eritrean troops must withdraw completely from Ethiopia, as the Government of Ethiopia has requested. And we call upon the Ethiopian Government to fully enable humanitarian access. That includes removing bureaucratic barriers to aid delivery and allowing sufficient cash and fuel into Tigray to enable humanitarian operations.

Secondly, Mr President, I want to emphasise the need for all parties to ensure the protection of civilians and to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law. The Secretary-General's briefing gave further weight to the reports we have been receiving of atrocities from all sides. These include brutal and systematic sexual violence, massacres, and indiscriminate shelling of towns. We have also witnessed an increase in hate speech and attacks on the humanitarian community.

The United Kingdom fully supports the joint investigation by the UN Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. It is crucial to prospects for peace and reconciliation that this investigation is thorough and robust. And perpetrators of atrocities must be held to account.

Thirdly, Mr President, let me underline the urgency of pursuing political dialogue to end this crisis. The United Kingdom is a longstanding friend and partner of Ethiopia. We have been proud to work alongside Ethiopians to support their progress in reducing poverty and building sustainable economic growth. This conflict is already reversing that progress. It now threatens the long term stability and prosperity of the country and of the region.

We want to see Ethiopia return to a positive trajectory. Ten months in it is clear there is no military solution to this conflict. The only way that Ethiopia can return to peace and prosperity is through an inclusive political settlement. That requires talks between the parties – urgently, and without preconditions.

We support the efforts of the Secretary General and Under Secretary-General Griffiths and by the Africa Union to make this possible, and we therefore welcome the announcement today of the appointment of former President Obasanjo as AU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa.

Mr President, it is abundantly clear what the parties need to do now to end the dreadful toll of human suffering in Ethiopia.

The United Kingdom joins the Secretary-General and other members of this Council in calling on all parties to cease hostilities, allow unfettered humanitarian access, comply with international law, and begin a process of dialogue to resolve the conflict.

Thank you, Mr. President.

6

PQs

6.1

Sudan

Sudan: Genocide

08 Jul 2021 | HL1406

Asked by: The Earl of Sandwich

To ask Her Majesty's Government what technical support, if any, they have offered to Nabil Adeeb and the inquiry he leads in investigating the June 2019 massacres in Sudan, particularly regarding the analysis of video evidence.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is taking a leading role with Sudan to help ensure the democratic transition is a success. As part of this we have been clear that accountability for crimes committed before, and during, the revolution is essential. The Minister for Africa reinforced this message at the international conference on Sudan in Paris on 17 May, as did the Foreign Secretary at the highest levels during his visit to Khartoum on 21 January.

We continue to urge the Sudanese to deliver their commitment to an independent and transparent investigation into the attacks on peaceful protesters on 3 June 2019, and to hold those responsible to account. The Foreign Secretary demonstrated support for the work of the investigation at a round-table discussion on transitional justice during his visit, alongside the head of the investigation commission Mr Nabil Adib. We remain in contact with those in charge of the investigation to support progress on this important work.

Sudan: Armed Conflict

28 Jun 2021 | 18499

Asked by: Dawn Butler

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessments his Department has made of the developing situation in Sudan; and what support the Government is providing to support civilians caught in conflict in that country.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK welcomes the commitment of the Sudanese Government to secure a lasting end to conflict as part of the country's transition to democracy. This

includes thorough implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, signed with a number of opposition groups in October 2020. We also welcome the Sudanese Government's commitment that it will assume full responsibility for the protection of civilians, and their recent announcement of the formation of a joint security force to help provide such protection. We are however concerned by continued incidents of intercommunal violence in Sudan, including in Darfur. We continue to urge all parties to implement the Juba Peace Agreement in full and urge non-signatory groups to engage in dialogue. On 8 June, representatives of the UK, Norway and the US (the Troika) signed the Juba Peace Agreement as Witnesses, as a sign of support to the peace process.

The UK is taking a leading role in working with Sudan to help ensure the democratic transition and peace process is a success. On 21 January, the Foreign Secretary visited Sudan and reaffirmed this commitment. Most recently, on 21 June I spoke with Sudanese Foreign Minister Dr al-Sadiq al-Mahdi to discuss UK work with the Sudanese Government on their transitional priorities. Our support includes £80m to assist the Sudanese Government's economic reforms, which are vital to stability. It also includes a £148m bridging loan to clear arrears at the African Development Bank, to help Sudan achieve comprehensive debt relief. We have also worked to build international support for Sudan through the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) which is mandated to assist the Sudanese Government with peace agreement implementation and protection of civilians.

Sudan: Violence

03 Jun 2021 | 7301

Asked by: Imran Ahmad Khan

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what discussions he has had with his Sudanese counterpart on recent reports of violence in the Red Sea state.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is deeply concerned by reports of intercommunal violence in the Red Sea state between the Beni Amer and Nuba. It is an important reminder of the challenges Sudan faces as it transitions to democracy and seeks to end decades of conflict. Following the removal of President Bashir in 2019 the UK is supporting Sudan through this transition process, including efforts to deliver much needed economic stability and aid to those most in need.

We welcome the efforts made by the Sudanese Government to ensure that Sudan is an inclusive peaceful country, embracing the diversity of its people, and urge the Government to: deliver their commitment to assume full

responsibility for the Protection of Civilians; implement swiftly their National Plan for Civilian Protection; and implement the Juba Peace Agreement, particularly provisions relating to security arrangements.

Tigray: Sudan

28 Apr 2021 | HL14902

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of UK aid to the Tigray region is being distributed in Sudan.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The conflict in Tigray has had significant consequences and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, as well as impacting those that were already in need of humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia and Sudan. Over 62,000 people have crossed from Ethiopia to Sudan as a result of the conflict (an additional 7,179 people have arrived in Blue Nile State as the result of separate conflict in the Benishangul Gumuz region of Ethiopia).

During his visit to Khartoum in January, the Foreign Secretary commended Sudan's leaders for their efforts to press for a peaceful resolution to the situation and support to refugees entering Sudan from Ethiopia. The UK has provided £6.1 million in funding to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Danish Refugee Council to address urgent needs arising from the Tigray crisis in Sudan. This additional funding is separate to the £15.4 million support specifically provided to help those affected by the conflict who are in Ethiopia.

6.2

Ethiopia and Tigray

Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

29 Oct 2021 | HL3224

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to secure the passage of humanitarian aid and food into Tigray; and what estimate they have made of the number of people now facing famine.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 16 October, the Minister for Africa announced an additional £29 million of humanitarian aid to people affected by the catastrophic conflict in northern

Ethiopia. She has called 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. Part of this additional funding aims to improve the logistical capability of the UN to deliver aid into Tigray. We continue to push both sides of the conflict to prioritise the wellbeing of people in need in northern Ethiopia and allow the flow of badly needed humanitarian assistance.

This conflict has caused a humanitarian catastrophe, with the UN estimating that 5.5 million people face acute food insecurity. Over 400,000 people in Tigray are experiencing famine-like conditions. The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer had visited Ethiopia in September where he concluded that the humanitarian situation has significantly deteriorated and the risk of famine is high. In Amhara he saw the World Food Programme (WFP) in action and reiterated the need for WFP and other partners to have access to all areas so they can provide vital humanitarian aid.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

29 Oct 2021 | WHL3223

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool | Party: Crossbench

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports of the bombing of civilian areas of the Tigrayan city of Mekelle; and what steps they are taking to hold the perpetrators of war crimes to account.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

On 20 October, the Minister for Africa publicly stated that we are deeply concerned by reports of escalating fighting and airstrikes in northern Ethiopia. Civilians must be protected and the violence must stop. The UK is supporting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigation into atrocities in Tigray, with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, is independent, transparent and impartial and holds the parties to this conflict directly responsible for their actions. It will issue its report on 1 November. The Foreign Secretary, the Minister for Africa and our Ambassador in Addis Ababa continue to raise human rights issues in their discussions with the Ethiopian Government and more broadly we have reminded all warring parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law.

Tigray: Armed Conflict

27 Oct 2021 | 58899

Asked by: Neil Coyle

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether she can request that the United Nations Secretary General send his Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict to the Tigray region in Ethiopia, as provided for by Security Council resolution 1888.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I am appalled by reports of sexual violence in Tigray and directly expressed my concerns in the strongest terms to the Ethiopian Ambassador during my first week as Minister for Africa. We support calls for the UN Secretary General to consider sending his Teams of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict to the Tigray region in Ethiopia. The UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, visited Ethiopia earlier in October and held discussions with British Embassy staff on our shared concerns.

In June we deployed an expert from our Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative UK Team of Experts to conduct an initial scoping mission to identify tangible ways to enhance the response to gender-based violence in Tigray. The UK is working with partners in Ethiopia to confirm next steps and implement recommendations from this scoping mission. We continue to explore options for addressing the immediate needs of survivors, preventing further sexual violence and delivering justice and accountability.

Ethiopia: Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs

25 Oct 2021 | HL3008

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what were the results of the visit to Ethiopia by the Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs in September.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer, visited Amhara and Mekelle in Ethiopia last month (September). The Minister for Africa Vicky Ford spoke to him immediately on his return. He concluded that the humanitarian situation has significantly deteriorated and the risk of famine is high. There are 6 million people, with 3 million of those being children, who are in dire need of food, health, water and sanitation assistance.

In Amhara the Special Envoy saw the World Food Programme (WFP) in action. He and Minister Ford have reiterated the need for WFP and other partners to have access to all areas so they can provide vital humanitarian aid. The UK Government is committed to continue to address the humanitarian crises in the north including Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regions. On 16 October - World Food Day - Minister Ford announced an additional £29m of humanitarian aid to people affected by the catastrophic conflict in northern Ethiopia. This increases the UK's commitment to the crisis to more than £75m - making the UK the second largest donor.

The Special Envoy has called for all sides to stop fighting and find a political solution to avoid civilian suffering. He raised this with the Ethiopian authorities when he met them during his visit, including the Ethiopian Minister of Finance.

The humanitarian situation in Tigray is a man-made crisis and it is completely unacceptable. Minister Ford urges all parties to urgently agree a ceasefire and to allow humanitarian aid to reach starving people.

Ethiopia: Human Rights

18 Oct 2021 | 53252

Asked by: Neil Coyle

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, whether the Government plans to make an assessment of the potential merits of sanctioning (a) the Chief of Staff of the Eritrean Defence Forces, Filipos Woldeyohannes and (b) individuals responsible for human rights violations in Ethiopia.

Answering member: Vicky Ford | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are deeply concerned by Eritrean involvement in the conflict in Tigray. My predecessor has made clear to the Eritrean Ambassador the UK's concern about reports of human rights violations by all parties to the conflict and the need for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from Tigray. The former Foreign Secretary raised the need for a political dialogue to bring a lasting peace to Tigray directly with Prime Minister Abiy on 5 August. I also raised these issues in my first meeting with the Ethiopian Ambassador on 22 September. The UK continues to consider the full range of policy tools at our disposal to protect human rights and deter violations of international humanitarian law. It is longstanding practice not to speculate on future sanctions designations as to do so could reduce the impact of the designations.

Tigray: Crimes against Humanity

21 Sep 2021 | HL2467

Asked by: Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports in the Daily Telegraph on 5 September that ethnic cleansing and atrocity crimes against Tigrayans have been committed in the Ethiopian city of Humera, (1) what assessment they have made of the reports, (2) whether they intend to verify the reports, and (3) whether they will take any action to bring those responsible to justice should those reports be verified.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are concerned by reports of ethnic cleansing and atrocity crimes against Tigrayans committed in Humera within Tigray as the Minister for Africa made clear in the Westminster Hall debate on 8 September. The UK is supporting the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that their joint investigation into atrocities in Tigray with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is independent, transparent and impartial and holds the parties to this conflict directly responsible for their actions.

Ethiopia: Human Rights

13 Sep 2021 | 41666

Asked by: Hilary Benn

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation facing the Oromo people in Ethiopia.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We are concerned by incidences of ethnic violence in Ethiopia including in the Oromia region, and especially on the Oromo border with the Amhara region. The Government of Ethiopia, regional governments and community leaders on all sides must be clear that they do not support ethnic-based violence and discrimination, and on the importance of respecting human rights and safeguarding human life. The Foreign Secretary and I have both raised the importance of respect for human rights - I did so most recently with the Minister of Peace in July. The elections of 21 June also took place in challenging and problematic conditions with a restricted political environment, including the detention of opposition members, harassment of media representatives and parties facing difficulties in freely campaigning. We call on the government and all stakeholders in Ethiopian society to ensure that a meaningful, broad-based national dialogue process takes place and to commit to peaceful solutions. This is needed to enable Ethiopia's democratic development and to reduce conflict across the country.

Tigray: Famine

10 Sep 2021 | 43626

Asked by: Wera Hobhouse

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help alleviate famine in the Tigray.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has to date provided £47.7 million in humanitarian support to respond to the conflict in Tigray for healthcare, sanitation and nutrition.

The humanitarian situation in north east Ethiopia continues to deteriorate. Access to Tigray for aid agencies is negligible owing to bureaucratic impediments to delivery imposed by the government and more than 400,000 people are assessed to be in famine-like conditions. Tigray is the most serious food crisis since famine was declared in Somalia in 2011. Conflict in neighbouring Amhara and Afar regions is now impacting an additional 1.7 million people. The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Nick Dyer visited Tigray in May and concluded that a region-wide famine in Tigray is likely if conflict intensifies and impediments to the delivery of humanitarian aid continue. Regrettably the operating context has become more fraught and the risks to civilians have increased. The UK reiterates its call for the protection of civilians and unfettered humanitarian access.

The Foreign Secretary raised concerns on the humanitarian situation and the need for a political dialogue to bring a lasting peace to Tigray directly with Prime Minister Abiy on 5 August. I also raised these issues with the Ethiopian Minister of Peace, Muferihat Kamil Ahmed, on 15 July. The UK Ambassador to Ethiopia has also raised our concerns on multiple occasions to the Government. We have consistently pressed these points in bilateral meetings, in multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council, the Human Rights Council and G7 and worked concertedly with international partners to raise our concerns. At the UN Security Council, I set out on 2 July our concerns at the continued lack of progress in delivering humanitarian access to Tigray.

Tigray: Humanitarian Aid

13 Jul 2021 | 27019

Asked by: Barry Sheerman

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of the findings in the report on the ongoing conflict in Tigray by the acting

humanitarian aid chief of the UN, entitled Tigray region humanitarian update, published on 24 June 2021.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government is deeply concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and shares the concerns outlined in the report on 24 June by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The UK has led calls for a humanitarian ceasefire, joined by all G7 nations and the EU, along with a growing number of other nations. The G7 Summit Communiqué of 13 June also called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and unimpeded humanitarian access. The Government of Ethiopia has since announced a unilateral humanitarian ceasefire in Tigray. We welcome this but continue to call for all parties to cease fighting, grant urgently needed unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray, respect international humanitarian law and prevent their forces from hindering the critical work of the UN and NGOs.

On 14 June I announced that the UK will allocate a further £16.7 million to the crisis in Tigray. This will support civil-military coordination to help aid get to those in need and address famine risk through the provision of healthcare, sanitation, and nutritional support. This allocation is on top of the existing £27 million in 2020-21 already directed to the response, and an additional £4 million allocated to support nutrition and vaccinations in Tigray. This brings UK total funding to support response to the crisis to £47.7 million. As mentioned in my statement of 23 June, we urge all parties to the conflict to protect civilians and respect international humanitarian law.

Ethiopia: Humanitarian Situation

06 Jul 2021 | 23380

Asked by: Feryal Clark

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the (a) African Union and (b) United Nations on humanitarian access, food insecurity and allegations of serious human rights abuses and atrocities in Ethiopia.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I have discussed the situation in Tigray with the African Union's Peace and Security Commissioner Bankole on several occasions. I also expressed my concerns about Tigray to the speaker of the Ethiopian House of Peoples Representatives when we met in Zambia last week. We are supporting the African Union Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights Inquiry into Tigray and are calling on the Government of Ethiopia to allow the Inquiry's access to the Tigray region.

The UK has made clear at the UN Security Council our concerns over the continued lack of progress with humanitarian access, and ongoing human rights abuses and violations. We are seeking a full discussion of Tigray at the Security Council. We are supporting a joint investigation of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) into human rights violations and abuses in Tigray to ensure the investigation is independent, transparent and impartial. The UK is also working with partners to raise the situation in Tigray at the Human Rights Council. The Government of Ethiopia has announced a unilateral humanitarian ceasefire in Tigray. We welcome this and continue to call for all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prevent their forces from doing anything to hinder the critical work of the UN and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

Tigray: Armed Conflict

25 Jun 2021 | 16957

Asked by: Alyn Smith

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of the relevance of (a) the Responsibility to Protect doctrine and (b) the UK Government's Protection of Civilians policy to the ongoing situation in Tigray.

Answering member: James Duddridge | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government has been at the forefront of the international response throughout the conflict in Tigray, engaging directly with the Government of Ethiopia, and that of Eritrea, to press for protection of civilians, unfettered humanitarian access and an end to the conflict, in line with our approach to protection of civilians and commitment to Responsibility to Protect. We have continued to engage core international partners and raise concerns in international fora, most recently through the G7 leaders' communique of 13 June. We have also raised the issue in UN Security Council open discussions on conflict and famine, the annual Open Debate on Protection of Civilians, in five 'AOB' items on the UNSC agenda, and the Interactive Dialogue of the UNSC of 16 June. The UK's longstanding position is that any determination of genocide is an issue for competent courts, rather than governments. Our focus is always on securing an end to violence and protecting civilians.

7 Debates

Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative

17 June 2021 | Backbench debates | House of Commons | 697 cc533-559

Motion that this House has considered the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative and the G7. Agreed to on question.

7.1 Sudan

Arrest of Sudanese Prime Minister

25 Oct 2021 | Urgent questions | House of Commons | 702 cc49-56

Urgent question to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs if she will make a statement on the arrest of the Sudanese Prime Minister.

7.2 Ethiopia and Tigray

Tigray

08 Sep 2021 | Debates | House of Commons | 700 cc85-110WH

Motion that this House has considered the humanitarian situation in Tigray. Agreed to on question.

Ethiopia

14 Jun 2021 | Urgent questions | House of Commons | 697 cc33-45

Urgent question on the situation in Ethiopia.

Conflict in Tigray Region of Ethiopia

25 March 2021 | Adjournment debates | House of Commons | 691 cc1173-1180

Agreed to on question.

8 Early Day Motions

8.1 Ethiopia and Tigray

Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia

EDM 112 (session 2021-22)

26 May 2021

Helen Hayes

That this House notes the high level of sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, resulting in an estimated 10,000 women being raped in the four months to March; further notes the leadership role the UK government has played in global efforts to eliminate sexual violence in conflict; notes that the UN Day for the Elimination of sexual violence in conflict is on 19 June; and calls on the UK government to table a resolution at the UN Security Council setting up a tribunal to investigate sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray as a war crime, a crime against humanity or a constitutive act of genocide.

Conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia

EDM 1723 (session 2019-21)

12 April 2021

Helen Hayes

That this House condemns the massacre at Axum in Ethiopia, documented by both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity; further condemns the reported wider pattern of violence throughout the Tigray region, including the use of rape and sexual violence, and the alleged involvement of Eritrean forces; notes that there is a risk of a regional conflict in the Horn of Africa, with an escalation of tensions with Sudan and Egypt; requests that the UK Government places that issue formally on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council, as well as on that of the African Union; supports calls for a full, prompt, impartial and effective investigation into the massacre and unfettered humanitarian access to Tigray, as well as immediate access for human rights and media organisations; considers that the starvation and conflict-induced food insecurity in that region is man-made, is a violation of international humanitarian law, and is a test case for the UK Special Envoy with that brief; and expresses concern for the fate of Eritrean refugees in that country alleged to be at risk of refoulement.

Violence in Tigray Province, Ethiopia

EDM 1603 (session 2019-21)

09 March 2021

Carol Monaghan

That this House strongly condemns the violence unfolding in Ethiopia's Tigray Region; notes that fighting between Ethiopian Forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) has claimed many civilian lives; acknowledges reports that Eritrean fighters have participated in the conflict on Ethiopian terrain; notes the findings of the United Nations Security Council Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide that extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, mass executions and property looting are prevalent in Tigray; recognises United Nations allegations that possible crimes against humanity have been committed in Tigray; is alarmed by reports that humanitarian organisations' access to the Region is being restricted; is concerned that an estimated 60,000 refugees have fled Tigray into neighbouring Sudan to escape the violence since November 2020; is appalled by recent reports of massacres carried out by Eritrean personnel against civilians, including at Maryam Dengelat church and the holy city of Aksum; calls for an end to violence committed by all parties in the conflict; fully supports the United Nations in its mission to facilitate peace, transparency, and emergency relief; and calls on the UK Government to exercise all its diplomatic capabilities to bring an end to this conflict.

Conflict in Ethiopia

EDM 1181 (session 2019-21)

24 November 2020

Layla Moran

That this House is deeply concerned about the escalation of conflict in Ethiopia; condemns the deliberate killing of innocent civilians; sends its sincerest condolences to all those who have tragically lost loved ones as a result; notes the estimated 4,000 refugees per day fleeing Ethiopia; further notes the UNHRC's warning of a full-scale humanitarian crisis if the conflict continues without imminent de-escalation; calls on the Government to use all diplomatic means it can to assist de-escalating the violence and resolving the underlying conflict; and therefore also urges the Government to ensure the Official Development Assistance budget is maintained to ensure Ethiopian civilians receive adequate support and aid.

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Committee publications

[The humanitarian situation in Tigray: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2019–21](#), First Special Report of Session 2021–22, International Development Committee, HC 554, 16 July 2021

[The humanitarian situation in Tigray Tenth Report of Session 2019–21](#), International Development Committee, HC 1289, 30 April 2021

[Letter from the Chairs of both the International Development & Foreign Affairs Committees to the Foreign and Development Secretary regarding the situation in Tigray](#), 23 March 2021

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