

Unsafe and Overcrowded: The Shelter Crisis Facing Displaced Families in Tigray





People In Need

605k



People

Targeted 573k



People Reached &
To be Reached

33k (5.8%)



Response Gap

540k (94.2%)



Financial

Requirement \$26.3M



Funding Secured

1.6M



Funding Gap

24.7M



IDPs (Indiv.) 760k



of Schools 92

Situation Overview

The humanitarian situation in Tigray remains critical, with 760,406 IDPs still living in precarious conditions across various settlement options. While the overall number of displaced persons has not significantly increased, living conditions continue to deteriorate due to dwindling resources and overcrowding. Many IDPs who previously lived in rental homes within host communities are now being forced into already overcrowded collective centers as they can no longer afford rent.

According to DTM SA R37, the Northwestern Zone alone hosts 309,906 IDPs (40% of the total displacement in Tigray), while the Central Zone hosts 196,229 IDPs (25.7%). These two zones together account for nearly 506,000 displaced individuals, yet shelter capacity remains critically low.

The strain on collective centers, particularly schools, remains a critical concern. EHF multisectoral funding, complemented by IOM shelter item donations, has enabled the relocation of IDPs from 21 schools. However, 92 schools across the region continue to house displaced families, with 67% located in the Northwest and Central Zones.

In addition to poor living conditions, the continued use of schools as shelters is severely disrupting education, leaving thousands of children unable to attend classes and further exacerbating the crisis. This situation is also straining relationships between the host community and IDPs, as local residents face disruptions to essential services, particularly education.





Insights from IDP Sites

Overcrowding, Shelter Gaps, and Urgent Needs

Tsehay IDP Collective Center – Shire

Displaced families in sites such as May Hanse, Hitsats, Adi Mahameday, Adi Nebried, Tahtay Adiyabo, and all collective centers in Shire are living in unsafe, unplanned, and deteriorating conditions. Overcrowding has reached alarming levels, and shelters are collapsing under the pressure of continuous new arrivals.

In Endabaguna Collective Center, more than five families are packed into a single room or makeshift shelters that are at high risk of collapse with no privacy and little protection from the elements. Meanwhile, in May Hanse, newly arrived IDPs are forced to erect ad hoc shelters and improvise sleeping arrangements due to a severe lack of household essentials. Basic items such as mattresses, blankets, and cooking supplies remain scarce.

In Adi Mahameday and Tahtay Adiyabo, the constant influx of new arrivals has overwhelmed the available space, pushing displaced families into even more precarious living conditions. The already limited resources are being stretched beyond capacity, worsening the sanitation situation and exposing IDPs to greater health and protection risks.

Adi Nebried Collective Center

Displacement is ongoing, with over 240 households forced to flee to the North-western Zone in January and February 2025 alone (DTM ETT 261). Fear of conflict and insecurity continues to drive repeated displacement, while economic hardship is forcing IDPs out of host communities and into already overcrowded shelters.

Many of these newly displaced families arrive without shelter, leaving them with no choice but to construct unsafe structures from salvaged materials. These makeshift shelters offer little protection from the elements, increasing the risk of exposure to harsh weather conditions and further displacement.

Urgent Call for Action

The worsening inadequacy of the shelters in Tigray requires immediate and sustained humanitarian intervention. Thousands of displaced families remain trapped in overcrowded, unsafe, and deteriorating living conditions, with little access to essential shelter, household items, and protection services.

To prevent further deterioration of the living conditions and mitigate the impact of the crisis, urgent support is needed to:

- **Expand shelter assistance** to provide **safe, climate-resilient housing** for displaced families.
- **Deliver essential household items**, such as bedding, blankets, and cooking supplies, to address urgent basic needs.
- **Accelerate school decongestion efforts** to enable displaced children to return to school and ease the strain on education infrastructure.
- **Enhance protection measures** for vulnerable groups, especially women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Sustainable Housing Solutions for Local Integration

With 5.2% of IDPs expressing a preference for local integration, now is the time to invest in durable, dignified housing that supports long-term stability and self-reliance.



