



MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA May 1998

Consolidated UN report prepared by the Information Section of the UNDP Emergencies Unit for Ethiopia from information and reports provided by specialised UN agencies, media sources, the Government and NGOs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ Despite intensive efforts to broker a peace deal, border dispute brings Ethiopia and Eritrea to the brink of all-out war;
- ❑ Government appeals for international assistance to meet the needs of 126,000 people displaced by fighting along the border with Eritrea;
- ❑ Effective closure of Assab port creates major import bottleneck as all shipments divert to Djibouti;
- ❑ International conference on human rights commissions and ombudsmen opens in Addis Ababa;
- ❑ Despite meteorological reports of favourable rains, prospects for a normal *belg* harvest appear poor;
- ❑ Government says unseasonal rains in late 1997 generally had a favourable impact on crop production and helped improve pasture conditions. 1998 relief needs are subsequently reduced by 4.5 per cent.

SPECIAL ITEM - Ethiopia clashes with Eritrea over disputed border

An incipient border dispute flared up into a major armed clash between Ethiopia and Eritrea during the early part of May. The initial focus of friction between the two countries was an area between the Tekezze and Mereb/Gash rivers known as the "Yirga Triangle". According to various reports, following a series of local disagreements, the Eritrean army moved to forcefully occupy an area around the border village of Badme on May 12. Local Ethiopian militia and police units attempted to prevent the Eritrean advance and in the ensuing clash it was claimed five Ethiopians were killed, eight "hostages" taken and a hospital, school and a public building destroyed (later upped to 16 killed, 24 prisoners taken and seven schools destroyed).

The following day, the Ethiopian Council of Ministers met to consider the situation on the border and later issued a statement demanding that the Eritrean government withdraw its army without preconditions. Claims emerged that Eritrean forces had penetrated "several dozen kilometers" inside Ethiopian territory, occupying the border town of Badme and parts of Sheraro district. The same day Ethiopian Airlines suspended all flights to Asmara and Assab, and two ships flying the Ethiopian flag were diverted from Assab to Djibouti.

On May 14, the Eritrean Cabinet of Ministers issued a statement accusing Ethiopia of "recurrent border incursions" and calling for a clear delineation of the disputed areas, demilitarisation of the border zone and negotiations to be guaranteed and conducted by a third party. The Eritrean ambassador to Ethiopia called the Badme clash a "sad incident" and told reporters in Addis Ababa that there were altogether some five or six disputed areas along the common border requiring arbitration.

Over the next week, amidst a "war of words" from both sides, a number of efforts were made by third parties to mediate in the dispute. President Hassan Gouled Aptidon of Djibouti was the first to meet with both Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea, soon followed by US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice and Paul Kigame of Rwanda. In the days that followed, despite intensive efforts to find an acceptable formula to resolve the dispute, tensions along the border steadily increased as both sides mobilised their armed forces and began a major

military build-up in the Yirga Triangle as well as at several other locations along the border. On May 22, all direct telephone links to Asmara from Ethiopia were cut and the following day, National Day in Eritrea, the border crossing to the port of Assab was closed to all traffic, joining the northern crossings at Zelambessa and Mereb which were closed a few days earlier.

Even while rumours were emerging that a joint US-Rwandan initiative to broker a peace was making some headway, on May 31 another major clash took place in a disputed area around the village of Alitena, a few kilometers east of the border town of Zelambessa. The clash took place as Eritrean army units advanced south towards what Asmara claims to be the colonial border. On June 3, details of the joint American-Rwandese "facilitation effort" were made public for the first time. In a statement, the spokesman for the US State Department said that there were many areas of commonality between the two sides and that in the interest of peace and regional stability an outline four-point plan had been presented to each party on May 30-31. The recommendations of the plan were summarised as follows:

1. Both parties should commit themselves to the following principles: resolving this and any other dispute by peaceful means; renouncing force as a means of imposing solutions; agreeing to undertake measures to reduce current tensions; and seeking the final disposition of their common border, on the basis of established colonial treaties and international law applicable to such treaties.
2. To reduce current tensions, and without prejudice to the territorial claims of either party a small observer mission should be deployed to Badme; Eritrean forces should re-deploy from Badme to positions held before May 6, 1998; the previous civilian administration should return; and there should be an investigation into the events of May 6, 1998.
3. To achieve lasting resolution of the underlying border dispute, both parties should agree to the swift and binding delimitation and demarcation of the Eritrea-Ethiopia border. Border delimitation should be determined on the basis of established colonial treaties and international law applicable to such treaties, and the delimitation and demarcation process should be completed by a qualified technical team as soon as possible. The demarcated border should be accepted and adhered to by both parties, and, upon completion of demarcation, the legitimate authorities assume jurisdiction over their respective sovereign territories.
4. Both parties should demilitarise the entire common border as soon as possible.

On June 4, it appeared for a while that a breakthrough was imminent. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi gave a press conference where he confirmed his government's acceptance of the peace plan although he also warned that while supporting the US-Rwandan facilitation effort, the Ethiopian armed forces had been instructed to take "all necessary steps" to counter any further Eritrean aggression.

The following day, however, all hopes for a last minute settlement were dashed when both Asmara and Mekele, capital of the Tigray administrative region, came under aerial attack, signalling a new and more serious escalation of the crisis. While damage in Asmara was light with few reported injuries, an evening attack on Mekele by an Eritrean plane led to the deaths of more than 40 civilians, including a number of children.

After representations by the Italian, British, Dutch and US embassies in Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian government agreed to an informal 13-hour cessation of aerial attacks on Asmara from 5 p.m. Saturday to 6 a.m. on Sunday June 7 in order that the evacuation of foreigners wishing to leave could be completed. A German military transport arrived shortly after at Asmara to evacuate 210 Europeans, and was soon followed by British, American, Italian, French and UN chartered aircraft. By morning the following day, around 1,500 people had been successfully evacuated by air. A Dutch frigate, on stand-by in the Red Sea, later docked at Massawa to evacuate a further 133 foreigners, including nationals from Yemen, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Sri Lanka, Britain and the United States.

Fearing the possibility of large scale movements of people fleeing the fighting, the UN, Red Cross and NGOs have been monitoring the situation on the border since the outbreak of hostilities early in May. Initially, the numbers affected by the fighting appeared limited and well within the capacity of the government and local authorities to manage. However, following a further flare-up of fighting around Zelambessa on June 9 and a further heightening of tension throughout the border area, reports emerged

indicating a sharp increase in the number of people fleeing the border area as well as from towns thought to be vulnerable to attack from the air.

According to local relief agencies operating in the area, many of those displaced from the border area are being assisted by local communities in a number of towns and villages including, Adigrat, Shire, Adi Ilageray and Adi Aha. In addition to people directly displaced by the fighting, around 3,000 Ethiopians previously living and working in Eritrea have left the country, the majority crossing back into Ethiopia across the Mereb river while several hundred port workers were reportedly expelled from Assab during the last days of May. On June 10, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission issued an appeal for the international community to provide assistance to the displaced. According to the appeal, in addition to the people expelled from Eritrea, over 126,000 people have been displaced by fighting and are in need of assistance. The support required includes the provision of emergency relief items for immediate use, and eventually rehabilitation assistance since many of those affected by the war have limited means of restoring their livelihoods. According to the appeal, the most urgently needed supplies include cereals, pulses, supplementary foods, clothing, blankets, tents, plastic sheeting, household utensils, water tankers and bladders, jerrycans, medicines and medical equipment.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Norwegian companies to determine hydroelectric potential: On May 4 the Ministry of Water Resources and two Norwegian companies signed an agreement to undertake feasibility studies for six months on three rivers - Genale, Baro and Gebba - with potential for hydroelectric power generation. The ministry has already undertaken similar studies on the Tekeze, Gojeb and Tis Abay rivers. These three alone have the potential to generate 523 megawatts of hydroelectric power.

Cellular telephones coming soon: The Ethiopian Communication Corporation announced that it would begin rendering cellular mobile telephone services in and around Addis Ababa before the end of the year. Registration of interested subscribers started on June 1. The corporation said it is making every endeavour to introduce state of the art communication technology for the service and has recently signed a contract for the purchase of GSM digital cellular mobile telephone with the Swedish company, Ericsson.

President Negasso urges investors to spur economic development: At the opening of a three-day investment promotion symposium organized by Oromia State Council, President Negasso stressed the need to promote the involvement of investors in economic development, "...as development is the top priority of the present government...". According to the Oromia State President, Kuma Demeksa, the Oromia State Council has been taking a series of measures to overcome some of the legal impediments in the acquisition of land, curtailing bureaucratic procedures as well as expanding basic infrastructures to boost investment.

US self-help fund supports local projects: The United States embassy in Addis Ababa has awarded over US \$125,000 to nine community projects and two other organizations in the country from the ambassador's Self-Help and Human Rights funds. The projects include the Akesta Intermediate Secondary school in South Welo, the Kola Diba and Tilahun Gizaw senior secondary schools in North Gondar and Tigray, respectively, in addition to women's groups in the Somali State and Bahir Dar, and the Gondar Region Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Association. The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) were given grants from the Human Rights fund. CETU will use the money to conduct various democracy, civil education and human rights seminars and FAWE for a Gender and Development Girls mentoring workshop to be held in the capital.

Conference on human rights and ombudsman: On May 18 a five-day international conference on the future human rights commission and office of the ombudsman in Ethiopia was opened at the UN Conference Centre in Addis Ababa. The conference was attended by human rights experts and academics from around the world as well as by Ethiopian government officials, human rights activists, and representatives of the civil society. Drawing on experience gained in other countries, some of the principles agreed: the two institutions should be independent from the government; have budgetary autonomy; appointees to the institutions should be representatives of the various sectors; legal professionals must have a record of specialist training; the activities performed must be clearly stated by law. But the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) said in a statement that if the constitution, with all its human rights provision, fails to ensure respect for human rights, it is difficult to believe that the

establishment of a human rights commission and an ombudsman will be more effective. Meanwhile, in an open letter, the co-ordinator of Amnesty International, Hanni Bienert, complained that no international human rights organizations were invited to the conference although the meeting was financed mainly through Western contributions.

84th Council of Ministers: In its 84th ordinary session, which opened May 8, the Ethiopian Council of Ministers discussed and made amendments to the proposed new investment code. The draft bill and the amended regulations will open sectors such as telecommunications, hydroelectric power generation as well as defense industries to both local and foreign investors. The draft bill would also allow native Ethiopians naturalized in a foreign country to be treated equally as local investors. The amended investment code will be directed to the House of Peoples' Representatives for final approval.

Irrigable rivers in Amhara not yet fully tapped: The Amhara State Sustainable Agricultural Development and Environmental Rehabilitation Commission said irrigable rivers in the state have not yet been fully tapped. The commission said the Blue Nile, the Tekeze and the Awash Rivers along with their tributaries can develop half a million hectares of land. However, it said only 74,000 hectares of land has so far been used for irrigation farming. Preliminary surveys have been conducted on 179 sites that could be developed through irrigation, 14 irrigation schemes that have the capacity to develop 3,456 hectares of land. The construction of six dams and six other irrigation schemes is under way in the state.

World Bank approves credit for Ethiopia: The World Bank has approved a US \$100 million credit for Ethiopian's education sector development programme. According to a news release issued by the Bank, the credit will support the first five years of the government's 20-year plan to overhaul the country's education system. The programme covers education from kindergarten to higher education and includes non-formal and special needs education. The aim is to raise the share of primary school-age children from 30 per cent to 50 per cent during the five-year programme, increasing public expenditure on education from 3.8 per cent of GDP to 4.6 per cent and facilitating private sector and community financing of education.

AGRICULTURE, PESTS AND WEATHER

Belg Prospects

Though earlier reports from the National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA) suggested that the *belg* rains have been largely normal to above normal, this has not always been reflected on the ground. In many food deficit areas of northern Ethiopia, farmers are reporting very poor rains with plantings less than half of normal observed in parts of North Welo. According to FAO, in South Welo, though the situation appeared initially favourable, a long dry period in March and very little recent rainfall has greatly reduced prospects for a favourable harvest. The situation is now having a "knock-on" effect on main season plantings with farmers considering the use of short-cycle, low yielding varieties of maize and sorghum.

A recent UNDP-EUE field visit to the South Welo weredas of Kutaber, Desezurya, Legambo and Tenta, where *belg* crops can account for up to 70-90 per cent of total production, found that unfavourable rains and widespread pest (aphid) and fungal (rust) infestations were the main factors leading local officials to predict a very much reduced harvest. Kutaber, for instance, is expecting the second worst *belg* season of the last five years. Likewise, in the higher altitudes of Desezurya some farmers are facing an almost complete failure of the *belg* crop. While a similarly depressing situation was found in Tenta, in Legambo farmers were anticipating a harvest somewhat better than last year but still below normal - a reflection of the erratic nature of the rains. The mission also found that despite rising relief needs in this part of Welo, a lack of resources meant only one food distribution had taken place in recent months and then only to a limited number of beneficiaries. In desperation, many families are consuming excessive quantities of the wild Grass Pea (*Lathyrus sativus*) which has been shown to cause serious neurological disorders with irreversible crippling effects (*Lathyrism*).

In a parallel mission to the West and East Haraghe zones of Oromiya region, UNDP-EUE field staff found a similar pattern of disappointing *belg* rains. Starting a little late during the first dekad of March, the rains stopped after a few days to resume only around mid-April. Most farmers therefore refrained from seeding any *belg* crops. The favourable rains of April/May, however, have been used for intensive land preparation and the seeding of *meher* (main season) crops. The relatively early sowing of these crops,

however, means that the young plants will be highly vulnerable to any early secession of the *kremt* (main) rains, a frequent occurrence in this part of Ethiopia.

Weather

An eastward shift in weather patterns during the first week of May led to widespread heavy rains over the lowlands of the Somali Regional State. Isolated heavy showers were observed over much of central Ethiopia while the northern, southern and western periphery had sunny weather. From mid-month, heavy cloud persisted over most of the country with occasional embedded rain storms observed in Amhara, central Ethiopia, western Oromiya, the Southern Peoples' region, Gambella and Benishangul, while scattered light showers extended into northern parts of Tigray. The generally cloudy weather continued through to the end of the month, bringing occasional heavy rain storms. The east and south-east, including Afar and the Somali Regional States, however, remained largely dry and sunny.

Crop pests

Though monitoring continues, FAO report no current locust activity in eastern Ethiopia. Currently, monitoring is focussing on summer breeding areas in low-lying areas adjacent to the Dire Dawa to Djibouti railway line.

Despite apparently favourable climatic conditions, no upsurge in armyworm activity has been reported from southern Ethiopia or anywhere else in the country.

Grain markets

Due to the suspension of the Grain Market Research Project, there will be no market reports until further notice. The GMRP was a project within the Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation (MeDAC) implemented with the management support of the University of Minnesota and financed by the US Government. A number of donors with an interest in supporting the food security policies of the Ethiopian government have expressed concern at the unexpected closure of the project which is viewed by many as being a valuable, indeed, the only source of objective information on the status and dynamics of the grain market in Ethiopia.

The regular market Information System News Flashes and Monthly Bulletins reporting on market prices and grain flows have been used by a number of donors to help determine the timing and nature of their food aid assistance, especially with regard to the local purchase of grains. The project also initiated a number of independent studies into a range of issues affecting food security in the country, reports that were seen as important contributions to the understanding of the role of food aid in Ethiopia. The studies have been an indication of the Government's commitment to addressing difficult and sensitive questions regarding the impact of food aid and the development of food markets. In response to representations made by a number of donors, it is understood that the core services of the project are likely to resume in the near future, a development which will be welcomed.

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Logistics and Port Operations

The Ethiopian boycott of Eritrean ports due to the border dispute has led to a significant increase in goods transiting through the port of Djibouti. From May 12, the Ethiopian government effectively banned the passage of all Ethiopian exports and imports through the Eritrean port of Assab. According to a news report, Djibouti's permanent secretary for information has said that since this announcement the port of Djibouti has been very busy with the task of absorbing the unexpected volume of Ethiopian goods. The port usually handles no more than 10 per cent of Ethiopian transit traffic, but this time the challenge is to handle the country's entire import and export requirements. Meanwhile, Djibouti radio said that a backlog of lorries were queued up in the parking area of the nearby fishing port waiting to load fuel, but local oil companies were experiencing difficulties in meeting the surging demand. The Djibouti branches of oil majors Mobil, Shell and Total, would have to supply 120 trucks a day each to keep up, the radio report said. Earlier this year, Ethiopia signed an agreement with the three companies to lease up to 200,000 tons of storage capacity in the port area, which would be sufficient to meet an notional demand of about 1.6 million tons/year. Ethiopian's total demand for oil products is currently around 1.2 million tons a year. Before the border dispute flared up, Ethiopia was transiting around 400,000 tons of oil per year through Djibouti, about 30 per cent of total oil traffic. The necessary throughput therefore will need to be increased significantly if all the country's needs are to be met through this one port.

According to media reports, as of mid-May, there was an estimated 150,000 tons of imported food and general cargo and about 4,000 vehicles accumulated in Assab port. Earlier in the year concerns were expressed that the government had given too great a priority to the movement of fertilizer out of the port and this had led to a major build-up of food aid, which at one point in March had reached a level in excess of 100,000 tons. In April, with the bulk of the fertilizer moved up-country, transporters were again able to switch trucks over the movement of food aid and uplift rates recovered somewhat, but not to the levels required to fully clear the backlog of cargo. In the immediate lead-up to the closure of the border on May 23, restrictions on the number of trucks that could enter the port area reduced uplift to little more than 200 tons per day. At the time of the border closure, there was an estimated 72,000 tons of food aid remaining in the port, of which around 11,000 tons belongs to the UN World Food Programme and 40,000 tons to USAID.

Options for the recovery of food aid and other priority supplies languishing in Assab port are being reviewed by the UN. The security situation permitting and subject to the agreement of both sides, one option under examination is for the use of small convoys of UN-marked trucks to shuttle cargo out of the port on behalf of a number of consignees who together would share the costs of the operation. However, with the widespread re-deployment of private and other trucks to Djibouti and in support of other priority tasks, it may be necessary to examine the possibility of supplementing existing transport capacity temporarily, possibly by contracting a specialised fleet of long-haul trucks from Saudi Arabia, Jordan or elsewhere, as was done in the past.

Table I: Port Performance 1994-1996 (metric tons, figures rounded)

Year	Assab (all cargo)			Djibouti (food aid only)			Massawa (food aid only)	
	All	Food	Fertilizer	Road	Rail	Total	Eritrea	Ethiopia
1994	840,000	755,000	48,200	90,500	0	90,500	n/k	n/k
1995	835,000	523,000	308,000	43,000	23,400	66,400	80,000	37,250
1996	615,000	220,500	389,100	29,000	14,250	43,250	20,450	3,300
1997	247,500	140,000	104,000	90,150	12,400	102,550	31,750	5,840

Source: WFP Food Aid Status 1997, Final Report

With food aid and other shipments now being diverted to Djibouti, serious congestion of the port is anticipated. As of June 3, there was already approximately 45,000 tons of wheat in the port with a further 5,600 tons at anchor awaiting discharge. Another shipment of 28,000 tons is expected for the middle of

June. Adding to the congestion is a balance of 35,000 tons of fertilizer. Djibouti port has been largely developed as a container terminal. Its capacity to handle bulk cargo is limited and in terms of imports throughput has rarely exceeded 400,000 tons per year (all cargo, petroleum products excluded - 1987). Covered storage in the port area is also limited to around 50,000 tons although there is plenty of scope to develop further uncovered storage space outside the port area.

Though not necessarily reflecting the full potential of Djibouti, Table I above provides an illustrative comparison of port performance over the past four years. While the governments of Ethiopia and Djibouti are making special efforts to enhance the handling capacity of Djibouti port, it is clear that without normal access to Assab, Ethiopia is going to face severe constraints on both imports and exports.

Food aid pledges and shipments

A new pledge of 21,914 tons from the German government was confirmed during May along with a small contribution from the Danish government. The previous British government pledge has been slightly adjusted upwards. Table II (below) reflects these adjustments. It should be noted that the WFP pledge of 60,000 tons for the 1998 relief programme remains notional with further donor contributions to the emergency operation (EMOP 5979) being actively sought. In this regard it is understood that the European Union are considering a significant contribution to WFP the value of which will be announced shortly.

Total deliveries so far this year include 99,292 tons against 1998 pledges plus an additional 117,066 tons against 1997 carry-over pledges, making a total of 216,358 tons.

Local purchase programmes got off to a rather late start this year. The procurement of up to 31,000 tons of sorghum through DPPC and financed by SIDA is now underway in the Humera area of Western Tigray. However, the operation has been beset by a number of problems which have created delays and raised costs. As of June 2, around 6,000 tons had been successfully transported to stores in Gondar but a shortage of warehousing in Gondar and security concerns in Humera district arising from the dispute with Eritrea are further hampering the operation. The cost of transporting this grain is being met by the government from the proceeds of the sale of 100 trucks which the Swedish Government donated to Ethiopia more than 3 years ago.

Meanwhile, the European Union is expected to issue tenders for the local purchase of 24,000 tons of maize, sorghum and wheat destined for the Food Security Reserve in the next few weeks. This is in fulfilment of a pledge made in 1996/97. The DPPC has also announced that the Government of Ethiopia itself has set aside some Birr 30 million (US \$4.3 million) for the purchase of around 20,000 tons of grain earmarked for the relief effort. The schedule for the delivery of this purchase is not yet known.

Table II: Pledges against 1998 Food Aid Requirements - Cereals & Pulses (source: WFP 2 June 1998)

	Relief	Regular	EFSR	TOTAL
<u>1998 pledges</u>				
USA	115,000	24,849	-	139,849
EC	30,933	7,140	50,000	55,333
WFP	60,000	27,239	-	87,239
Sweden	31,000	-	-	31,000
Germany	2,426	19,488	-	21,914
UK	18,422	-	-	18,422
Denmark	-	200	-	200
Canada	1,000	1,100	-	2,100
TOTAL	259,381	80,016	50,000	389,397
Deliveries as of 02/06/98	92,422	6,870	-	99,292

Allocations already approved by the European Union in response to the Government's 1998 appeal are currently being borrowed from the Emergency Food Security Reserve. Table III (overleaf) indicates the allocations being made to NGO's against 1998 pledges while Table IV shows allocations made to NGO's against the 1997 *beig* appeal which were approved in late December 1997 with distributions beginning January and still continuing. The imports, local purchase and transport of these allocations will be co-

ordinated by EuronAid. While cereals are expected to be imported, pulses will continue to be locally purchased.

Table III. EU Allocations to NGOs: 1998 pledges (metric tons)

NGO	Cereals	Pulses	Veg. Oil	Seeds	Fertiliser	Total
SCF(UK)	15,000			380	360	
LWF	8,000	600	600			
Oxfam	2,000					
						29,940

Table IV. EU Allocations to NGOs: 1997 pledges (metric tons)

NGO	Cereal	Pulses	Veg. Oil	Faffa	Total
SCF(UK)	11,740				
LWF	5,962				
CARE	5,000		200	333	
GAA*	5,000	333			
					28,568

*shown as a 1998 pledge in Table II

Food Security Reserve Status

The Emergency Food Security Reserve continues to maintain stocks at a reasonable level with physical holdings reported to be around 165,000 tons as of the beginning of June. Out of this amount, around 64,000 tons has already been committed and is awaiting withdrawal. Loans amounting to 182,000 tons are outstanding and pending repayment over the next few months, largely through imports.

Government Updates 1998 Relief Needs

In a presentation to donor and NGO representatives on 25 May, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission presented the results of the pastoral area and post-harvest needs assessments completed earlier this year and announced minor adjustments to 1998 relief needs.

According to the findings of the post-harvest assessment, the late and unseasonal rains in October/November 1997 were beneficial for some crops, significantly contributing in offsetting earlier production losses in some localities. The rains also had a generally positive effect on livestock in both the pastoral and cropping areas. They replenished water supplies and led to the significant regeneration of pastures. The major health finding widely reported during the assessment was malaria with a much higher than normal incidence than normal reported, especially from low-lying areas.

Most of the relief food requirement in 1998 is in the Amhara and Tigray administrative regions. Despite the generally beneficial effect of the late rains, however, the DPPC have indicated that needs in Tigray, Afar, Harari and Oromiya have remained unchanged. However, the late rains did ease the situation slightly in Amhara where beneficiary numbers have been reduced by 121,100 to 2,000,000. The rains also favoured the production of root crops and ratoon sorghum in the Southern People's region where there will no longer be a food relief requirement this year. Indeed, stocks of food pre-positioned in Shashamane for the south are presently being moved to meet needs in the north of Ethiopia. In addition, the need for food relief is not anticipated in the Somali region where pasture and water availability have improved markedly. On the other hand, a rise in beneficiary numbers was noted for Dire Dawa and Gambella regions.

Nationally, the DPPC report indicates the population requiring relief assistance this year has gone down from the pre-harvest estimate of 4,262,515 to 4,071,115, a decrease of 4.5 per cent. The revised relief food requirement for 1998 now stands at 544,137 tons with 285,968 tons needed for the period May to October. In terms of physical deliveries of food aid to the region, the DPPC report a total of around 105,000 tons delivered since December 1997 against needs estimated at just under 260,000 tons. 75 per

cent of the food has been handled by DPPC and the remainder by NGOs with Tigray and Amhara regions receiving the bulk of deliveries (73,000 tons).

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

After reaching a peak in March/April, the incidence of malaria is reported to be declining rapidly. However, at the same time, there have been reports of further outbreaks of acute diarrhoeal disease (ADD). In April, health workers reported a sudden epidemic in the Jijiga area which infected several hundred people. Similar outbreaks were reported from the Afar region and parts of southern Ethiopia. In May further outbreaks have been reported in the south-east, with 250 cases and 28 deaths reported from Bale zone of Oromyia region. No hard data is available from the Ministry of Health and due to poor reporting from the regional health bureaux, information on the nature and extent of the problem is presently not available. WHO note that as cholera is no longer considered to be a notifiable disease, national authorities find themselves under less pressure to verify the true nature of such diarrhoeal disease outbreaks.

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

No narrative report this month.

Refugee Statistics (as of 30 April)

West

Bonga	11,920
Fugnido	18,482
Dimma	7,644
Shirkole	20,461

Sub-total **58,507**

South-east

Dolo Odo	5,000
Dolo Bay	1,200
Suftu	1,800

Sub-total **8,000**

North-east

Afar Region	3,000
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East

Hartisheikh (A & B)	41,389
Aisha	15,282
Kebribeyah	11,077
Teferiber	46,331
Derwenaji	32,090
Camaboker	28,590
Rabasso	16,814
Daror	33,985

Sub-total **225,558**

South

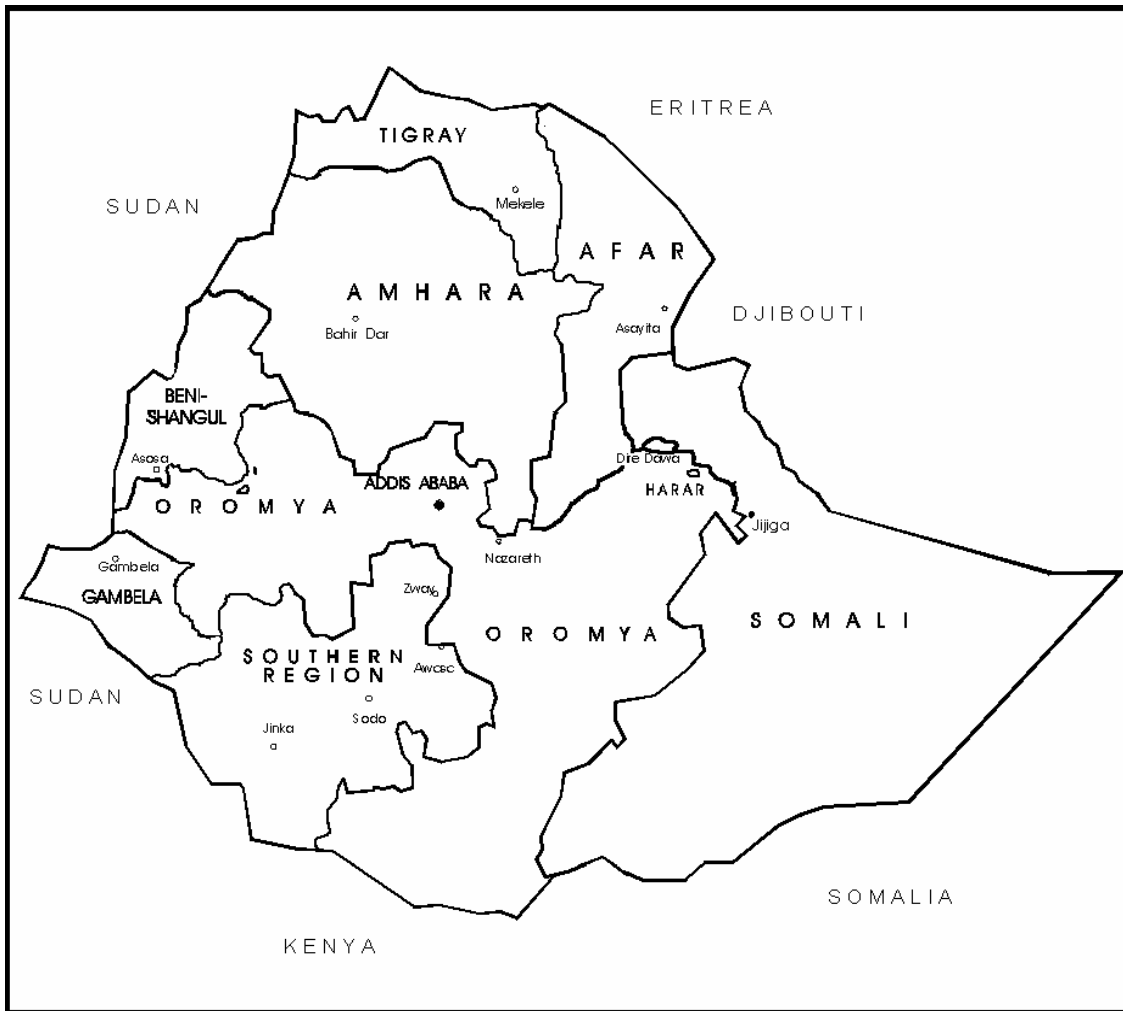
Moyale/Dokisso	8,671
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Addis Ababa

Urban refugees	700
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GRAND TOTAL 304,436

Administrative Map of Ethiopia



DISCLAIMER

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SOURCES:

UNDP-EUE field reports; CARE; Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC); European Union; FAO; FEWS; National Meteorological Services Agency (NMSA); Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA); Grain Market Research Project of the Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operation (GMRP-MEDaC); SCF (UK); UNICEF; UNHCR; WHO; AFP; ENA.

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