



MONTHLY SITUATION REPORT FOR ETHIOPIA August - September 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 Ethiopian Government and NGOs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ❑ The disputed border regions between Ethiopia and Eritrea have remained quiet with no military clashes reported since the middle of June; meanwhile, international and regional diplomatic efforts to reach a negotiated settlement to the dispute continue, though these have yet to achieve any significant progress;
- ❑ Following a slightly delayed start to this year's *kiremt* season, the rains became well established in August and September with good distribution and quantity of rain reported from central, northern and north-western areas of the country;
- ❑ A Government of Ethiopia update of relief needs arising from the conflict with Eritrea cites 25,000 returnees from Eritrea requiring resettlement assistance and 188,690 displaced people in Tigray and Afar region in need of short-term relief, an increase of 43,690 over the figure given in the original appeal in June;
- ❑ Arrangements to transport relief food out of Djibouti port are proceeding smoothly with a daily uplift of between 600 and 800 tons achieved since the WFP dedicated fleet commenced operations in July; however, shipments amounting to more than 135,000 tons of food aid and 125,000 tons of fertiliser are expected before the end of January next year, increasing the possibility of serious congestion;
- ❑ Following the successful completion of the 59th convoy of Somali refugees returning home to "Somaliland", UNHCR are optimistic that the momentum of the voluntary repatriation programme can be maintained and this year's target of 70,000 reached on schedule by December.

NEWS AND EVENTS

National Bank adopts new policy: The National Bank of Ethiopia has adopted policy changes for the 1998/1999 fiscal year that it believes will help to develop the financial capacity of the country. The new policy seeks to decentralise the issuance of import and export licenses (except coffee), and to devolve management of foreign exchange, and hard currency allocations and revenue administration from the central bank to government and commercial banks. Other changes include: the removal of restrictions on the amount of foreign currency loans for Ethiopians who go abroad for medical treatment, education and trade and business tours; a new facility for foreign nationals who work in Ethiopia to send their net salaries abroad in foreign exchange; the value of government treasury bills to be determined by market price and a reduction of the minimum denomination of bills from 50,000 to 5,000 Birr; and the new capacity of commercial banks to buy and sell foreign exchange freely. In another announcement the National Bank declared that Ethiopia earned 10 billion birr (one US dollar = 7.25 Ethiopian Birr) in hard currency in the last budget year from export goods and other services. This marked an increase of 1.5 billion birr from the previous budget year. The increase was attributed to an increase in the coffee exports and the rise of the price of commodity in the international market. (*DPA, September 1; The Ethiopian Herald, September 1 & 2*)

Afar parties to merge: The merging of four political organisations in the Afar State has received the backing of Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The 4 organisations are: the Afari People Democratic Organisation (APDO), the Afar National Liberation Front (ANLF), the Afar National Democratic Movement (ANDM), and the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Union Front (ARDUF). In a similar move, the merger of the Gambella's People's Liberation Front (GPLF) and the Gambella's People's Democratic Unity Party (GPDUP) has taken place. The new party is called Gambella's Peoples Democratic Front. (*The Ethiopian Herald, September 2; The Reporter, September 3*)

Embezzled funds blocked: The Swiss Supreme Court has blocked the transfer of US \$8 million, money allegedly embezzled by Ethiopia's former deputy prime minister, Tamirat Layne. The court decided that the funds cannot be transferred as requested by Ethiopian authorities until a decision is passed on Tamirat and his female friend (who deposited the money in the Swiss account) by the Ethiopian Supreme Court. The Swiss court also requested that the Ethiopian authorities ensure that the woman be well treated and that the Swiss ambassador in Addis Ababa be allowed to visit her freely, make inquiries about her case and be present at hearings. Layne has been charged with embezzling a total of US \$16 million. (*The Reporter, September 15; The Monitor, September 15*)

New aid agreements signed: Ethiopia and the Netherlands have signed two grant agreements amounting to US \$12.96 million. \$8.96 million will be used for the execution of part of the Addis Ababa Sewerage Project. The balance will be used to procure essential drugs for the 1998 programme to improve the health of the Ethiopian population in the long term. Meanwhile, Japan has signed three grant agreements with Ethiopia totalling US \$37.7 million. \$21.5 million will be used for water supply development in the urban centres, \$6.4 million to reinforce the power distribution network in Addis Ababa and the balance of \$9.8 million to meet the first part of a \$77.9 million grant allocated for the rehabilitation of the Addis Ababa-Debre Markos trunk road. The Japanese State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs disclosed that this would be the largest Japanese grant aid project undertaken in the Middle East or Africa. (*The Ethiopian Herald, September 8 & 11*)

Indigenous bio-diversity to be protected: The Ministry of Agriculture announced that Phase II of a multi-year project to preserve and develop indigenous plant resources is scheduled to be undertaken at a cost of 15.3 million birr (US \$2.1 million) in the new Ethiopian year. The project will cover some 700,000 square kilometers of the country. The registration of forest plants and gathering of socio-economic data have already been carried out in Gojjam and most parts of Gondar; while Welo and North Shewa zones are targeted for the 1998/99 year. In related news, at a workshop on bio-diversity, the Director General of the Ethiopian Agricultural Organisation (EARO) called on conservationists, researchers, and communities to effectively conserve and utilise the resources of the Rift Valley Lakes, as part of Ethiopia's bio-diversity conservation and research strategy. (*The Ethiopian Herald, September 4 & 16*)

More farmers to benefit from development package: Over 140,000 peasant farmers will be involved in various extension packages in the coming year in Wag Hamra and Central Tigray Zones. The extension packages focus mainly on the production of linseed, pea, lentil as well as afforestation and animal husbandry. 88,000 stations have been set up country-wide to conduct these extension packages. Meanwhile, over 8,300 tons of fertiliser has been distributed to farmers in the extension and regular farming activities in the east Wollega zone of Oromiya and over 39,500 tons of fertilisers and select seeds distributed to farmers in the Southern Peoples' region as part of the current year's extension programme. Meanwhile, The Shewa zonal administration of Amhara region has reported that more than 84.5 million birr (US \$11.6 million) has been allocated to launch an integrated food security programme in four weredas of the North Shewa zone. This is part of the drive to avert the threat of drought in the zone which is one of the most vulnerable in the country. The programme is expected to be implemented following the expansion of infrastructures in the agricultural, water and environmental sectors. (*The Ethiopian Herald, September 3, 4 & 13*)

CONFLICT WITH ERITREA

General Situation

Though international and regional diplomatic efforts appear to have made little progress in resolving the dispute, August and September have passed quietly, without any serious clashes reported from the contested border zone. Meanwhile, both sides appear to have made use of the lull to strengthen defences and position additional men and equipment close to the front lines.

With the military build-up and increasing tension, there has been a continuous trickle of people moving away from the potential danger zones. By the end of September, according to the Government's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission a total of 188,690 people had been displaced by the conflict and registered for relief assistance, up from 145,000 given at the time of the June humanitarian appeal.

The two-way flow of nationals across the common border has also continued unabated during the lull. While deportations of people of Eritrean nationality considered by the authorities to be a threat to national security has diminished considerably since the end of July, there has been some increase in the numbers of people wishing to leave Ethiopia in order to join their family members already deported to Eritrea. In such cases, the government indicates that it has been willing to give people the choice of staying if they wish but otherwise giving sufficient time for arrangements to be made for the handling of business and other personal affairs. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is now present on both sides of the border and is active in escorting all groups wishing to make the transit from Ethiopia into Eritrea and vice versa.

While considerable international attention has been focussed on the deportations from Ethiopia, there has also been a steady flow of Ethiopians leaving Eritrea, where many have lived and worked for their entire lives. The Ethiopian government has accused the Eritrean authorities of mistreating its nationals stranded in Asmara and Assab, and of preventing them from returning to Ethiopia, allegations which the Eritrean government denies. Toward the end of September, the number of Ethiopians crossing back into the country increased markedly, especially at Bure where several groups of a thousand and more have crossed from Assab. As of September 24, the Government indicated that a total of 24,970 Ethiopians had returned from Eritrea, up from a figure of 14,938 issued by the government a month earlier.

The negotiating positions adopted by the two countries have remained unchanged since the end of June: It has been indicated that Eritrea might be ready to enter into direct talks to reach a peaceful settlement of the dispute; meanwhile, Ethiopia points out that, prior to any settlement arrangements Eritrea should withdraw its forces to points occupied prior to the first military clashes on and around May 6 this year, as stipulated in the US-Rwandese peace plan proposed in June and which has since received the full backing of the Organisation of African Unity and the UN Security Council.

Under the auspices of its present chairman, Burkina Faso president Blaise Campoare, the OAU is expected to convene one more meeting of the high-level "Contact Group" in an attempt to reach agreement on a negotiated settlement to the dispute. The Contact Group, which in addition to Burkina Faso comprises the heads of state of Zimbabwe and Djibouti, is expected to be joined by delegations from Ethiopia and Eritrea led by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and President Isaias Afewerki, respectively. The meeting, is due to take place in Ouagadougou in October. Despite considerable international backing for the OAU initiative, many regional observers feel that it is most unlikely that the Eritreans will heed demands for a withdrawal of their troops from the occupied territories, which is seen as the only way to rapidly de-escalate tensions in the border areas. Without a withdrawal, both the Ethiopian president, in an address to the nation on September 11, and the prime minister more recently have made it clear that the federal army is ready to re-take the lost territories by force.

Humanitarian Update

On September 25, the Ethiopian Government's Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission (DPPC) called a meeting of donors, NGOs and international organisations to present an updated account of emergency needs arising from the conflict with Eritrea. This briefing had been anticipated for some time as the earlier June appeal explicitly excluded consideration of Ethiopians forced to leave Eritrea, the needs of host communities, and longer-term rehabilitation and integration requirements. The

update summarised assistance needs for a total of 24,970 Ethiopians "expelled" from Eritrea, and quoting short term (until February 1999) relief requirements for a total of 188,690 internally displaced, up from 145,000 given in the June appeal.

For Ethiopians who have returned from Eritrea, the government has devised a short- and medium-term programme to help the group quickly reintegrate in the country and restart their normal lives. The government is therefore seeking international assistance for a "relief-rehabilitation package" that comprises transport assistance from reception centres to home areas, basic food rations, various household items, blankets, clothing and a one-time cash grant of approximately US \$200 per couple. Assuming a planning figure of 50,000, in addition to \$4.5 million for the cash grants, the DPPC indicated that the returnee package would require 6,750 tons of food (rations for nine months), household items worth approximately \$360,000, some 10,000 blankets and funds to meet transport costs estimated at \$310,000.

While the current number of Ethiopians who have returned from Eritrea is officially reported as of September 24 to be 24,970, the DPPC reports this number is climbing almost daily (some 4,000 returning from Assab in a one week period alone) with the current planning figure for relief purposes put at 50,000. However, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the final figure could be as high as 100,000. While the largest group of returned Ethiopians to-date are being assisted in Tigray region (approx. 11,000) substantial numbers are also recorded in Amhara region, Afar and Addis Ababa (where some 4,000 plus are registered). The largest influx at present, however, is taking place from Assab via the Bure border crossing.

The new figures for the number of people internally displaced by the border fighting is put at 166,308 in Tigray region and 22,382 in Afar. The new update details the local and international response to the June appeal, emphasising that the regional governments have been at the forefront of co-ordinating and organising assistance. A national fund-raising committee has been formed to co-ordinate fund raising activities and to alert the public and potential donors to relief needs. To date, this committee has secured nearly 72 million birr (approximately US \$10 million) in cash contributions from public and private institutions, individuals, community associations and Ethiopians residing abroad. According to the DPPC, an "unknown portion" of these funds have been pledged, and will be used, in support of national defence efforts but this has not prevented the fund from being used to underwrite the purchase of household items and to support regional government relief efforts to the tune of Birr 20 million.

Present needs for the internally displaced, both in terms of relief and rehabilitation, remain considerable. For the moment, however, the government is focussing on the most immediate relief needs only, preferring to leave consideration of rehabilitation requirements until "after the areas occupied by Eritrea have been recovered". In terms of numbers, the government is still using a planning figure of 300,000 - but for the new appeal update preferred to keep to the present registered caseload of 188,690 and assistance for a six month period until the end of February 1999.

After taking into consideration commitments to date and the planning figure of 300,000, according to the DPPC the net current requirements for the internally displaced include 14,218 tons of relief food (including supplementary rations), some 80,000 blankets, household kits and jerrycans for around 80,000 families and support for water supply and health services amounting to approximately US \$1.7 million and US \$890,000 respectively.

Significant additional pledges confirmed recently include a US government grant of US \$10 million for 16,000 tons of food aid and 36,000 blankets (more details below) and an agreement signed between the Italian Government and the DPPC worth \$230,000 for the provision of additional shelter materials. UNHCR have also confirmed the contribution of a limited number of additional kitchen sets, plastic sheeting and other household items which the DPPC intends to distribute to needy returnees as part of the planned resettlement package.

AGRICULTURE, WEATHER AND PESTS

Weather and prospects for the *meher* harvest

With the *kiremt* (main) rains well established, normal to above normal rains were experienced over most major cropping areas of the country from mid-August through to the end of September. In some areas, such as eastern Tigray, South and North Welo heavy rains at the end of August and beginning of September led to localised flooding and some waterlogging of crops. Exceptionally heavy rains were also recorded for the western part of Tigray during the first and second dekads of September. Conversely, parts southern and south-eastern Oromiya, the Southern Peoples' region and north-eastern parts of the Somali region received below normal rainfall during this period.

Crops at flowering stage, and crops planted on poorly drained and clay soils are considered to be particularly vulnerable to rain damage and the weather toward the end of the *kiremt* season is often characterised by intense local storms, frequently intermixed with hail. With the main season rains commencing around two weeks later than normal, in some areas there have been concerns that crops will be especially vulnerable to storm damage this year. There are also indications that after the poor start to the season many farmers have switched from coarse grains such as maize and sorghum and re-planted with Teff, which is a low volume, high value cereal also considered to be vulnerable to damage from heavy rain.

Problems of waterlogging were reported from high plateau (2,500+ metres) areas of South Welo and North Shewa, in particular, as well as from areas of the central Ethiopia where the fragile Teff crop has suffered damage from heavy downpours. In North and South Welo, a poor *meher* crop could lead to increased food aid needs later as it would follow a poor *meher* harvest in 1997 and a less than satisfactory *belg* earlier this year. In a recent survey, Save the Children Fund (UK) have found a significant decline in nutritional status in the mixed *belg and meher*-growing areas of South Welo, although overall the mean nutritional status remains "satisfactory" at 91.4 percent. A similar survey in North Welo in August indicated a "poor" nutritional status in Wag Hamra and Bugna, though in the lowlands the situation is somewhat better.

While central, northern and north-western parts of the country appear to be enjoying a very good *kiremt*, the rains in southern and south-eastern areas have been poor. Particularly badly hit are mid- and lowland areas of Eastern Haraghe where farmers are facing a failure of the maize crop and, in some cases, are already moving in search of work opportunities and relief assistance. Poor rains in the northern and central agricultural areas of the Somali Region are also giving rise to concern that main season production will be significantly reduced this year giving rise to increased relief needs. The important maize and sorghum-growing areas around the regional capital of Jijjiga appear to be particularly badly hit and though the area enjoyed some showers in the third dekad of September, this was too late to allow any recovery of the crop.

With continuing rain over central parts of Ethiopia, and still some scattered showers over Tigray and northern parts of the Amhara region, prospects at the end of September were for an extension of the *kiremt* until at least the first dekad of October. Given the somewhat late start to the season, this extension is considered very favourable for the continued development and maturation of both long and short-cycle *meher* crops. Given good fertiliser sales and the absence so far of any serious pest infestation, prospects for a *meher* harvest of the scale seen in 1996 are presently considered to be very good. In Tigray, for example, the agriculture bureau are anticipating the "best *meher* harvest in ten years", with good prospects for the local purchase of surplus grain not only in the Western zone of Tigray but other zones as well.

Migratory pests

Despite widespread rains and favourable vegetative growth over much of the country, no significant outbreaks of migratory pests have been report in Ethiopia so far this year. There were a few isolated swarms of Desert Locust reported from the eastern lowlands (Somali and Afar regions) earlier in February/March which gave raise to fears that these might presage an upsurge in locust activity but

government control efforts supported by the Desert Locust Control Organisation (DLCO) were largely successful in preventing large scale breeding.

Though some experts now believe that the Armyworm has become locally established in the south of Ethiopia - making the country vulnerable to sudden infestations - despite favourable weather conditions an increase in moth activity has not been reported. As is the practice in other affected countries in East Africa, the plant protection department of the Ministry of Agriculture track Armyworm activity by monitoring moth traps placed in areas most prone to breeding.

Quelea birds have been a problem in some localised, mainly Sorghum-growing areas of the Rift Valley, eastern Oromiya region and Somali Region. Though control operations using avicides such as Queltax have been largely successful, the Quelea problem is expected to persist and even increase significantly if this year's main season crop is good.

Fertiliser

Fertiliser availability for this year's main growing season was very good with stocks of around 485,000 tons reported. As of 30 August, total sales from around the country were estimated by the National Fertiliser Industry Agency (NFIA) to be approximately 280,000 tons, a 10 percent increase over the same period in 1996, the last year when growing conditions were considered very favourable, and 56 percent more than last year. The target for the whole of 1998 is 380,000 tons.

As usual, the bulk of sales this year have been in Oromiya region (50 percent), followed by Amhara (25 percent), Southern People's region (12 percent) and Tigray (5 percent). However, actual sales in these regions compares poorly with previous years, with state and commercial farms showing the most significant increase in demand.

FOOD AID AND LOGISTICS

Food aid pledges and shipments

The US government signed an agreement with the DPPC on September 22 confirming a new pledge of relief food in response to the government of Ethiopia's June appeal for assistance to people displaced by the conflict with Eritrea. The total value of the pledge, which includes non-food relief items such as 36,000 blankets, is US \$10 million. The food component will include approximately 13,000 tons of cereals and 3,000 tons of pulses and vegetable oil, which will help feed a proportion of the 211,000 displaced people in Tigray and Afar for six months. The European Union meanwhile, has placed on hold consideration of additional food pledges for the displaced population pending the identification of additional emergency requirements.

Pledges against 1998 Food Aid Requirements - Cereals & Pulses

	Relief	Regular	EFSR	TOTAL
<u>1998 pledges</u>				
USA	125,156	20,630	-	145,786
EC	46,200	32,140	50,000	128,340
WFP	60,000	34,309	-	94,309
Sweden	31,000	-	-	31,000
Germany	3,718	19,488	-	23,206
UK	18,792	-	-	18,792
Canada	1,036	2,100	-	3,136
Denmark	1,100	900	-	2,000
Norway	1,950	-	-	1,950
Netherlands	10,000	-	-	10,000
TOTAL	298,952	109,567	50,000	458,519
Deliveries as of 22/09/98	135,126	30,530	-	165,656

Source: WFP (22 September 1989)

August and September have been relatively quiet months regarding food aid deliveries. As of September 22, a total of 293,460 tons of both relief and regular food aid had been delivered, including 127,804 tons in 1997 pledges carried-over to this year. In terms of current year's pledges, deliveries remain very low at only 36 percent of total commitments. Of deliveries made this year, approximately 70,000 tons of food aid was still in the port of Assab awaiting clearance and transport up-country in May when the conflict with Eritrea effectively blocked access.

Food aid deliveries to the port of Djibouti are expected to pick-up during the final quarter of the year with shipments amounting to 135,000 tons expected to arrive between the end of September and January 1999. This includes 12,500 tons of commercial wheat, 16,000 tons European Union emergency food aid, 24,500 tons of USAID Title III emergency food aid, and approximately 24,000 tons of WFP programme food aid in October; a total of around 50,000 tons of food aid in November and 90,000 tons in December. On top of this, fertiliser shipments of 50,000 tons and 75,000 tons are expected in November and December, respectively. Under this kind of pressure, serious congestion of Djibouti port is anticipated for the coming months.

Logistics and port operations

Djibouti port

To help minimise port congestion, the UN World Food Programme is coordinating closely with donors and NGOs on the scheduling of incoming aid shipments to Djibouti. The recommendation to donors is that they look carefully at the sequencing of arrivals at the port, but with only two and a half bulk cargo berths available, delays in discharging vessels is almost inevitable.

Under the framework of its "Food Aid Transport System" (FATS), a dedicated fleet of 117 long-haul trucks has been moving WFP food aid since July, and so far transport operations have run smoothly out of Djibouti. The taking of cargo from vessels on direct delivery plus the well stacked cargo at both WFP port and town warehouses have ensured uninterrupted loading of trucks. On the other hand, problems with on-board cranes, slow off-loading at some destinations and poor conditions on the Dewale - Dire Dawa road due to heavy rain, have hampered the overall efficiency of the operation. In mid-September, the important northern route was closed to traffic for four days following an accident between two trucks which effectively blocked the carriageway. During the period from September 1 to September 19 a total of 11,250 tons of food was dispatched from Djibouti to various destinations in Ethiopia, an average of 625 tons per day. The longer-term daily average is nearer 800 tons with 1,000 tons plus achieved from time to time.

WFP is considering an 40 - 60 percent expansion of the dedicated trucking fleet by the end of October to meet the additional demand as shipments to Djibouti increase. The service will also be offered to donors and NGOs on established routes at rates that will vary from an indicative US \$105 (Mekele) to US \$50 (Dire Dawa) per ton depending on final destination. WFP is also negotiating a direct agreement with the Ethio-Djibouti railway company for guaranteed minimum monthly deliveries to Dire Dawa, an arrangement which it is hoped will take some of the pressure off the Dewale road.

Berbera port

A number of donors, including the European Union, have indicated an interest in making use of the "Somaliland" port of Berbera to supplement the still limited bulk cargo handling capacity of Djibouti. According to a fact-sheet prepared by UNCTAD, with a linear wharf of 650 metres (comprising, five commercial berths and one roll-on/roll-off berth) and a depth of water ranging from 9 to 12 metres, the port of Berbera has sufficient capacity to receive cargo vessels of 10,000 to 15,000 tons capacity. With no shore cranes, however, discharge has to be through vessel's own tackle though three mobile cranes are available. Covered storage capacity in the port area amounts to some 5,760 square metres (approximately 120,000 tons) while some 64,000 square metres of open storage is also available. Given this profile, and the availability of stevedores and equipment, recent visitors consider the port well able to handle discharge rates of around 1,000 tons per day.

Port charges compare favourably with Djibouti with stevedore costs of US \$3.50 per ton (\$4.50 in Djibouti) and port handling where storage is required of US \$3.50 per ton (\$6.00 in Djibouti). Experienced shipping agents and freight forwarders are represented in Berbera and, according to the local authorities, ample trucking capacity is available for transporting consignments from Berbera to Jigjiga and Dire Dawa.

There is an asphalt road from Berbera to a point some 60 kilometers from Hargeisa. Though there are a number of broken bridges, trucks without trailers should be able to negotiate the route to Jigjiga without problems except for a 20 kilometer stretch around the border which becomes difficult in the rainy season. Total distances involved are comparable to Djibouti.

Following a recent mission to the port, the European Union suggest in a report that if the option of Berbera can be successfully tested with a modest shipment of 5,000 to 10,000 tons of food aid with a final destination of either Jigjiga or Dire Dawa, such an initiative would encourage other donors to also look at the feasibility of using the port, thus helping take some pressure away from Djibouti.

Emergency Food Security Reserve status

The Emergency Food Security Reserve continues to operate at a minimum level with physical stocks remaining fairly stable at around 70,000 tons. New loans are still being granted, including a recent one of 2,940 tons to the Lutheran World Federation, but releases are only made as replenishments are received. Stocks are expected to rise in October as the EuronAid shipment of 16,000 tons is delivered to EFSR stores from Djibouti. As of the middle of September, there were nil stocks in the EFSR warehouses at Kombolcha, an important jumping-off point for Amhara region and around 30,000 tons of spare capacity in Mekele (Tigray Region).

Health and Nutrition

HIV-AIDS

The Ethiopian Ministry of Health recently reported that an estimated 2.5 million adults are believed to be infected with the HIV virus. The number of reported cases currently stands at 61,270. Although the problem used to be mainly urban centered, recent findings indicate that the disease is spreading to the rural areas as well.

Malaria

Toward the end of the *kiremt* rains (September/October) is generally the time of year when there is a marked upsurge in the incidence of malaria. In low and mid-altitude areas, locally serious outbreaks have been observed in recent years and following widespread rains, this year is expected to follow the same pattern. With the support of WHO, regional health teams have been attending training in Nazereth on monitoring and case-control. As part of a national pilot programme, in Amhara Region the health bureau will be promoting the use of bed nets in malaria-prone areas of Bahir Dar and Metemma. Promoting the use of bed nets is seen as perhaps the only effective malaria control strategy in areas where there is a high prevalence of drug resistance.

In Tigray, UNICEF reports that malaria has become a very serious problem this rainy season in many mid- and lowland areas, and is a major threat to the health of people displaced by the conflict with Eritrea. As there was no planned malaria component in the original relief plan for Tigray, UNICEF is seeking US \$300,000 through re-programmed country resources and additional donor contributions to provide insecticide spray, logistical support and training to the regional health bureau malaria control programme.

Acute Diarrhoea

Although localised outbreaks of acute diarrhoea have been reported during the rains from parts of Oromiya and western Ethiopia, the situation has been better than the same period in previous years.

Meningitis

The dry period from the end of the *kiremt* rains through to January/February is traditionally the time when there can be a resurgence of meningococcal meningitis in Ethiopia. The last major epidemic was in 1989/90 when the disease spread rapidly from western parts of the country, through the Rift Valley area and to the south of Ethiopia, causing the deaths of a reported 17,000 mostly young and elderly. In preparation for a possible outbreak, the Ministry of Health has asked WHO for assistance in purchasing additional meningitis vaccines to bolster existing emergency stocks.

REFUGEES AND RETURNEES

Though there continues to be a trickle of new arrivals in the west (a total of 308 Sudanese refugees in Fugnido and Dimma during August), generally there has been little change in the refugee situation in the country. During the rainy season there have been logistical difficulties in reaching some of the camps, especially those in the west where the rains made roads virtually impassable. For some camps this has meant delays in the delivery of food rations. In Bonga, the camp health authorities have reported a significant increase in the mortality rate which is currently being investigated by UNHCR to determine the cause and take remedial action.

The operation to repatriate Somali refugees in the east continues with the successful completion of convoy number 59 from Teferi Ber on September 21. This convoy completed the 4th batch of 10,000 under the 1998 voluntary repatriation programme. A breakdown of 4th batch convoys, with details of destinations in "Somaliland", is as follows:

Date	Convoy Number	Convoy Total	Cumulative Total	Destination
August 25	53	1,311	1,311	Borama
September 7	54	2,427	3,738	Dilla
September 8	55	1,098	4,881	Gabiley, Dilla, Kalabaydh
September 9	56	1,063	5,895	Borama, Gabiley, Kalabaydh
September 10	57	1,265	7,164	Borama
September 18	58	1,978	9,142	Borama, Dilla
September 21	59	858	10,000	Hargeisa

Total number of refugees repatriated to date (including those repatriated under the initial pilot phase last year) stands at 39,342 from the following camps:

Hartisheik A & B	18,819
Derwanaji	10,523
Teferi Ber	10,000

UNHCR expect to maintain the momentum of the operation and prospects of reaching the initial target of 70,000 by the end of the year are considered to be very good. Work on the 5th phase of the programme is expected to commence on October 10.

Refugee Statistics (as of 31 August 1998)

West

Bonga	12,635
Fugnido	23,725
Dimma	7,852
Shirkole	20,613

Sub-total **64,825**

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

Hartisheik (A & B)	31,389
Aisha	15,290
Kebribeyah	11,569
Teferiber	45,020
Derwenaji	29,649
Camaboker	28,590
Rabasso	16,814
Daror	33,985

Sub-total **212,306**

South

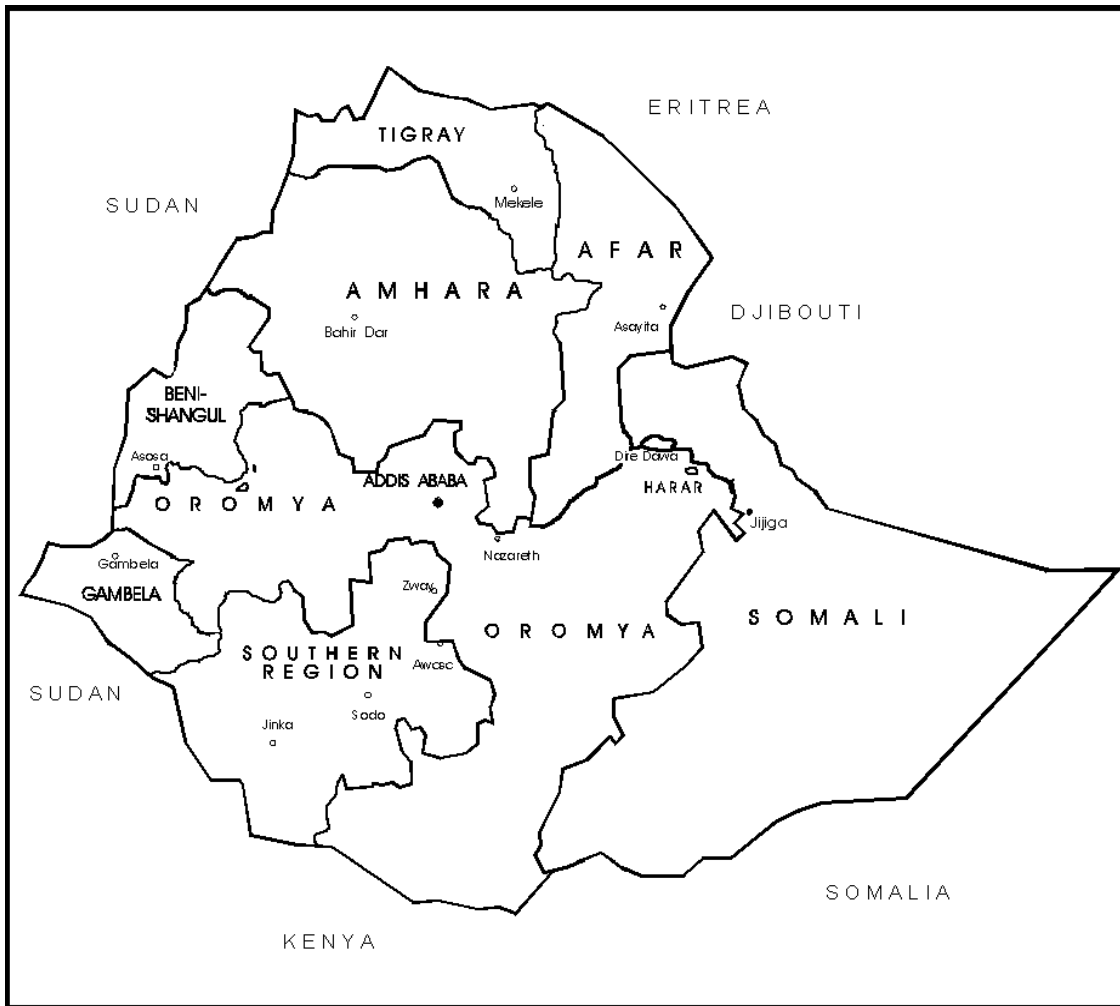
Moyale/Dokisso	8,671
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Addis Ababa

Urban refugees	700
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GRAND TOTAL 297,502

Administrative Map of Ethiopia



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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.

Dedication:

This edition of the monthly situation report is dedicated to the memory of Admassu Haile Yesus who passed away on September 27. Admassu served with the Emergencies Unit as a Field Officer for several years and was a highly valued member of the team and a friend. He will be greatly missed.

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