

NRC’s operations in Ethiopia

Humanitarian overview

The humanitarian situation in Ethiopia remains critical, driven by the overlapping and compounding effects of conflict, climatic and seismic shocks, recurrent disease outbreaks, and influxes of refugees and asylum seekers. People have been displaced and their livelihoods destroyed, exposing them to serious vulnerabilities. Large numbers of children remain out of school, health and WASH needs are immense, and protection risks are high, with resources and service-delivery systems overstretched, limiting access to essential services.

Ethiopia is the third-largest refugee-hosting country in Africa, home to over a million refugees and asylum seekers – mainly from Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. Following the outbreak of armed conflict in Sudan (April 2023) and the recent conflict in South Sudan, Ethiopia has been receiving thousands of forcibly displaced people at several points of entry, including recently in 2026.

The Government of Ethiopia, in partnership with regional authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, and other actors, are working to provide safe asylum access, documentation, protection and durable solutions to refugees in need of humanitarian support (the Government launched a great social inclusion initiative, *Makatet*). They are also delivering multisectoral emergency and transitional assistance to displacement-affected people while supporting pathways towards self-reliance and durable solutions.

The recent funding reduction at a time of increased displacement and rising humanitarian needs creates major risks for displaced communities in Ethiopia as inadequate access to basic services and livelihood opportunities exposes them to protection risks and negative coping mechanisms, threatening their safety.



Photo: Ahmed Omer/NRC

Our core activities



Education



Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)



Protection from violence



Shelter and settlements



Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

NRC Ethiopia

Established	2011
Mobile staff	6
Resident staff	363

Our areas of operation

- Benishangul Gumuz Region
- Somali Region
- Tigray Region
- Amhara Region
- Afar Region
- Oromia Region
- Maitseabri
- Wolkait Tegede Setit Humera



Our activities in detail

NRC is present in six of the 12 regions of Ethiopia (Afar, Amhara Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Somali and Tigray) in addition to Maitseabri and Wolkait Tegede Setit Humera. We focus on providing emergency relief to displacement-affected people, and assist in rebuilding their lives and removing displacement-related barriers towards self-reliance and durable solutions. In 2025, NRC assisted 1,170,480 displacement-affected people through its various activities, including 284,642 reached through the now discontinued livelihoods and food security response.



90,781 people reached in 2025 ▼

Education

Support for displacement-affected children, adolescents and youth to access quality and safe education, and income pathways for youth, through:

- lifesaving and protective first-line rapid education in emergencies (EiE), including establishment of temporary learning spaces
- provision of safe, inclusive, age-appropriate and quality education through formal and non-formal learning
- provision of marketable skills training and transitional income pathways and livelihood support
- provision of teaching and learning materials
- capacity-building training for teachers, school administrators, education experts and community structures
- psychosocial support to children through the classroom-based Better Learning Programme (BLP 1)
- construction/rehabilitation and equipping of learning spaces, WASH facilities and admin blocks



43,212 people reached in 2025 ▼

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

Support for vulnerable refugees, IDPs and conflict-affected populations to claim and exercise their rights and attain durable solutions through:

- supporting access to legal identity documentation
- enhanced housing, land and property (HLP) rights, including collaborative dispute resolution for HLP disputes, and access to HLP documents
- employment laws and procedures to remove barriers to wage and self-employment opportunities
- access to basic services and referrals to other service and protection providers
- enhanced capacity of duty bearers through capacity-building training on responding to HLP and LID issues
- coordination of the HLP working group at national and sub-national levels



5,171 people reached in 2025 ▼

Protection from violence

Our response ensures vulnerable displacement-affected populations are protected from violence through:

- undertaking protection assessments and monitoring to identify protection risks facing vulnerable communities
- conducting protection case management and response through individual protection assistance, including cash for protection, to vulnerable individuals at high risk
- referral services to address the needs of individuals that expose them to various protection risks



44,802 people reached in 2025 ▼

Shelter and settlements

NRC ensures access to adequate housing for populations affected by displacement, including highly vulnerable returnees.

Our response provides emergency and transitional shelter, as well as non-food item assistance as part of the emergency response framework designed for affected communities, including:

- providing emergency/temporary shelter solutions and basic household items in the immediate aftermath of displacement
- improved access to transitional shelters for protracted IDPs and support for access to permanent shelters for returnees through cash modality and strengthening of local construction knowledge through capacity-building initiatives
- improved access to basic settlement infrastructure services



769,797 people reached in 2025 ▼

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

Our response supports refugees, IDPs, returnees and vulnerable host communities impacted by conflict, climate shocks and disasters to access to sustainable and locally driven WASH solutions, through:

- provision of safe, adequate and affordable water supply services in both collective IDP camps and community settings, with enhanced management of water infrastructure, coordinated oversight and capacity building
- appropriate, safe sanitation facilities and improved solid waste management systems
- strengthened sustainability of key positive hygiene behaviours, with enhanced capacity of local governance structures and community groups to effectively promote safe hygiene and sanitation practices
- preventive measures and coordinated response strategies for waterborne diseases and outbreaks



85,487 people reached in 2025 ▼

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

NRC implements multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) at scale to deliver an effective, efficient and people-centred response to Ethiopia's complex humanitarian crisis. Through MPCA, NRC enables vulnerable refugees, IDPs, returnees and host communities to meet their basic needs with dignity while preserving their preferences and freedom of choice and supporting local markets and economies. NRC is also a member of the Ethiopia Cash Consortium (ECC).

Emergency / rapid response

NRC focuses on reaching hard-to-access areas, delivering first-line integrated emergency aid to displacement-affected communities within 72 hours, ensuring their urgent needs are met. The country office is staffed by a skilled and adaptable mobile emergency response team (ERT), recognised for its prompt, high-quality interventions aimed at alleviating suffering and enhancing wellbeing in crisis-affected regions:

- **WASH:** immediate distribution of WASH NFIs, hygiene kits, hygiene promotion, and rapid rehabilitation of water supply systems and water treatment
- **Shelter:** rapid provision of essential NFIs, emergency shelter and NFI kits (ESNFI), and cash-for-rent support to disaster-affected populations
- **Cash assistance:** immediate delivery of multi-purpose cash assistance to meet basic household needs
- **Education in emergencies:** immediate distribution of scholastic materials, construction of temporary learning spaces, Better Learning Programme (BLP) inclusive of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), accelerated education programmes to assist the transition from emergency learning into accredited formal school systems and restoration of education services in crisis settings
- **Protection from violence:** protection monitoring to identify the most vulnerable individuals, case management and response through individual protection assistance (IPA) and/or referral support to specialised services
- **Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA):** emergency counselling on housing, land and property (HLP) rights to protect newly displaced households from exploitation and rapid eviction, civil documentation and identity support for the most vulnerable to allow access to emergency services

Markets systems approach

NRC designs and delivers comprehensive responses that enable displacement-affected populations to access their preferred goods and services with choice and dignity, while strengthening local systems and markets to recover and stabilise sustainably. Where appropriate and feasible, cash assistance is the preferred modality, reflecting NRC's commitment to integrating market-based approaches across its programming.

NRC strengthens local market actors to lead responses to community needs while contributing to the recovery of host community economies. It also builds the capacity of community structures and government authorities to serve as first-line responders and sustain essential services and stability for displacement-affected populations.

Coordination and collaboration

NRC has strong participation and leadership in various coordination mechanisms in Ethiopia – including the national cluster, working groups, the INGO Forum and the Refugee Consultation Forum – and participates in all government-led initiatives and coordination. Our approach to coordination goes beyond participation, as we share our knowledge and expertise.

NRC co-chairs the SLSC cluster at the national cluster, and various RE-ACT initiatives at the regional level and in areas like Kamashi, Metekel. NRC also sits on the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). Additionally, NRC coordinates closely with the government at the federal and regional level, ensuring alignment of the response to government policy and priorities.

Alongside this, NRC works closely with UN agencies, academia, and other international and national NGOs including engagement with umbrella entities of national CSOs.

Our donors

We are grateful for the generous support from our donors:

- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)
- EU Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)
- EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
- Education Cannot Wait (ECW)
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
- German Development Cooperation (GIZ)
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