

TPLF incursion into Amhara, Afar affects 4.5 mln people

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By **Sisay Sahl**

Following TPLF's recent incursion into the Amhara and Afar regional states, the number of people affected by the conflict has reached 4.5 million and more than 500,000 have also been displaced, the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) revealed on Thursday, August 26, 2021.

In a weekly press conference, the Press Secretary for the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Billene Seyoum told both local and international reporters that the number of displaced people from the two regions has surpassed half a million. She also highlighted the need for urgent humanitarian assistance.

Emergency Incident Posts, together with the National Coordination Center and Regional Coordination Committee, established in the Amhara and Afar regions are working closely with the federal government to facilitate smooth humanitarian access.

According to Billene, thus far, the government has distributed 4800 quintals of food for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in Afar. Additionally, the World Food Program (WFP) has allocated three rounds of food distribution to the Afar region, the first of which is already underway.

Similarly, 2800 quintals of food items are moving to the Waghemra Zone of the Amhara region, and 2000 quintals of food items are moving to Debark Gonder, she said.

She also indicated that humanitarian partners have mobilized resources for 60,000 IDPs residing in the South Wollo zone of Dessie, most of whom fled from the northern Wollo Zonal Administration of the Amhara region. In this regard, more than 5000 quintals of food items have been delivered to 30,000 beneficiaries in the Dessie area.

However, due to shortage of support to feed the huge number of IDPs in the two regions, Billene called on international partners to scale-up their assistance.

Furthermore, she noted that assessment is underway to identify the level of damage caused by the TPLF's aggression around these communities. She said the relevant authority will issue the level of the damage once the assessment is finalized.

Regarding humanitarian assistance to the Tigray region, she revealed that 380 of the 457 trucks of food and nonfood items sent to Tigray region as of August 25 2021 have already arrived.

Billene also noted that following feedback and comments from partners regarding the large number of checkpoints, they have been reduced from seven to three to enable a more efficient transit.

However, she stressed that despite the efforts of the federal government, the existing corridor has intermittent access disruption due to attacks by the TPLF forces.

Though agreed humanitarian guidelines developed by both the federal government and international stakeholders regarding loading and unloading of trucks set not more than three to five days to transport humanitarian assistance, at least 72 trucks did not return since July 21, 2021, Billene underscored.

(Source: THE Reporter)