



Case Study: **Ethiopia: A Crisis where Access is Critical for Protection**

Humanitarian access in Tigray, since the beginning of the war in northern Ethiopia in 2020, has been severely constrained. Amidst very limited availability of basic services, food and fuel, all parties to the conflict were accused of restricting humanitarian access, particularly food assistance.¹⁴ Throughout the conflict, the Protection Cluster noted a sharp rise in protection risks stemming from human rights abuses, displacement and negative coping strategies amongst affected populations.¹⁵ Such negative coping strategies included child labour and intimate partner violence, as affected people struggled to survive amidst the stark lack of access to the very basics. Deaths linked to starvation and the lack of access to health care were reported in several areas. The specific impacts that access constraints have had on protection actors in Tigray included the inability for partners to safely access numerous conflict-affected communities to understand the threats facing civilians and identify those most in need of life-saving assistance, severe limitations on GBV response efforts and significant challenges with family tracing for the large number of separated and unaccompanied children. In 2022, the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia found reasonable grounds to believe that in Tigray the Federal Government and its allies had denied some six million people access to basic services for over a year and that the Federal Government was using starvation as a method of warfare.¹⁶

¹⁴ Report of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Investigation into Alleged Violations of International Human Rights, Humanitarian and Refugee Law Committed by all Parties to the Conflict in the Tigray Region of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2021. Available [here](#)

¹⁵ Northern Ethiopia Protection Cluster, Protection Analysis Update, May 2022. Available [here](#)

¹⁶ Report of the International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, September 2022. Available [here](#)