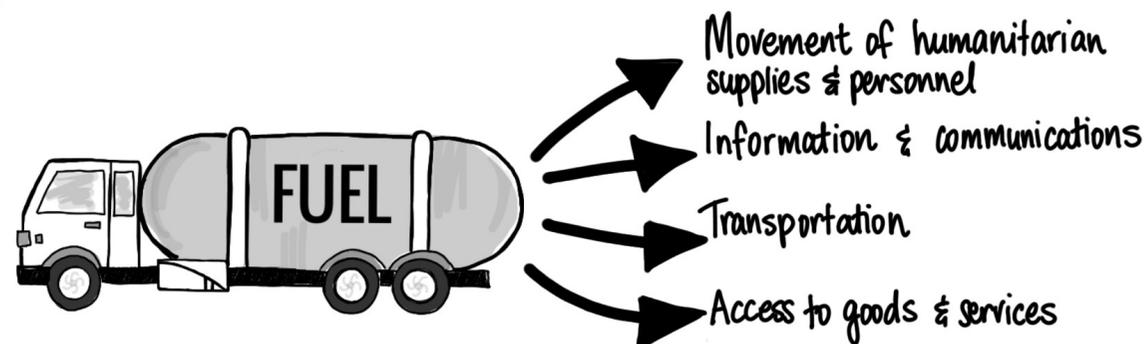


FUEL SITUATION IN TIGRAY SINCE 28 JUNE

Inside Tigray **access to fuel is increasingly challenging** as supply within the region depletes and is not being resupplied through the regular commercial channels. It has been estimated that **a minimum of 200,000 litres of fuel is needed for humanitarian response per week**, equivalent to 4-5 tankers (OCHA 29/07/2021; WFP 26/07/2021). However, between 28 June and 5 August, a total of only five fuel tankers have reached Mekele (KII 06/08/2021D; OCHA 19/07/2021; KII 03/08/2021A; KII 04/08/2021B; KII 28/07/2021B).

Since July, zonal administrations are responsible for the distribution of fuel to woreda authorities, but it is **unclear how much fuel remains** in the entire region or in each zone. Regardless, the remaining fuel will not last long without additional supply (KII 30/07/2021A). Both diesel and petrol are in very short supply (KII 12/07/2021C). Woreda authorities have made available **fuel rations** for humanitarian organisations, with priority given to food distributions and water trucking operations (KII 09/08/2021A; KII 06/08/2021D; KII 08/02/2021).



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Aim: This report aims to capture the currently available information on fuel shortages in Tigray and the impact of these on humanitarian operations. This report focuses on diesel and petrol needed for transportation and generators rather than other petroleum products or cooking gas etc.

Method: The information was compiled through publicly available data and information shared with ACAPS, including key informant interviews, in late July and early August 2021.

Limitations: Information regarding the situation in the region remains difficult to verify, as a result of continued communication blackouts, lack of access into the region, continued conflict in certain areas and concerns around information sensitivity.

DRIVERS OF FUEL SHORTAGES IN TIGRAY SINCE 28 JUNE

Blocked humanitarian access: Humanitarian access into Tigray is severely constrained as only one road through Afar region can be used (Semera-Mekele), compared to three routes prior to 28 June. As a result, only three convoys, including five fuel tankers, reached Mekele between 28 June and 5 August. Since late June, only three convoys have reached Mekele. The first convoy on 12 July included one fuel tanker (WFP 12/07/2021). On 17 July, the second convoy was not allowed to continue past the first checkpoint with any fuel tankers (KII 20/07/2021A; KII 19/07/2021 KII 17/07/2021a). Between 3-5 August, 4 tankers were able to reach Mekele (KII 06/08/2021D).

Commercial transport: As at 10 August, there has been no commercial transport of fuel into Tigray since 28 June (KII 12/07/2021C; KII 29/07/2021A).

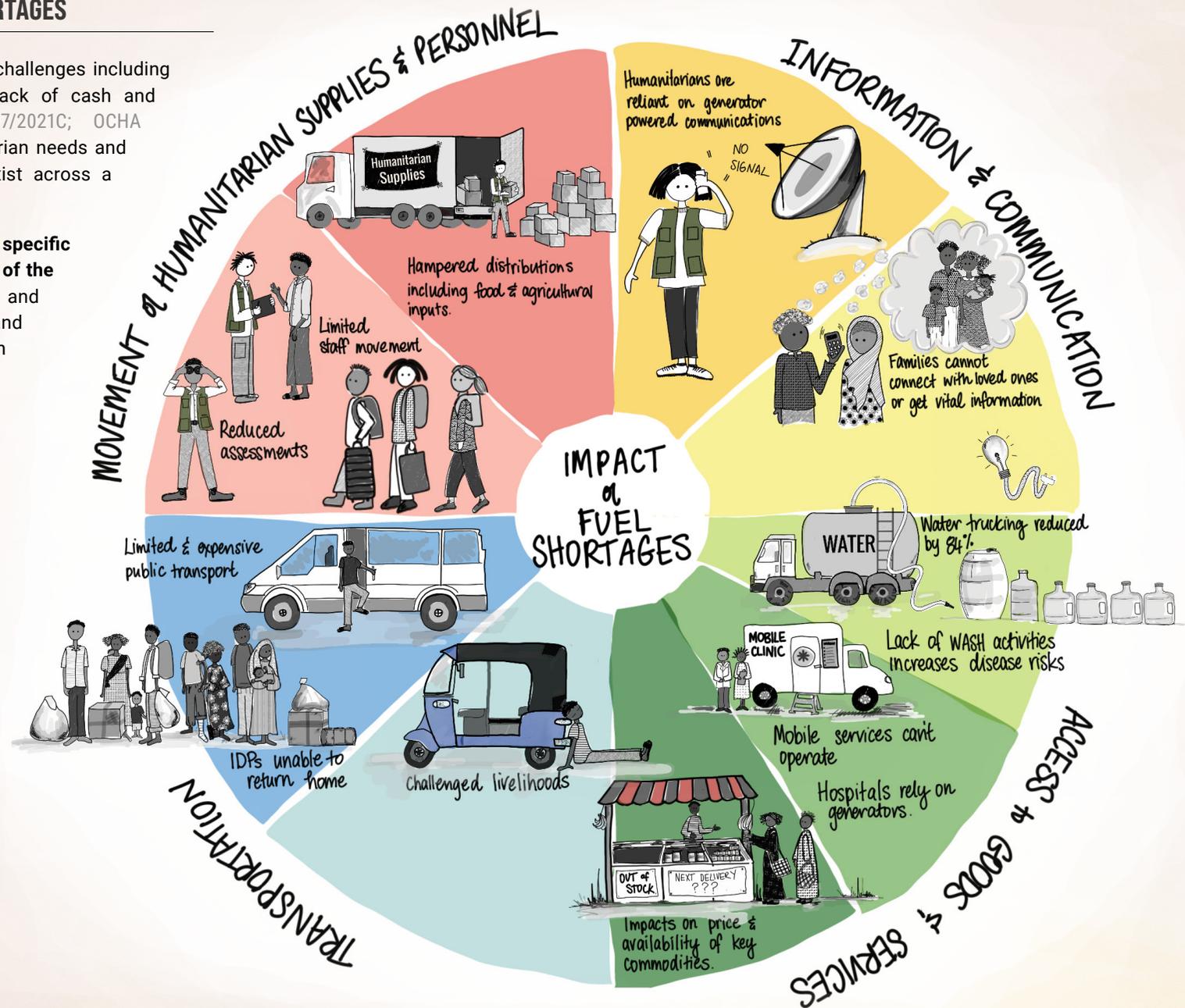
Restrictions and quality: There is a general fuel shortage in Ethiopia resulting in a range of limits imposed on the volume of fuel humanitarians are entitled to, including restrictions on filling up jerry cans in Gondar prior to entering Tigray in April (KII 09/08/2021A). In May it was noted that petrol quality had declined, most likely due to being cut with water or other substances (KII 29/07/2021A). Any remaining fuel in the region may also be contaminated, reducing fuel performance.

Increase in fuel prices in formal and informal markets: Prices began to escalate in early July (KII 12/07/2021C). By 9 July, prices for fuel on the illegal market increased by 185% compared with the end of June (OCHA 09/07/2021).

THE CROSS-CUTTING IMPACT OF FUEL SHORTAGES

Humanitarian response in Tigray faces serious challenges including non-functioning communications systems, a lack of cash and dwindling humanitarian supplies (KII 28/07/2021C; OCHA 29/07/2021). This is in the context of humanitarian needs and concerns which are deep, widespread, and exist across a variety of sectors.

The shortage of fuel adds to this, both as a **specific** challenge and one that **cuts across all elements of the response**, impacting transportation of people and of supplies and inhibiting access to electricity and communications. Fuel is essential to the provision of lifesaving assistance, without the required supply, **needs will continue to worsen**.



IMPLICATIONS OF FUEL SHORTAGE IN TIGRAY

Fuel is critical to nearly all aspects of life in Tigray. The geography and demographics of the region mean that access to markets, healthcare and most goods and services are in some way dependent on fuel. Transportation of goods to markets, running facilities in the absence of reliable electricity supplies, and moving within the region for work all mean that fuel is essential to keep vehicles on the road and generators running. Many of the key reasons fuel is important are interconnected. For instance, understanding the situation in relation to supplies and needs specific to particular areas of the region requires information, which again requires people being able to visit these areas and communicate information so that the right response, including supplies, can be delivered. Similarly, if people require medical assistance, they need to travel to one of the few health centres in the region and are then reliant on this facility having the staff, supplies, electricity and water to be operational – all dictated by fuel supplies. The implications of fuel shortages can be classified under four interconnected themes presented below.

Movement of humanitarian supplies and personnel

Humanitarian personnel: Movement of humanitarian personnel has been reduced (OCHA 05/08/2021). The ability to conduct assessments has been drastically reduced due to the lack of fuel and prioritisation of distributions. This hampers any kind of assessments, data collection or site visits which mean it is difficult to understand the situation throughout the region (KII 23/07/2021C; KII 09/08/2021B).

Supplies: Inside the region, the movement of humanitarian supplies has been hindered since early July (OCHA 09/07/2021). Distributions have been significantly hampered by the lack of fuel, including essential food response (KII 21/07/2021D; OCHA 19/07/2021; OCHA 05/08/2021). Many responders can no longer use large vehicles needed to transport supplies due to their large fuel consumption (KII 09/08/2021B). Fuel shortages are also limiting the transport of essential agricultural inputs across the region. This hinders the distribution of short-maturing seeds that are critical for the remainder of the rainy months of July and August ahead of the *meher* harvest in November (OCHA 05/07/2021; OCHA 09/07/2021; OCHA 19/07/2021; OCHA 29/07/2021).

Information and communications

Civilian population: Telecommunication, internet, and electricity remains cut off across the region since late June. Without communications, the need for mental health and psychosocial support increases; families remain unable to connect with missing or separated loved ones (OCHA 19/07/2021). Lack of telecommunications means that information sharing among the population must rely on other means, including local transportation, which is inhibited by the fuel shortage, and donkeys (KII 18/06/2021C).

Humanitarian organisations: UN agencies, ICRC, and NGOs rely on electricity or generator operated satellite and VSAT connections for internet, which are only available in Mekele and Shire (06/08/2021C; KII 06/08/2021D; KII 09/08/2021B). Due to fuel shortages, generators are only operating for a limited number of hours per day (KII 03/08/2021C). Without region-wide, consistent telecommunications the humanitarian response is severely hindered. Internet challenges delay and hamper assessments to the degree they can take place, as well as limiting the scope for data sharing, reporting, and planning (OCHA 05/08/2021).

Transportation

Public transport: The price of public transport increased by 200% in July 2021 compared to pre-crisis, due to the shortage of fuel (KII 09/08/2021B; KII 26/07/2021B). As a result, people may not be able to afford to travel distances to reach goods and services, such as markets and health facilities. IDPs have requested transportation assistance to return home (KII 21/07/2021C), but safe returns are hindered by the lack of affordable transportation and the limited ability of humanitarian responders to assist with this in the current conditions.

Livelihoods: Restricted movement impedes people's ability to undertake income generating activities. For example, the lack of fuel has directly disrupted the income source of people involved in transportation, including taxi motorcycle drivers known in Ethiopia as *bajaj* (KII 26/07/2021B).



Access to goods and services

The lack of fuel directly reduces the population's ability **to meet their needs** through many facets of life. Limited transportation options and increased prices lead to challenges accessing goods and services. With no electricity, reliance on fuel also increases.

Markets: Increased transportation prices impacts the price and availability of commodities as the cost of bringing goods into Tigray rises. Until regular transportation resumes, the ongoing scarcities are built into the purchase price (KII 26/07/2021B). At the end of July, responders had already observed price increases of some commodities (KII 21/07/2021C), which is aggravated by the shortage of cash (KII 09/08/2021A).

Health facilities: Due to electricity cuts, hospitals are forced to rely on generators that run on fuel, making general functioning challenging in the face of shortages (ICRC 15/07/2021). In Shire, Suhul Hospital has no fuel for the generators, leading to shortages of oxygen and water (KII 27/07/2021A). From late July, mobile health teams, which provide life-saving assistance, have not been able to operate due to lack of fuel (OCHA 29/07/2021).

WASH services: Essential WASH services that rely on electricity or fuel operated generators to function have been significantly reduced or halted. These include waste management, water pumps, and water-trucking, which has been reduced by 84% as at early August (OCHA 09/07/2021; OCHA 19/07/2021; KII 02/08/2021; OCHA 05/08/2021; KII 20/07/2021B). As a result, the population's access to clean drinking water and sanitation has been restricted. Simultaneously, construction of new WASH facilities and waste management activities have been halted or significantly reduced due to fuel shortages. This has led to worsening unhygienic conditions, especially at crowded IDP sites (OCHA 05/08/2021; KII 28/07/2021A; KII 15/07/2021C). The inability to conduct WASH activities due to fuel shortages significantly raises the risk of disease spread (OCHA 05/08/2021).

ACCESS TO FUEL IN TIGRAY: PRE- AND EARLY CRISIS

Fuel situation before November 2020

Prior to the conflict, Tigray's fuel was mainly supplied and transported into the region by private companies. Fuel was available to humanitarian organisations and the rest of the population at commercial petrol stations at the prevailing market rates (KII 29/07/2021A).

Fuel situation in Tigray January-June 2021

Prior to 28 June, the fuel supply into Tigray was managed by Ethiopian Federal authorities (KII 30/07/2021A). Approximately 90% of Ethiopia's grid power originates from hydropower (HSF 30/09/2020). However, during the early phases of the crisis (November and December 2020), response had already been challenged by electricity cuts and lack of fuel for generators. Following major electricity blackouts at the beginning of the crisis, starting in **January** the energy situation in major towns in Tigray improved with electricity supply resuming (KII 15/01/2021). Electricity access then fluctuated during the first half of 2021 (KII 27/04/2021B).

In **April** Ethiopia experienced a nation-wide fuel shortage, triggered by conflict between Afar and Somali regions which caused delays on the major import route from Djibouti, resulting in long lines at petrol stations (Ethiopia Monitor 11/04/2021). In Addis, humanitarian organisations were limited on the number of jerry cans of fuel they were allowed to fill up, and in many areas responders were only allowed to fuel their vehicles and not additional jerry cans (KII 21/04/2021A). The temporary closure of the road between Mekele and Shire caused fuel shortages in Tigray. In Gondar, Amhara region, there were long waiting times to fuel up vehicles prior to entering Tigray and restrictions on bringing jerry cans of fuel into Tigray (KII 21/04/2021A).

In **May**, responders noticed an increase of fuel prices and decrease in fuel quality (for example that it was cut with water) (KII 29/07/2021A; KII 19/05/2021A). In June, the lack of fuel for vehicles was already impacting WASH activities (KII 14/05/2021D).