



We urgently need your help to save and rebuild the lives of war victims



Displaced Tigrayans gather to collect food relief REST's depot



Good news, and not such good news...

For our WellWishers supporters who have been following events in Ethiopia, the news has been pretty bad for the people of Tigray region where much of our wells program is located.

Just to recap:

Tensions had been growing between the central Ethiopian government and the Eritrean regime on the one hand and the Tigray regional government on the other following the peace accord signed between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2019. At the time the accord was signed, the Eritrean leader, Isias Aferwerki commented “Game over!” meaning that the peace accord would create his chance to crush Tigray between Eritrea and the ruling forces in Ethiopia.

The subsequent restructure of the ruling political front/party in Ethiopia saw the withdrawal of the Tigrayan section of the coalition. With elections due under the Constitution by October 2020 the Tigrayan administration went ahead with its own regional elections but the national electoral board cancelled national elections, ostensibly due to Covid-19. The National Electoral Board declared the Tigrayan elections invalid and declared the newly elected regional government in Tigray illegitimate. After a move by the Tigrayan local forces to disable the national army command post in Mekelle, the capital of Tigray, the Ethiopian government declared a “law and order” operation to arrest or kill key Tigrayan leadership.

The ensuing conflict has seen the involvement of many divisions of the (foreign) Eritrean army, the Ethiopian army and the militia from the Amhara province to the south of Tigray. The Eritrean army has been particularly brutal with its occupation of Tigray. It is now clear that thousands of Tigrayan civilians have been summarily executed - particularly men, thousands of women raped, schools, universities, clinics, hospitals, factories, shops and homes looted and destroyed and crops burnt. Over one million people have been displaced, and four and a half million people are in desperate need of food assistance. The security situation in much of Tigray remains volatile and unpredictable. The verification of reports of the situation is slowly emerging as the international community establishes contact along the main road through Tigray. However, humanitarian partners have not been able to get access to many parts of the region, particularly remote and rural areas.

Our partner, the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) reports that thousands of wells and water sources have been deliberately damaged or destroyed by the Eritrean and Ethiopian armies.

Some basic services have been gradually restored in Tigray Region but for the most part restoration is limited to Southern and South Eastern Zones and Mekelle Town. Large swathes of Tigray have had no access to telecommunications, electricity, cash and fuel since early November. Many local markets are still reportedly not functioning, exacerbating an already critical situation.

The future:

As the key local non-government organisation, REST is uniquely placed to help with rebuilding. REST has now reopened 18 of its 21 regional offices. REST has been our Tigray partner for our village well-building program for the last 14 years.

Our immediate project with REST will be the restoration of damaged potable water supplies in 20 secured villages to provide water for 3,600 people: 10 water wells in Kilte Awlaelo district (Eastern Zone) and 10 in Hintallo-Wajerat district (South- Eastern Zone) of Tigray. These Woredas (Districts) are currently accessible and secure and maintenance activities can be undertaken.

This will be a tiny start to a very large program, as it is estimated that 60% of the 11,250 water supply schemes (including over 7000 wells) in Tigray are now non-functioning because they have either been damaged as a result of the conflict, or communities have no access to spare parts, or there is no technical support. The cost of these repairs and maintenance of the first 20 wells will be approximately \$56,000 which we will allocate immediately from our reserves. 60% of this amount will be allocated to cover the cost of deployment of technicians, and the rest is for procurement of necessary spare parts for maintenance and repair.

The Director of our partner REST has asked if we are able to fund more restoration and maintenance of our existing wells during 2021. WellWishers Trustees are pleased that the security situation is improving sufficiently to enable this to happen. This funding will be our priority for the remaining months of 2021.

We strongly feel that we cannot just walk away from the communities who have benefitted from WellWishers support over the last 14 years, and who have been victims of these vicious attacks. Lives depend on the restoration of water supplies.

We urgently need your support to bring back water supplies – and some hope for the future - to our friends in Tigray region, Ethiopia.



Our partner, The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) supplying emergency water containers and distributing soap.

REST has also been the recipient of a major food donation from the US Government.



It is not our usual practice to put out a PLEA for extra funds. We value your regular support for our ongoing program of well-building. However this vicious attack on civilian life (some commentators are calling it genocide) has brought an unprecedented urgency to our work. REST has requested more funding for restoration of wells in 60 villages - vital water supplies for 10,800 rural Ethiopians. To see the summary of the program, copy this link:

<https://wellwishersethiopia.com.createsend1.com/t/i-l-mhhejt-l-y/> (or ask us for a copy in the mail)

For a detailed update on the situation in Tigray by the Tufts University World Peace Foundation (foreword by NZ ex-PM Helen Clark), copy this link:

<https://sites.tufts.edu/wpf/files/2021/04/Starving-Tigray-report-final.pdf> (or ask us for a copy in the mail)

OUR BIG THANKS FOR ANY SUPPORT YOU CAN OFFER!



DONATIONS

- \$6800 will cover the cost of one well for an entire community, providing clean, accessible and permanent water for about 225 people
- \$150 will provide permanent water for a family
- \$25 will cover the cost of restoring a war-damaged well for one person
- Donations of any amount are most welcome!

Name:

Postal address:.....Postcode.....

Email (if you have one).....

My Donation is enclosed: \$. (Cheques or Money Orders made out to WellWishers)

OR Debit my Visa / Mastercard - donation amount: \$.....

Name on card:

CARD NUMBER: Expiry...../..... CCV.....(last 3 numbers on the back of card)

Signature..... Date:.....

OR Donate online (Secure site): www.givenow.com.au/wellwishers

OR Donate direct to WellWishers account at the Bank of Queensland:
BSB: 124048 or 124001 (either are OK) Account No: 21658949
Please leave your name and postcode as reference.

Name for Tax Deductible Receipt purposes if different from bank account or card

Name:.....

Or please tell us if this is a gift in lieu with details:

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Please send me information about making a Bequest to WellWishers

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership of WellWishers is for the calendar year
To become a member of WellWishers please complete the form below with the Annual Membership of \$2.20 (payable with unused postage stamps). Your email address would be very helpful for contact purposes.

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