

## Ethiopians face starvation due to aid cut-off. Devex, 30 April 2026

### Pipeline to disaster

For years, a critical U.S. food assistance program has been helping to feed millions of Ethiopians. But it looks like [the program will soon fall victim](#) to the larger purge of U.S. foreign aid that started last year, with sources telling Devex **it could be cut off by the end of June**.

That doesn't sit well with the top Democrat on the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

“I write to inform you of a dire humanitarian food pipeline break that will take place in Ethiopia in the coming months,” Sen. **Jeanne Shaheen** wrote in a letter to Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** that was obtained by Devex. “Without the necessary funding and commodity procurement, **a humanitarian catastrophe for up to 3.1 million** acutely food insecure people is anticipated.”

The program, known as the Joint Emergency Operations Program, or JEOP, delivers food and cash transfers across Ethiopia through a consortium of aid agencies, led by [Catholic Relief Services](#).

It was previously funded by [USAID](#) and then, when the agency was shuttered, transferred to the [State Department](#), where the handoff was presented as continuity rather than curtailment, my colleague Elissa Miolene writes.

Last July, a U.S. Embassy official in Mekele even declared: “There is no reduction in U.S. assistance — only a more focused and coordinated way of delivering it.”

Today, **the potential closure of JEOP** — along with other development and longer-term food aid programs in Ethiopia — **comes as conflict again erupts in Tigray**, where aid is dwindling.

Meanwhile, across the country, 4.7 million people have been displaced from their homes and are stuck in limbo, relying on food aid.

All of this comes as Ethiopia heads into preharvest and rainy seasons, **when the number of food-insecure people doubles** and heavy rainfall makes it difficult to transport aid.

That has Shaheen concerned and **urging Rubio “to provide the JEOP with funding** for market-based assistance for [internally displaced people] in Northern Ethiopia for the upcoming lean season to avert a catastrophic humanitarian disaster in Tigray.”

**Exclusive:** [US aid cutoff threatens Ethiopia’s displaced millions](#)