

Ethiopia: West Guji – Gedeo Conflict Displacement

Flash Update 3

06 June 2018

Highlights

- Renewed inter-communal violence along the borders of Gedeo (SNNPR) and West Guji (Oromia region) zones on 3 June displaced an estimated 40,000 people in Gedeo zone and more than 28,000 people in West Guji zone. Some 274,548¹ people were already displaced in Gedeo and at least 84,000 people in West Guji from the previous waves of violence since April 2018.
- Civilian deaths, damage to properties and public infrastructures, including schools and health facilities, were also reported.
- Regional authorities and hosting communities are providing first-line assistance to the displaced, but it is significantly inadequate. The capacity of the hosting communities is also being stretched to the limit.
- West Guji zonal authorities officially requested for food, plastic sheets and clothes assistance to the Oromia Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC) on 4 June. The request also extends to humanitarian partners. Meanwhile, the SNNP regional government has only so far requested humanitarian partners' support for recovery assistance in areas of return.
- On 5 June, the UN issued a travel restriction on all UN missions to West Guji and Gedeo zones. The situation continues to be closely monitored.

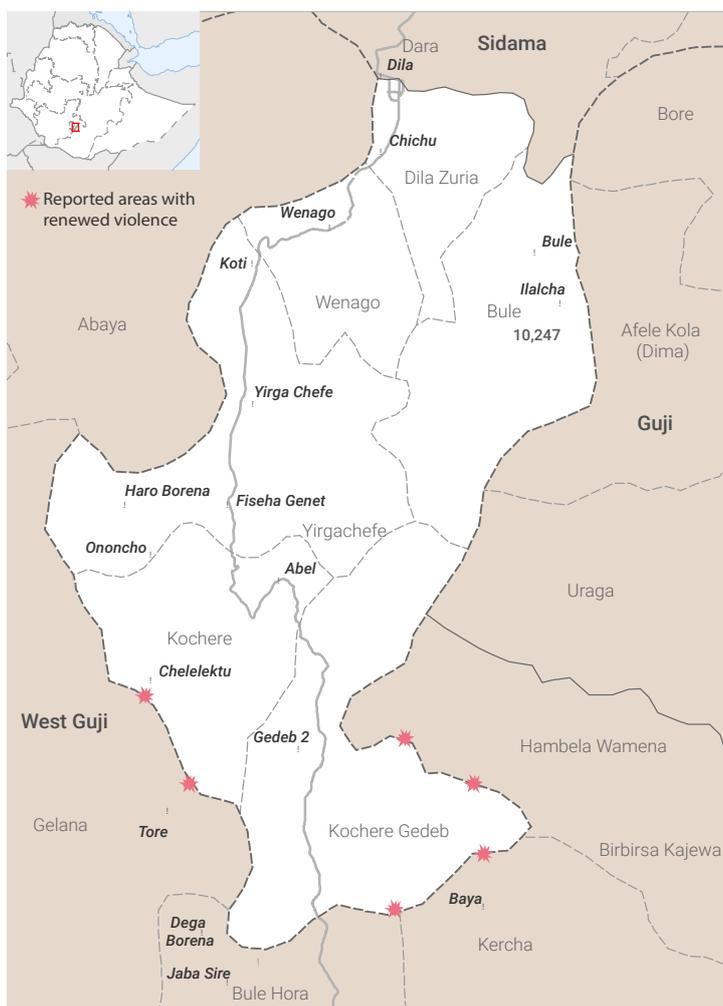
I. Displacement overview

Renewed inter-communal violence along the borders of Gedeo (SNNPR) and West Guji (Oromia region) zones was reported on 3 June. An estimated 40,000² people are reported to have been displaced by this latest wave of violence, and are currently settled in Bule (1,263 male; 167 female), Gedeb (32,809 people) and Kochere (2,439 male; 3,285 female) woredas of Gedeo zone, either with relatives or in public structures like schools and churches.

Meanwhile, more than 28,000³ people are reported to have been displaced by the 3 June violence in West Guji zone, including 1,688 people in Kercha woreda and 27,141 people in Gelana woreda.

Civilian deaths, damage to properties and to public infrastructures, including schools and health facilities were also reported.

Government security forces are deployed to the



Source: UNOCHA

¹ of whom 102,593 people have already returned as of early May, according to official report.

² It is not possible to make an accurate assessment of the total number of displacement due to the highly fluid situation, including returns and secondary-displacements

³ Unofficial reports received on 6 June put this number up to 50,000 newly displaced people in the area.

area to prevent the escalation of the conflict and for protection of civilians, but the situation remains tense.

This is the third wave of violence that has hit the area since April 2018. The last upsurge in violence between the Gedeo and Guji communities started in Kercha woreda of West Guji zone and later spread to other woredas along the border on 13 April 2018. Houses were burnt down, damaged, looted and livelihoods destroyed, and at least 274,548 people were displaced in Gedeo, and scattered across Dilla Zuria, Gedeb, Kochere, Wonago and Yirgachefe woredas. Some 84,000 people were also displaced in West Guji zone. All IDPs in Gedeo zone are believed to be ethnic Gedeos displaced from West Guji zone. Around 67 per cent of the IDPs in West Guji zone are also believed to be ethnic Gedeos displaced within West Guji.

II. Humanitarian needs, response and gaps

Regional authorities and hosting communities are providing first-line assistance to the displaced population, but it is significantly inadequate. The capacity of the hosting communities is also being stretched to the limit. There were some partner support in May, but the international response had since been minimal and challenging.

Relief food has already been dispatched for 69,259 IDPs in West Guji zone. On 4 June, West Guji zonal authorities officially requested for additional food, plastic sheets and clothes assistance to the Oromia Disaster Risk Management Commission (DRMC). The request also extends to international partners.

In Gedeo zone, local authorities are distributing 111 quintal⁴ of maize – diverted from the flood response stock – to the newly displaced people, while Woreda Health Office is preparing to distribute some CSB from available stock.



Burnt houses in Gedeo zone. Source: IOM

The needs however surpass the available resources to date. The Gedeo zonal authorities have officially requested SNNP regional government support for food assistance targeting 91,364 displaced people living with the host community in Gedeb, Yirga Chefe, Wonago, Kochere and Dilla, and are awaiting a reply. The SNNP regional government has so far only requested international partners' support for recovery assistance in areas of return.

Both Oromia and SNNP regional authorities are promoting the return of all the IDPs to their respective areas of origin and for the provision of assistance in areas of return, and some voluntary and organized returns were reported.

However, continuing insecurity and the lack of or inadequate assistance in areas of return has discouraged return. A recent OCHA mission has also had the chance to talk to some IDPs who were secondarily-displaced after return due to insecurity.

Regional authorities, with the engagement of community leaders (Aba Gedas), had organized peace and reconciliation conferences with affected communities in order to find solution to the root cause of the displacement back in April. However, tension and sporadic violence, including the 3 June incident, remain.

On 5 June, UNDSS issued a travel restriction on all UN missions to Abaya, Birbirsa Kajiwa, Gelana, Hambele Wamena, and Kercha woredas of West Guji zone of Oromia region; and to all woredas of Gedeo zone of SNN-PR. The situation continues to be closely monitored.

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