

Ethiopia: West Guji – Gedeo Conflict Displacement

Flash Update 2

22 May 2018

Highlights

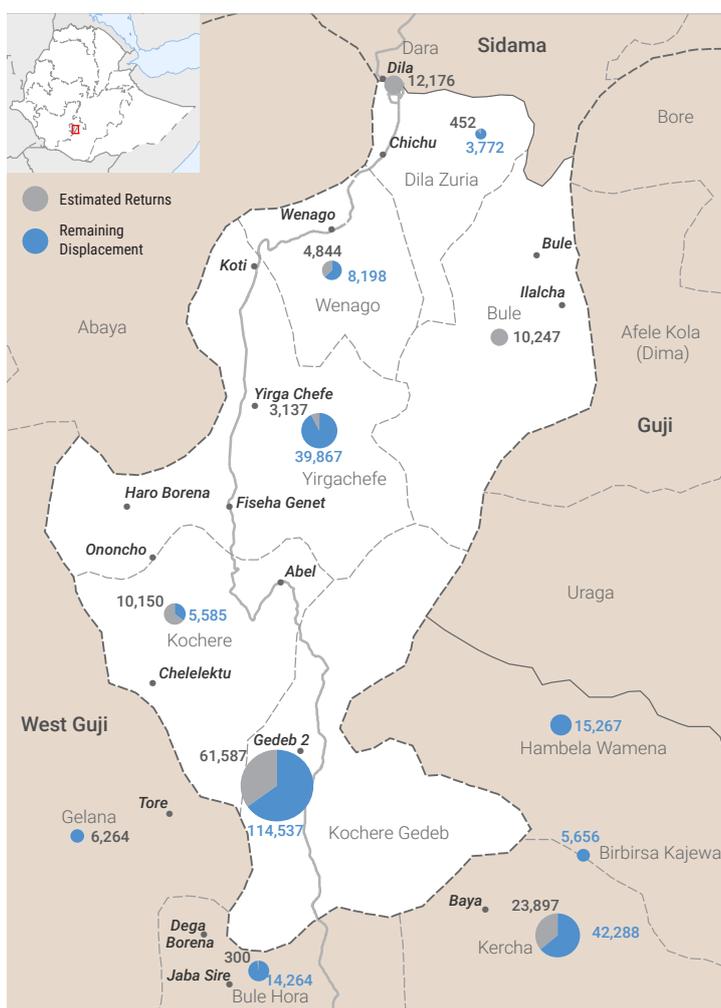
- A rapid assessment conducted in Gedeo zone (SNNPR) found that at least 274,548¹ people were displaced from West Guji (Oromia) to Gedeo zone following the violence that erupted along the regional boundary in mid-April. Some 84,000 people were also displaced in West Guji zone. More than 4,000 houses were reportedly burnt down or damaged in West Guji and livelihoods destroyed.
- Official reports indicate that as of early May, 102,593 people of the 274,548 people displaced in Gedeo were returned to their villages in West Guji zone
- The Government, the local community and civil society were the first and main responders to date, with support from few partners. Significant gaps in food, shelter, NFI and WaSH are reported
- Although there were no reported health outbreaks so far, AWD, scabies and measles are potential health risks due to the use of water from unsafe sources, open defecation, overcrowded shelter and sharing of clothes. The overcrowded shelter conditions within hosting households also present protection concerns.

I. Displacement overview

A rapid assessment conducted in Gedeo zone (SNNPR) from 2 to 8 May found that at least 274,548 people (139,494 male; 135,104 female) were displaced from West Guji (Oromia) to Gedeo zone, following the inter-communal violence that erupted in mid-April 2018 along the borders of the two zones. This recent wave of 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.

The 274,548 IDPs in Gedeo were scattered across Dilla Zuria, Gedeb, Kochere, Wonago and Yirgacheffe *woredas* of Gedeo zone, 64 per cent of whom were hosted in Gedeb *woreda*. Some 84,000 people were also displaced in West Guji zone. All IDPs currently 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.

Within the first two weeks of displacement, the Oromia and SNNP regional authorities agreed to facilitate the return of all the IDPs to their respective areas of origin by end of April, and to provide assistance in areas of return. Authorities, with the



Source: UNOCHA

engagement of community leaders (Aba Gedas), have held peace and reconciliation conferences with affected communities in order to find resolution to the root cause of the displacement.

Official reports indicate that as of early May, 102,593 people (52,288 male; 50,305 female) of the total 274,548 people displaced in Gedeo were returned to their villages in West Guji zone. However, continuing insecurity in West Guji and the lack of or inadequate assistance in areas of return has slowed down the pace of the return operation. Anecdotal reports also indicate that some IDPs returned to West Guji are moving back to Gedeo zone.

Given that the authorities are encouraging return, there are currently no IDP collective centers. The IDPs are living with host communities, who are themselves vulnerable. Four of the seven IDP-hosting woredas in Gedeo (Kochere, Yirga Cheffe, Wonago and Dilla Zuria) are classified as hotspot Priority 1, while Gedeb *woreda* is classified as Priority 2. There are 72,000 relief food beneficiaries and 49,069 PSNP beneficiaries in the hosting woredas. There is also a scabies outbreak in Gedeb, Kochere, Yirgacheffe and Wonago *woredas*.

II. Humanitarian needs, response and gaps

The Government, the local community and civil society were the first and main responders to date, with support from few partners. However, the needs significantly surpass resources available. The response effort is also delayed/hampered by the return and assistance in areas of return stance adopted by regional authorities. Significant gaps are reported in food, shelter and NFI and WaSH supplies. Although there were no reported health outbreaks so far, acute watery diarrhea (AWD), scabies and measles are potential health risks due to the use of water from unsafe sources, open defecation, overcrowded shelter and sharing of clothes. The overcrowded shelter conditions within hosting households also present protection concerns.



Burnt houses in West Guji zone. Source: IOM

The emergency response was initiated by the Gedeo Zonal Administration with an allocation of ETB308,000 from its contingency budget for the purchase of food items. Some ETB7.8 million were also mobilized by the host community, churches and civil servants for food and non-food assistance. The one-time food allocation by the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), including 1,250 metric ton (Mt) of rice, 115 Mt of CSB, 33 Mt of oil and 500 cartons of biscuit to Gedeb (SNNP) and Kercha (Oromia) only reached 50,000 IDPs in SNNPR and 27,500 IDPs in West Guji zone. The food ration was also inadequate, with only 5 Kgs of relief food distributed per person for

10 days; 2 Kgs of CSB per child and 2.5 Kgs per moderately malnourished mothers for 5 days. Upon the request of the West Guji zonal authorities, the Oromia Regional Government submitted a request to the federal government for additional food assistance. Allocation is still pending.

The majority of the IDPs have lost most or all of their household items, and their houses were fully or partially damaged, requiring appropriate shelter and NFI support. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Red Cross reached up to 2000 households with a variety of NFIs, while the INGO IRC distributed shelters for 710 households in Yirgacheffe woreda. IRC also distributed similar quantity of shelter and NFI kits for IDPs in Bule Hora *woreda*, West Guji zone.

Upon the decision of regional authorities, all health facilities in IDP-hosting woredas in Gedeo zone are providing free health service for the IDPs. The Regional Health Bureau (RHB) provided different types of drugs and medical supplies (EDK kits) to IDP-hosting woredas and health facilities. Health education, mainly on hygiene and sanitation, were given to IDPs and host communities in all hosting-*woredas* of Gedeo. Overall, Government provided primary health care for 24,021 IDPs and reached 71,212 IDPs and host community with health education. All nine Mobile Health Clinics that were established in Gedeb *woreda* in the initial stages of

displacement were dismantled when the IDP return operation commenced.

In April, 20,750 IDP children under-5 were screened for malnutrition, of whom 2,675 children were found to be moderately malnourished and 488 children were found to be severely malnourished (15.3 per cent Proxy GAM). Similarly, of 4,441 pregnant and lactating mothers screened, 1,307 mothers were found to be moderately malnourished (31.4 per cent Proxy GAM). There are currently no reported shortages of TFP supplies in all affected *woredas*.

Water supply coverage in IDP-hosting *woredas* in Gedeo zone is critically low ranging from 21 per cent in Gedeb to 64 per cent in Dilla Zuria. To improve water access, the Government had deployed 2 water trucks and the borehole in Gedeb Town was rehabilitated. The water trucking service was however discontinued when the IDP return operation started. Meanwhile, several water points in the IDP-hosting *woredas* became dysfunctional due to over-use. A total of 76 water schemes need immediate rehabilitation. To reduce open defecation and associated health risks, the Government, with community participation, constructed 13 and rehabilitated 46 communal latrines in Gedeb, Kochere and Dilla Zuria *woredas* of Gedeo zone. However, these remain worrying insufficient compared to the scale of displacement. UNICEF distributed water treatment chemicals and WaSH NFIs to IDPs in Gedeb AND Yirgachefe *woredas*. An adequate stock of WaSH supplies was also prepositioned at regional and zonal levels.

In the initial stages of displacement, 54 schools in Gedeb *woreda* were used as temporary shelter for the IDPs, affecting 49,519 students. As of 30 April however, 47 schools were reopened as IDPs were returned or moved to host communities. Seven schools (1 school burnt down, 5 schools looted and 1 school still sheltering deployed military force) remain closed affecting 4,921 students. The SNNP Regional Bureau of Water and Children Affairs (BoWCA) was approached to solicit support for IDP-hosting *woredas* in identifying GBV cases and unaccompanied children.

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¹ 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