The humanitarian landscape in the sub-region remains heavily impacted by standoff between security forces and unidentified armed groups (UAGs). Clashes in West and Kelem Wellega have intensified since January. Violence is impacting the civilian population, with reports of arrests and an unconfirmed number of people displaced to Gambela. The security situation in East Wellega is calm, though tensions in some boundary areas with Kamashi remain.

While humanitarian partners are not directly targeted by the ongoing violence, the likelihood of suffering collateral damage remains high. Since January, partners have reported various incidents including intimidation and commandeering of vehicles by security forces, which put them at risk in light of the ongoing conflict dynamics with UAGs.

Over 50,000 IDP returnees living in boundary areas between West Wellega and Kamashi are out-of-reach to aid partners intermittently. Since January, partner’s critical interventions under implementation on emergency health and education. During 2018 violence are yet to be fully repaired, affecting zonal authorities, 13 schools and 2 health posts damaged by security operation has blocked access to large areas, hindering their access to aid. The ongoing violence, the likelihood of suffering collateral damage remains high. Since January, partners have reported various incidents including intimidation and commandeering of vehicles by security forces, which put them at risk in light of the ongoing conflict dynamics with UAGs.

The situation in West Wellega is precarious. An estimated 18,000 people remain secondary displaced in a vulnerable situation due to very limited access to aid. The ongoing security operation has blocked access to large areas, forcing partners to suspend operations, hibernate or relocate staff. Since January, some 15,000 people, beneficiaries of partner’s projects, have been cut from operations. However, tensions between ethnic Oromo and Gumuz remain along some boundary areas. An estimated 15,000 people remain secondary displaced, including 10,000 in Haro Limu and 3,000 in Sasiga woreda. These IDPs are not recognized as such by local authorities, lowering their access to aid. A recent assessment in Limu woreda, identified IDPs who have not returned to their former homes in boundary areas with BGR due to security concerns. Physical access restrictions related to the poor state of roads impact operations in rural areas Haro Limu and Sasiga woredas.

Operations in Kamashi zone are ongoing, but access to the zone is hampered by the security situation in West Wellega. As alternative, partners have used the Assossa - Oda Bidigilu and Haro Limu - Yaso roads, both under construction. According to zone government, out of the 62,000 people displaced by conflict, some 23,000 thousand returned from the Wellegas, plus some 29,000 within Kamashi. Few partners are operational in the zone, and some areas have not received any humanitarian or recovery assistance.

Many returnees in Kamashi have not yet returned to their habitual residence areas due to security concerns. Partners struggle to locate them, as they are scattered and often only show up to receive assistance. According to zonal authorities, 13 schools and 2 health posts damaged during 2018 violence are yet to be fully repaired, affecting the population’s access to essential services such as health and education.