



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 has intensified since January.

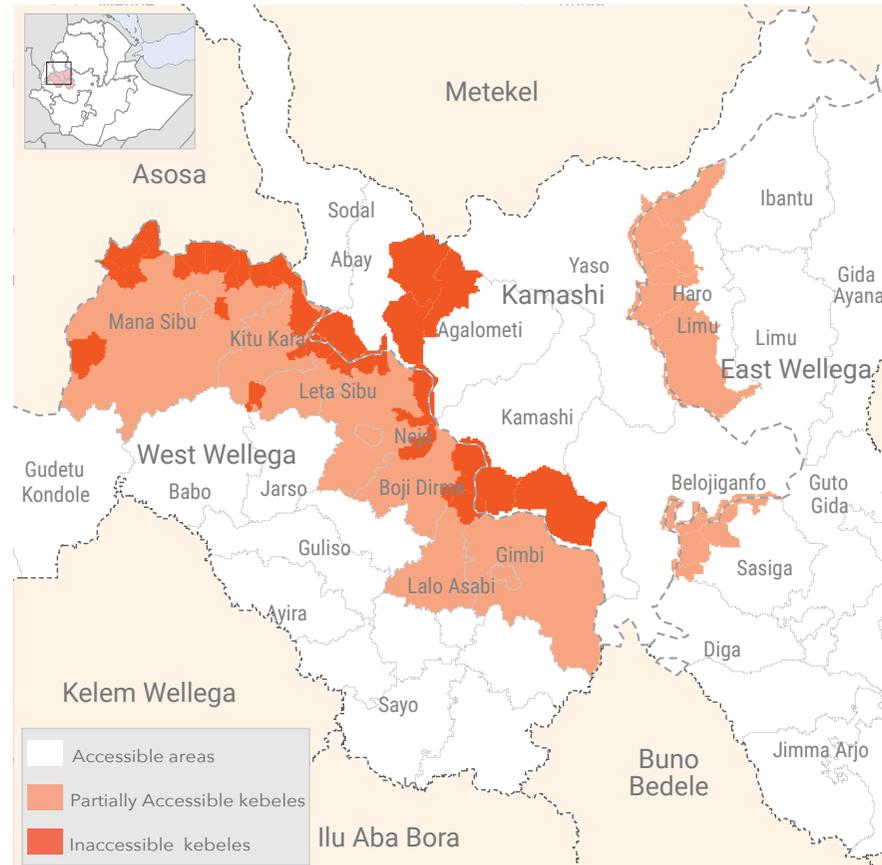
Violence is impacting the civilian population, with reports of arrests and an unconfirmed number of people displaced to Gambela. The security situation in East Wollega is calm, though tensions in some boundary areas with Kamashi remain.

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 cash, health, nutrition, agriculture, shelter/ NFIs, protection, water and sanitation are temporarily suspended.

Since early January, access to internet and mobile network services have been shut down in large parts of Western Oromia. As a result, partners are unable to conduct surveillance of disease outbreaks or monitor nutrition activities or assistance to displaced families. **The blackout has impacted the security of aid personnel,** with HF/ VHF radio the only options to coordinate staff movements and monitor security developments. Further, partners have expressed concern on the **shortage of communication equipment.** At the end of February, two VSATs were installed in Nekemte, allowing partners' access to internet services in town.

The situation in West Wollega is precarious. An estimated 18,000 people remain secondary displaced in a vulnerable



Zone	Total IDPs and Returnees	IDPs/Returnees in partially accessible kebeles	IDPs/Returnees in inaccessible kebeles
Kamashi	56,000	-	6,000
West Wellega	54,000	23,000	31,000
East Wellega	101,000	13,000	-

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 assistance.** Only a few agencies have maintained presence but limited operations to areas along the Nekemte - Assossa road. Reportedly, lack of assistance has forced IDPs/returnees resort in to negative coping mechanisms.

The situation in East Wellega remains permissive to 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, hindering 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 Wollega. As alternative, partners have used the Assosa - Oda Bidiglilu 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.**