

Ethiopia: Gedeo-West Guji Displacement Crisis

Situation update No.8



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Highlights

- The Government has been facilitating the return of Gedeo-Guji IDPs to their respective areas of origin since the third week of August 2018, where conditions allow.
- The discrepancies in the number of people reported to remain displaced in Gedeo zone, and the number of IDPs reported to have moved back to West Guji zone is impairing the ability of partners to adequately plan interventions, particularly in the food and shelter/non-food items sectors. The Government and humanitarian partners are working to address the discrepancies.
- A joint response and early recovery plan for the Gedeo- Guji displacement crisis has now been completed.
- The living condition of IDPs in the remaining communal shelters in Gedeo and in the new collective centers in West Guji hosting returnees is dire.

I. Displacement and return overview

The Government has been facilitating the return of Gedeo-Guji IDPs to their respective areas of origin since the third week of August 2018, where conditions allow. The returns were preceded by successive Government and community leaders-led peace and reconciliation conferences organized since the inter-communal violence broke out along the Gedeo (SNNP) and West Guji (Oromia) regional boundaries in April 2018. The peace



Figure 1 IDP returnees being transported from collective sites to their place of origin. Photo Credit: OCHA

conferences were organized at all administrative levels (kebele, woreda, zone, region and federal) with the involvement of key stakeholders (Aba Gedas, women, men, spiritual leaders). The youths were consulted separately to ensure their involvement in the peace building effort. Government officials and IDP representatives also conducted “go and see visits” to areas of return, to enable informed decision making. Partners have advised for further peace building conferences to be organized with the full participation of the returnees.

According to the Government, the expedited return is intended to allow IDPs to return in time for the coffee harvesting season and the resumption of the school year. A number of IDP sites (especially schools) were vacated

and rehabilitated in preparation of the start of the school year. According to the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), the Federal Ministry of Education had visited schools in the affected areas following which it allocated US\$4.5 million for school maintenance activities.



Figure 2 IDP women and children just returned to their villages in Kercha woreda, West Guji zone. Photo credit: OCHA

To date, the Dilla Emergency Operation Center (EOC) reported that some 456,696 IDPs had returned to their respective areas of origin, including 112,023 returnees in Gedeo (80,811 IDPs returned from one woreda to another within Gedeo and 31,212 IDPs returned from East and West Guji); and 344,673 returnees from Gedeo back to East and West Guji. But according to West Guji authorities, nearly 195,000 people returned to areas of origin: 133,400 from within the zone and an additional 61,400 from Gedeo. Government and humanitarian partners are working to address the discrepancies in number.

Recent reports from the field indicate that some IDPs that had returned to West Guji have started to go back to Gedeo, pointing to a possible trend of “reverse return” due to insecurity. IDPs in their hundreds – who had returned to Kercha woreda of West Guji - are reportedly back in Wenago woreda of Gedeo zone awaiting registration. Similar reports are received from Gedeb woreda. The Dilla EOC and zonal authorities are verifying the report.

The Government and humanitarian partners are working towards improving the response operation, including ensuring better involvement of IDPs in the planning and management of durable solutions in line with the principles of voluntariness, safety, dignity, non-discrimination and sustainability.

A joint response and early recovery plan for the Gedeo-Guji displacement crisis has now been completed. The plan lays out identified needs for emergency response for IDPs that are not ready/unwilling to go back to their places of origin; and early recovery needs for those IDPs that have returned and are still in need of relief support. Forty newly established collective centres were identified in kebele capitals in Birbirsajajowa, Bule Hora, Hambela Wamena and Kercha woredas of West Guji zone, which are hosting returnees.

The Government and humanitarian partners are committed to continue to provide assistance to the remaining IDPs as they wait for a safe and dignified return to their place of origin, and to support sustainable return and reintegration (food, health, water, shelter, education, livelihood), based on needs.

At the peak of the crisis, 694,367 people were displaced in Gedeo zone, including 344,673 people displaced from West Guji and East Guji zones, and 349,694 people displaced within Gedeo. While the majority of the IDPs (60 per cent) were taking refuge within the host communities, 40 per cent were settled in numerous collective centers (mainly in schools, unfinished government buildings and churches. Meanwhile in Oromia, 189,010 people were displaced within West Guji zone, including 52,651 people displaced from SSNP region.

Challenges in areas of displacement and return

The living condition of IDPs residing with host communities and in the remaining communal shelters is still dire: relief food deliveries are still not adequate; protection risks and hygiene and sanitation issues are still rife; while health outbreak risks are still high. Humanitarian services are stretched beyond capacity. Of particular concern are the most vulnerable groups (i.e. the already high number of malnourished children and pregnant /

breastfeeding women). There is greater need to respond to the assessed requirement reflected in the Humanitarian and Disaster Resilience Plan mid-year review.

Meanwhile, there is lack of adequate assistances in areas of return and early recovery support for returnees. Some of the returnees are in collective centers, and relief needs in these new sites remain critical. IDPs who have voluntarily returned to their homes noted challenges to resume their lives, including critical shortage of shelter and non-food items (particularly household utensils/kitchen sets) and other amenities such as seeds and farming tools. In addition, it is essential to maintaining law and order to ensure security in areas of return.

II. Response



The National Disaster Risk Management Commission – NDRMC (in two woredas) and the Joint Emergency Operation Program – JEOP (in 4 woredas) reached at least 691,871 general relief food beneficiaries under the second round of relief food distribution in Gedeo zone, which was conducted from 29 July to 10 September. IDPs in these woredas also received food assistance. In West Guji, Round 2 food distribution was completed by NDRMC in mid- August (96.4 per cent coverage in cereals, 90.8 per cent in oil and 184.2 per cent in CSB), reaching an estimated 189,000 IDPs.

At present, third round relief food is being distributed by the Government, with 70 per cent of food allocation distributed so far in Gedeo zone, benefiting 145,856 people (33,390 IDPs from East Guji in five woredas and in Dilla Town; and 111,926 returnees in four woredas). Similarly, in West Guji, the Government is distributing third round relief food in almost all IDP-hosting woredas. The West Guji zonal authorities have approved 260,634 (43,775 households) returnees and IDPs requiring assistance in six woredas. The fourth round relief food distribution will be conducted by one food operator – JEOP –covering IDPs and returnees in seven woredas in Gedeo zone, and six woredas in West Guji zone.

Overall, delays in food distribution due to secondary transportation and shortage of storage facilities are reported.



In West Guji, the third round nutrition screening was finalized (94 per cent coverage). The data indicates a proxy GAM of 8 per cent. Only two woredas separated the screening data by IDP and host community. The second round Targeted Supplementary Feeding (TSF) supplies are being distributed, and reached 13 per cent delivery. Community management of moderate acute malnutrition - CMAM supplies were prepositioned in zonal stores for 1500 severely malnourished children (SAM) returnees. Of 291 health workers identified for SAM training, 44 have already been trained, while 217 of the 357 health extension workers targeted for this training have already received it. Strengthening of outpatient therapeutic program - OTP/stabilization center - SC is an ongoing weekly activity conducted by the Nutrition Cluster.

In Dilla zone, four mass screening campaigns were conducted. At least 1,586 severely and 19,994 moderately malnourished children were treated in August, in addition to 16,248 moderately malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women. 118 health workers received capacity building training to improve SAM case management. More than 20 Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNT) are working in prioritized kebeles and two MHNT are providing service at Kera site in Dilla Town. Insufficient relief food supplies, lack of safe water in at least nine stabilization centers, and lack of skilled personnel to promote IYCF in emergency context are some of the identified gaps. A strong cross-woreda/cross-zone referral mechanisms for both SAM treatment and MAM management is required in the case of return.



According to NDRMC, the Federal Ministry of Education had visited schools in the affected areas following which it allocated US\$4.5 million for school maintenance activities. The Education Cluster identified 10 schools still occupied by IDPs in Gedeb, Kochere and Yirga Chefe woredas. Twelve additional schools were

identified as partially damaged and five as totally damaged that require rehabilitation. IOM is committed to construct 50 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS) to make fully damaged classes and other amenities in the five schools operational. Cleaning and disinfection of schools is ongoing as one of the major activities for the cluster. USAID will supply stationary materials to 19 primary schools in Gedeo zone. In West Guji zone, the Ministry of Education distributed 1,600 backboards and 3,200 uniforms to the six affected woredas, while the SNNP Regional Education Bureau distributed 5000 exercise books and pencils and the Zonal Education Office distributed 100,008 exercise books and 40,000 pens. The INGO Imagine 1 day, in partnership with UNICEF, has been supporting pre-school education targeting 1,200 returnee children aged 5-6 years.

PROTECTION

A protection monitoring and mapping system has been in place since the beginning of the operation to identify challenges and respond to identified concerns. A simplified referral matrix and information sharing protocol is being developed with the support of the Child Protection/Gender-based Violence – CP/GBV Sub-Cluster for both Gedeo and West Guji zones, in close collaboration with the relevant Government sector bureau. In West Guji zone, data verification for unaccompanied and separated children (UAM/SC) in woredas and kebeles continues. Nearly 1,300 unaccompanied and separated children (~390 girls) were so far reunited with their families in West Guji zone. Data harmonization is ongoing for some 1,800 child protection cases identified. Similarly, in Dilla zone, 2,095 UAM/SC were identified in Gedeb, of whom 113 children were already reunited with their families; 12 children are receiving foster care; 418 children are in the process of reunification; 1,552 children are living with relatives, and 543 are identified as emergency cases (UAM/SC without family/relatives). Community awareness events, strengthening of GBV health response and distribution of dignity kits are some of the other activities being conducted by the cluster.

The Protection Cluster has currently completed preparation to conduct protection monitoring that will enable the identification of IDPs and returnees with protection concerns, which will inform decisions and action by relevant national, regional and international actors and ensure the full respect of the rights of IDPs and returnees.

EMERGENCY SHELTER/NON-FOOD ITEMS (ES/NFI)

The cluster's priorities for IDPs and returnees are (i) emergency shelter kits for shelter improvements: plastic sheet, wooden poles, nails, tools, ropes and cash (ii) emergency NFI, including kitchen equipment, and (iii) transitional shelter assistance for the households able to safely rebuild their homes. Areas with low temperatures will be prioritized. In Dilla zone, the cluster has completed the analysis of needs for the 145,845 individuals (24,309 households) identified by the zone as population in need of NFIs in the seven affected woredas, which includes both IDPs and returnees. The Cluster supported 13,116 households with partial NFI kits. NDRMC has distributed 12,433 plastic sheets in return woredas. Some 24,309 households (returnees and IDPs) are in need of emergency NFI support in Dilla, and contingency stocks are required for an additional 10,000 households in case of secondary displacement. In West Guji zone, 22,898 households of 36,412 households targeted were reached with ES/NFI assistance.

WaSH

At least 14 partners are involved in water supply and other related interventions in Gedeo zone alone. Cleaning, disinfection, and desludging (CDD) of school latrines is ongoing before the opening of schools. Cleaning of 19 schools, disinfection of 39 schools, decommissioning of 143 latrines and 8 solid water pits, and desludging of 16 blocks of latrines have been completed. Four new water supply systems (borehole and shallow wells) were constructed, and 20 hand pumps were rehabilitated. Five water trucks are supplying clean water to an estimated 20,000 beneficiaries in Gedeb, Kochere, Dilla Town and Bule at a ratio of 10 liter /person/day. Some of the identified gaps for the WaSH response in Gedeo include: Institutional WaSH (50 per cent of health centers lack access to safe water and there are gaps in WaSH facilities in schools); the response has not yet reached the minimum standard for water support: water supply is at an average of 5 liter/person/day (water trucking) and 1 latrine is for an average of 100 people; there is need for more than 2 million tablets/sachets/bottles of water purification and disinfection chemicals, as well as 381,000 WaSH NFIs; disinfecting, constructing, desludging and decommissioning of 1,186 blocks/stances of latrines in collective centers and the host communities is pending.

In West Guji, 17,328 Jerry cans, 18,580 buckets, 119,450 laundry soaps and 205,466 body soaps were distributed in total. The cluster's estimated response gap includes jerry cans (75 per cent), buckets (73 per cent), laundry soap (67 per cent) and body soap (44 per cent). More operational partners are needed to provide full WaSH package support both short-term and long-term in West Guji.



In Dilla zone, more than 124,983 people received health service; Woreda Rapid Response Teams (RRT) were established, with 244 health workers trained; 10 mobile clinics are providing services to returnees in areas where health facilities were damaged; emergency health kits and supplies were also provided by the cluster. Some of the identified needs/gaps include: shortage of staff, medication and medical equipment, as well as water supply (50 per cent coverage) at health facilities; seven damaged health facilities require rehabilitation; routine Expanded Program of Immunization (EPI) services are interrupted in most health facilities. Meanwhile in West Guji zone, AWD preparedness remains a priority for the cluster with preposition of AWD Kits in Kercha and other AWD-prone woredas and the identification of potential CTC sites. Strengthening of health services (mobile and static) is ongoing in all affected woredas. The Health Cluster has initiated a weekly coordination meeting for partners that are supporting mobile health and nutrition services.

III. Coordination Arrangements

The Government and partners have taken several measures to enhance response coordination and to boost response capacity at site level. Two Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) were established in Dilla Town in Gedeo zone and in Bule Hora Town in West Guji zone. The EOCs have four sections: 1) Management, which is responsible for the overall response management under the leadership of NDRMC and Zone Administration, 2) Planning, which is responsible for collecting, evaluating and disseminating information, 3) Logistics, which is responsible for identifying and procuring resources and serving as the link with partners to ensure effective and timely delivery, and 4) Operations, which is responsible for coordinating all operations to support the response. The National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) and humanitarian partners have deployed staff to support the EOCs.

While the humanitarian context in both Gedeo and West Guji zones has been rapidly changing due to the dynamics of return since August 2018, the EOCs continue to coordinate emergency response and support return. Woreda-level coordination meetings were established in all woredas to coordinate the response to the returnees.

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Choice Okoro, Head of Strategic Communication Unit, OCHA Ethiopia, okoroc@un.org

Mrs. Malda Nadew, National Information Officer, UNOCHA Ethiopia, nadew@un.org

Ms. Karin Fenczak, Humanitarian Affairs Officer/Ethiopia Desk, OCHA New York, fenczak@un.org