

PRESS RELEASE:

ETHIOPIA: US\$118 MILLION URGENTLY REQUIRED TO SUPPORT OVER 818,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED BY INTER-COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AROUND GEDEO (SNNPR) AND WEST GUJI (OROMIA) ZONES

(Addis Ababa, 22 June 2018): The Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners have released a Response Plan to address fresh internal displacement around Gedeo (SNNPR) and West Guji (Oromia) Zones. The Appeal prioritizes life-saving support for over 818,000 men, women and children displaced as a result of inter-communal violence that has escalated since early June 2018. The Appeal requires US\$118 million for the coming six months to urgently scale-up assistance to the displaced people who are mostly settled with already food insecure relatives or residing in cramped public buildings. The influx has seen near-doubling of district populations in some areas that, even prior to the crisis, were one of the most densely populated parts of the country, with around 1,000 people per square kilometer.

Support to-date has mainly been provided by the Government and host communities, with humanitarian partners trying to scale up response despite the challenging context and major resource constraints.

“The international community has tirelessly and generously stood by our side when our country was hit by the El Nino-induced drought in 2016, and as we have dealt with other drought and displacement challenges over the past year and we are grateful for this solidarity,” said Mr. Mitiku Kassa, Commissioner of the National Disaster Risk Management Commission who is currently in the affected areas overseeing the crisis response. “This unfortunate incident along the Gedeo-West Guji border caught us all by surprise, and the Government of Ethiopia is doing its level best to meet the needs of the affected population by diverting resources from ongoing drought and flood responses, but the gap is overwhelming,” he continued.

UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie added that, “UN Agencies and NGOs have a well-established presence in the affected areas. This plan needs to be urgently funded to allow us to support the Government-led response”

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Ethiopian Government is working on measures to bring peace, unity and reconciliation, including seeking durable solutions to other situations of internal displacement. However, the displaced people in Gedeo and West Guji Zones need to be urgently assisted through a major scale-up of assistance until conditions permit voluntary return.

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