

Ethiopia: West Guji – Gedeo Conflict Displacement

Flash Update 4, 14 June 2018



OCHA



Figure 1 People displaced by the Gedeo-West Guji inter-communal violence. Credit: OCHA

Highlights

- Continued insecurity and ongoing localized inter-communal violence are displacing people; hindering IDP return to areas of origin as well as humanitarian operations.
- The National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) estimates that as many as 527,263 people are displaced from West Guji zone to Gedeo zone alone; while some 170,467 people are displaced in West Guji zone.
- Humanitarian assistance to the IDPs is to date very minimal and inadequate; most support provided is by the hosting communities and local authorities.
- Recognizing that the IDPs need to be assisted through a major scale-up in humanitarian response in areas of displacement for at least the next six months, until conditions permit voluntary return, partners are trying to mobilize additional resources to expand their operations where possible.
- Given the critical gap in Emergency Shelter and NFIs support and the urgency given the forecast heavy summer rains in the area, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team is trying to identify global large stocks of shelter/NFI to ship in the country for immediate distribution to the displaced population.

I. Displacement overview

Despite the deployment of federal and regional security forces to prevent the escalation of violence between the Gedeo (SNNPR) and West Guji (Oromia region) communities since April 2018, continued insecurity and ongoing localized inter-communal violence are continuing to displace people, with a new significant increase in violence in early June; hindering IDP return to areas of origin as well as humanitarian operations.

Whilst it remains challenging to make an accurate assessment of the total number of displacement due to the highly fluid situation, including secondary-displacements, and access constraints, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) estimates that as many as 527,263 people are displaced from West Guji zone to Gedeo zone alone, and are scattered across Bule (38,459 IDPs in one

Woredas hosting IDPs



site), Dilla Zuria (10,551 IDPs living with host communities), Gedeb (278,745 IDPs in three sites), Kochere (61,403 IDPs living with host communities), Wonago (16,199 IDPs), Yirgachefe (103,950 IDPs in four sites) woredas and Dilla Town (17,956 IDPs in one “collective” type center).

Meanwhile, reports from West Guji zone indicate the presence of some 170,467 IDPs in Abaya (7,877 IDPs), Bir-birsa Kodawa (5,686 IDPs), Bule Hora (15,330 IDPs), Gelana (43,224 IDPs), Demtu Hambela (29,08 IDPs) and Kercha (69,264 IDPs) woredas. Houses are being burnt down, properties looted and livelihoods destroyed.

Even prior to the crisis, the affected area was already one of the most densely populated parts of the country, with around 1,000 people per square kilometer. There was widespread food insecurity and both zones were “hotspots” of acute malnutrition. The new influx of IDPs in some areas has seen near-doubling of woreda populations, with many residing in cramped public buildings – schools and training centers.

II. Humanitarian needs, response and gaps

Humanitarian assistance to the IDPs is to date very minimal and inadequate, and is to a large extent still shouldered by the hosting communities and local authorities.



Figure 2 People displaced by the Gedeo-West Guji inter-communal violence. Credit: OCHA

In Gedeo zone, 12,917 quintals of cereals (1600 quintals from the region and the rest from Federal Government), 820 quintals of Corn Soya Blend (CSB) and 226 quintals of oil are currently being distributed. In West Guji zone, of the total amount of relief food basket requested to Federal Government, only 19 per cent of cereal, 73 per cent of CSB and 44 per cent oil arrived in the zone and is currently being distributed, albeit inconsistently. No pulses had been received as of 11 June. Challenges in the food distribution is further compounded by the lack of storage facilities in the area. The food is being distributed directly from trucks.

Partners’ response operation remains limited and challenging due to resource and access constraints. Furthermore, in some areas such as Gelana woreda in West Guji for example, humanitarian partners have had to scale-back operations and temporarily pull out due to ongoing insecurity, further impacting the overall response. The lack of adequate assistance and the limited to impossible return or relocation opportunities is creating restlessness and anger amongst the IDPs.

Recognizing that the IDPs need to be assisted through a major scale-up in humanitarian response in areas of displacement for at least the next six months, until conditions permit voluntary return, Federal Government and partners are trying to mobilize additional resources to expand operations as and where possible. The key priorities are emergency shelter and non-food items – NFIs (particularly plastic sheeting, kitchen sets and blankets), multi-purpose cash (where markets are functioning), and water (the trucking of safe water needs to be massively expanded to areas with high concentrations of IDPs).

Meanwhile, in addition to its ongoing NFIs (cash and in-kind) response and support in medical supplies, World Vision has managed to secure additional funds from its own resources to scale-up response. The INGO PiN is targeting 2000 displaced households in Gedeb with WaSH and partial NFI support, and is in discussion with the SNNP Regional authorities restart emergency assistance to the nearly 18,000 IDPs in Dilla Town. Other partners are ready to step-up their response as resources are made available and security permits.

Given the critical gap in Emergency Shelter and NFIs support and the urgency given the forecast heavy summer rains in the area, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team is trying to identify global large stocks of shelter/NFI to ship in the country for immediate distribution to the displaced population. The NDRMC is ready to facilitate expedited customs clearance within Government for any incoming shelter-NFI supplies.

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