



## Interagency Rapid Protection Assessment - Bahir Dar, Amhara Region

18-19 December 2018

### MISSION OBJECTIVE / PURPOSE:

In mid-December 2018, the Protection Cluster was informed of the arrival of approximately 1,200 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Kamashi zone in Benishangul-Gumuz region to Bahir Dar in Amhara region. Amhara regional DRM confirmed the numbers and added that an upwards of 200 IDPs continue to arrive Bahir Dar on a daily basis. The IDPs are of Amharic ethnicity, whom have reported instances of GBV and human rights violations, suffered in Kamashi and en route to Bahir Dar. The Protection Cluster conducted an interagency Rapid Protection Assessment between the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> December, to better understand the protection needs of the new arrivals to Bahir Dar, as well as the conditions in Kamashi zone. As humanitarian access to Kamashi zone is restricted, the total number of IDPs and conditions in Kamashi, remains largely unknown by the humanitarian community.

The aim of a Rapid Protection Assessment is to assist the Protection Cluster and protection agencies to collect relevant information to identify key protection concerns and information gaps according to an agreed common methodology, which included: key informant interviews, focus group discussions and observations.

### MULTIFUNCTIONAL TEAM MEMBERS:

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### MEETINGS HELD

Addisu Chanie Chief of UNICEF Field Office Amhara Region	Amare Kinde Deputy Head of Amhara Region DRM Bahir Dar
Arefaw Bekele Deputy Head, Early Warning Disaster and Food Security Office, Awi Zone	Simachew Dagne, Delegated Head, BOWCYA Amhara Region
Focus Group Discussions with male IDPs at Zenzelima Collective Site, Bahir Dar	Focus Group Discussions with female IDPs at Zenzelima Collective Site, Bahir Dar

## OVERVIEW OF DISPLACEMENT TO AMHARA REGION

- IDPs started arriving Amhara region in May 2018 from Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz (BSG) regional states. The Amhara regional government authorities stated they have been able to manage the response themselves until the numbers have drastically increased as of December 2018, as roads were opened from BSG-Amhara-Oromia regions, as a result of the deployment of EDF forces.
- In December 2018, the numbers of IDPs in Amhara region were estimated at 30,000-37,000<sup>1</sup>, including minimum 7,000 individuals recently displaced due to conflict in Gondar.
- The majority of IDPs in Amhara region are staying in the host community with family and friends, throughout the region, including Bahir Dar, central and west Gondar, west Gojjam, and North Wollo.
- Previously IDPs from Kamashi zone in BSG were restricted to Awi zone in Amhara region, bordering Kamashi zone and located approximately 100kms from Bahir Dar. However, now IDPs are coming directly to Bahir Dar (from Kamashi zone in BSG) and have petitioned the Amhara region DRM to provide support, including opening an IDP site.
- The Amhara regional government has outlined three approaches for IDPs: (1) return home (to BSG or other location outside of Amhara region); (2) reintegration into place of origin in Amhara; (3) provide temporary services until the IDPs decide where to live.
- Until recently, the government has not established IDP sites or provided assistance other than basic NFIs and food. There are an estimated five to 10 million Amharas living outside of Amhara Region, so the government explained the need to be conservative with support provided to IDPs, so as not to create pull factors. For example, of the 90,000 IDPs in Nekemt, East wellega, Oromia region, 16,000 are ethnic Amhara and the Amhara regional government have sent food and supplies (200 quintals of rice and 200 quintals of pasta) to support the efforts of the regional government of Oromia with the ethnic Amhara IDP caseload.
- One small collective site used to be open in a school in Bahir Dar, with around 120 IDPs, but it has been closed. In the past week (approx. 10 DEC), a much larger IDP collective site has been opened in a market place and is called Zenzelima collective site.
- To respond to the gaps in need, the local community has mobilized support in the forms of clothing and food. There is a protective factor of being of Amharic ethnicity in Amhara region and this is one of the reasons IDPs come to the region rather than to Oromia or elsewhere. To date, there has been very little tension or security incidences in Amhara region related to IDPs. As the roads are now open between BSG and Oromia regions, it is expected Amhara IDPs in the wellega zones of Oromia may also migrate to Amhara region.
- The Amhara regional government responded to the drought in 2016 and clusters were established at this time. This experience gives the officials a basic understanding of emergency response, however further capacity building is required. Some clusters have continued to meet since 2016, including the DRM convening a meeting each month. Other clusters have 'pre-meetings' to prepare for the monthly DRM meeting, but CP/GBV Sub-Cluster lead by BoWCYA is not meeting regularly.
- Presently, the government does not have an official policy to facilitate the enrolment of IDP children in school. It has been explained this is due to their temporary status, however some IDPs have been living in the region for the past eight months, which means the children have been out of school for the period of displacement. Follow- up is needed to determine if this can be remedied at a local level.

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<sup>1</sup> Multi-Sector IDP Response Plan for Amhara Region released by regional authorities in late December 2018; citing 42,000 IDPs in Amhara region.



## MEETING WITH AMHARA REGION DRM

- The regional government established a multi-sectoral taskforce to coordinate the response and the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) has provided some support but additional support is needed urgently, such as food, NFIs, and other supplies. Specialized support is needed for pregnant and lactating women as well as children. As the vast majority of the IDPs are scattered and living amongst host community, it is more difficult to provide services and a coordinated response.
- The number of IDPs recorded in Amhara region in the Meher Assessment shows a dramatic increase since last seasonal assessment.
- When IDPs arrive in Bahir Dar they are registered by DRM. If they arrive in woreda or kebele they are registered by officials there and this information is fed to the Regional level DRM. The government indicated that in order to prevent fraud or double registration they would like to introduce an ID card system with photos, for individual IDPs.
- There are 41 community teams and team leaders that are assisting the government to verify IDPs are from Amhara in order to reduce potential for fraud.
- Most IDPs are arriving as families, but some are separated with women and children arriving alone, as male family members stay behind, to protect property or due to fear they would be captured or attacked during flight.
- Authorities are not able to access Kamashi zone due to insecurity. Of the seven woredas in Kamashi zone, three are inaccessible to all including the government.
- IDPs coming from Kamashi zone reported they have been staying/hiding in the zone and waiting for a safe time to leave.

## SITUATION IN KAMASHI ZONE, BENISHANGUL-GUMUZ REGION

- Violence in Kamashi zone is targeting Amharas and Oromos. In December, the Ethiopia Defence Forces (EDF) moved into Kamashi zone with the aim to improve the overall security situation, however, to IDPs from Kamashi zone, the capacity to which EDF forces were deployed to the zone, is not clear.
- There is anecdotal evidence of GBV and other forms of violence in Kamashi, and in transit, but it is underreported. GBV is a taboo and sexual violence is especially stigmatized and hindering survivors to speak out about this difficult subject.
- It is reported that the government in BSG has started to arrest perpetrators of conflict and there has been an ongoing peace dialogue and reconciliation between the groups.
- IDPs leaving Kamashi zone reported having to make payments to Gumuz people in order to be allowed to pass and leave the area.
- The majority of IDPs from Kamashi zone are from Yaso woreda, which is comprised of 10 kebeles. The male IDPs reported that there were no EDF soldiers in Yaso at the time they fled.
- Currently there are no schools or clinics open in the area. The majority of persons in Yaso earn a living by farming. IDPs report they have remained in contact with their friends and relatives in Yaso. However, people are living in fear and rarely come out of their house due to the violence by Gumuz people against Oromo and Amhara people. An example was provided of 45 Oromo people killed in Yaso woreda, which escalated fear and reason for flight from the area.



## MEETING WITH THE DISASTER PREVENTION AND FOOD SECURITY OFFICE, AWI ZONE

- As of 18 December 2018, there were 1104 IDPs in Awii zone, including 596 male/508 female individuals of 397 households.
- Awii zone have been receiving IDPs since September 2018. They are of Amhara ethnicity, from Somali and BSG regions, the majority of IDPs are from BSG region.
- Now that roads to Kamashi zone are open, authorities expect an increase of ethnic Amhara IDPs to the Amhara region.
- The government is looking to open a collective site 50 kilometres away from Awii town in Chagny. Until the site is open, IDPs are living with friends and relatives, with a limited number in a small collective site (meeting hall).
- IDPs register with authorities when they arrive at the Disaster Prevention and Food Security Office in Awii zone.
- Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) are arriving, however the office does not have an accurate record of how many UASC have arrived. The office was encouraged to take the name, age and sex of individual IDPs, as well as household, to better disaggregate the data and support targeted response services.
- Formally, IDPs are not allowed to access health or education services in Awii zone.
- Civil servants that were previously working in BSG are receiving their payments in displacement, which is a positive development.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH IDPS

### VIEWS OF FEMALE IDPS

- Focus group discussion (FGD) with female IDP participants reported that they were sleeping outside in a field and receiving some assistance from the local community for their basic needs before the recent arrangement was made by the Amhara regional government to move them to a collective site. The collective site is a newly constructed market, which is not yet in use. The site is named Zenzelima collective site and the IDPs currently living in the collective site are from Kamashi zone, Yaso woreda, Yaso kebele.
- Reportedly movement from Kamashi zone to Bahir Dar has been happening since September 2018 (due to violence) and the most recent arrival came on the day before this assessment (17<sup>th</sup> December).
- The female IDPs informed the team that all of them want to stay in Amhara region and are not intending to return home (to Kamashi zone) for the time being. To be able to settle in Amhara region they are seeking some kind of support from regional government as compensation for their losses, such as destroyed property and cattle that they left behind. Female IDPs include pregnant women, women who recently gave birth, as well as elderly women.

### VIOLENCE AT ORIGIN AND IN-TRANSIT

- There has been unrest and violence at their place of origin (Kamashi) since September 2018. Before the clashes and violence commenced in September there was some tension between different groups (i.e. Gumuz, Oromia, Amhara) at times, but they were living peacefully in their communities. Female IDPs reported that the displacement occurred due to a dispute between the Gumuz and the Oromo ethnic groups. The Amhara and Oromo people are targeted because they are not considered to be indigenous to the area by the Gumuz people. Partly because of the similarity of

their skin colour to the Oromo's, and due to these disputes, IDPs were subjected to various types of violence, which prompted their flight from their homes.

- They all reported that they fled in fear for their lives, due to the recent spike in violence.
- Men have been particularly targeted by violence, including castration and killing.
- Women have been raped at their origin and in transit to Bahir Dar, and there have been violent acts such as cutting off women's breasts, and cutting out and killing of unborn babies.
- Gumuz militias and woreda officials, former police officers allegedly among the perpetrators, including police officers. IDPs reported that women who were left behind in Yaso woreda as they were unable to make the long journey on foot, and women whose husbands had been killed, have been kept detained at police stations in Kamashi zone where they are repeatedly raped by police officers. To date, community members do not have any contact with the missing women.
- They walked for two to three days, in groups of 60-80 people, on foot to reach Bahir Dar and at all times they needed to be escorted by a Gumuz in order to facilitate passage on but there were still gangs on the way that were demanding payment (200-500 birr) and IDPs were threatened with rape if they did not pay.
- They often were requested to pay up to 1000 birr individually to cross the Abay River. Sometimes sent back to the place of origin after the two three days walk.

#### SITUATION AT COLLECTIVE SITE, BAHIR DAR (ZENZELIMA COLLECTIVE SITE)

- No security incidents were reported at the site, during the FGDs with IDPs. Women and children are sleeping inside and men outside due to the lack of space and mattresses. There is a small local militia present that are protecting them, and the women have formed a committee. All said that they feel safe in the collective site.
- Due to a lack of latrines, the IDPs relieve themselves in the nature nearby. Food is reported to be inadequate and of poor quality.
- Families left their place of origin and reached the collective site together, but there are some children aged around 11-14, whom are separated children, with relatives.
- Most of them are registered (with DRM) and their names have been sent to the nearest hospital, named Addisalem hospital, so they can receive treatment. However, IDPs report the hospital staff have turned them away and refused them treatment because of shortage of drugs and medicines that can be provided for free and insulted them because of their displacement and because they are soiled with menstrual blood as they do not have any sanitary materials. In other instances they could not afford the prescribed medicines.
- They have no access to family planning services, they previously used pills, injectable and IUDs but since they have arrived, these items are not available and as a result, unwanted pregnancies are occurring.
- Rape survivors among the IDPs at the collective site have not received any treatment or services at the hospital.

#### VIEWS OF MALE IDPs

- In September 2018 violence/unrest started, but persons were prevented from leaving Yaso woreda. It was explained that people were not allowed to leave Kamashi zone because the government did not want large numbers of IDPs fleeing the area because it would draw attention to the conflict.
- IDPs said they fled Kamashi zone because Oromos were being killed and Amharas believed they would be next.

- At the end of November 2018, individuals and families fled during the night by foot. Departure from Yaso is organized and persons wait in their homes until they are informed of a secure time to leave, usually with the help of Gumuz neighbours who have been paid money to provide such information. Priority for leaving is to save children otherwise males would have stayed behind to watch their property.
- Men informed that the journey out of Kamashi is dangerous because of the risks of sexual violence against women and killing of men. One example given of a community paying 2500 Ethiopian Birr (ETB) to release a girl who was captured and detained for 12 hours.
- Reports of persons being shot during flight from Kamashi zone. An example was given of three persons being selected, one was killed and two injured.
- The IDPs fled into the forest and the journey out of Kamashi zone took two days, they passed through a small village named Chilanko.
- Friendly Oromos and Amharas along the way helped them, however robbery along the way is also common.
- Male IDPs reported that Gumuz militia are leading the violence in Kamashi zone, the militia are backed by the BSG government to keep the peace, however were doing the opposite and are committing acts of violence and inciting conflict.
- IDPs report the killing and mutilation of Oromo and Amhara people in Kamashi by Gumuz people. Details were provided such as slicing people open and eating their kidneys.

#### ARRIVAL TO BAHIR DAR

- Upon arrival to Bahir Dar, the IDPs went to the DRM regional office. Initially they were told to go to their original home area in Amhara (meaning their original village in Amhara region), but they did not want to go so remained at the DRM office for approximately one week, until DRM took them to a collective site located just outside the city. The IDPs have not been informed how long they will be able to stay at the collective site.
- The IDPs do not want to return to their home area in Amhara because they had left the place decades ago due to drought. IDP reported that if they returned to Yaso, they would be killed. Although EDF forces had been recently deployed to Kamashi Zone, the IDPs did not believe they would be safe in Kamashi, as in the past EDF forces were not able to secure peace to the zone.

#### DOCUMENTATION

- Male IDPs are leading an initiative to record the lists of IDP's property and losses in Kamashi zone. They intend to share the records with government as proof ownership and request for compensation.
- Those IDPs who had their IDs with them in their pockets brought with them. Those that could hide their documents managed to flee with them. IDPs report their documents were taken from them, as a tactic to make it more difficult for return.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOR DRM, AMHARA REGION

- Ensure BoWCYA and the CP/GBV sub-cluster is included in coordination meetings and any Needs Assessments.
- When selecting and opening collective sites, consider the different needs of women, men, girls, boys and people with specific needs. Refer to IASC Guidelines, and utilise expertise of clusters.
- It is essential to, in consultation with IDPs, provide information on conditions in potential areas of return in order for IDPs to make a voluntary and informed decision on the appropriate solution to their displacement. In addition to the option to voluntarily return to the place of origin in safety and dignity, where conditions allow, the prospects of alternative durable solutions of local integration or relocation should be available. A feedback mechanism for IDPs should be established.

### FOR AWI ZONE, AMHARA REGION

- Clear disaggregated data of IDP individuals and families, including name, age, sex, as well as vulnerabilities. Training and follow-up will be needed to ensure accurate reporting.
- Map available services, both public and private.
- Strengthen communication with regional DRM office in Bahir Dar.
- Convene meetings with the host community to discuss issues.

### FOR BUREAU OF WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH AFFAIRS, AMHARA REGION

- Reactivate the Child Protection/GBV Sub-Cluster in Bahir Dar.
- Social workers to visit IDP collective site to identify urgent needs of women and children and refer to services as needed.
- CP/GBV Needs Assessment of IDP sites to be conducted. If inter-agency and/or inter-sector assessments are conducted, ensure protection, child protection, GBV issues are captured and needs identified.
- Map child protection and GBV resources and services available in Bahir Dar and Awi zones.
- With UNICEF support, prepare request for dignity Kits, recreation kits and other NFIs.
- Continue to advocate for the protection needs of IDPs in coordination meetings, with DRM, and with other sectors.

### FOR NATIONAL PROTECTION CLUSTER AND CP/GBV SUB-CLUSTER

- Share assessment finding with relevant clusters for action.
- Provide training and technical support on child protection and GBV to BOWCYA staff in Amhara Region. Update ToR of Child Protection/GBV Sub-Cluster in Bahir Dar.
- The UNCT/Protection cluster together with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) should advocate for investigation by the government of Ethiopia of alleged human rights violations and abuses and take tangible measures to bring perpetrators to justice. In addition, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission should deploy a team in order to take the lead on human rights dimension of protection.
- The Protection Clusters should ensure that monitoring and documentation of human rights abuses and violations be an integral part of the provision of protection to IDPs.

#### FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

- Given the alleged occurrence of gross human rights abuses and violations, the government of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) should undertake a thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the alleged human rights violations in Kamashi zone and hold alleged perpetrators accountable in line with national and international standards and obligations. By enforcing accountability and bringing perpetrators to justice, the Government will ensure that impunity does not continue and that more violations do not occur.
- Take into account the situation and needs of host families and communities that provide vital support and assistance to internally displaced persons in order to ensure that assistance reaches the host communities as necessary, and to prevent, to the fullest extent possible, tensions from emerging between the displaced communities and the host communities.

#### Photos of Zenzelima Collective Site in Bahir Dar

