



Interagency Rapid Protection Assessment – East Wollega, Oromia Region

28-30 January 2019

MISSION OBJECTIVE / PURPOSE:

On 20 January 2019, the Protection Cluster received a report regarding allegations of forced relocation of IDPs from Nekemte woreda to Sasiga woreda in East Wollega zone. The local authorities confirmed the relocation of IDPs from Nekemte to Sasiga woreda is on-going and will continue until all the IDPs in Nekemte are relocated out of the woreda. In response, the Protection Cluster organized a rapid protection assessment to East Wollega from 28-30 Jan 2019 to assess the voluntariness of the relocation and protection needs of the newly relocated IDPs.

METHODOLOGY:

Focus group discussions were conducted with both male and female IDPs in Sasiga woreda, key informant interviews with local authorities and observation were mainly used to identify some of the protection concerns. The team tried to have discussion with those IDPs who have been recently relocated from Nekemte to Sasiga as well as other IDPs who have originally been displaced in Sasiga.

MULTIFUNCTIONAL TEAM MEMBERS:

Sebena Gashaw Human Rights Officer OHCHR, Addis Ababa	Zuzana Kovalova Protection Officer (IDP) UNHCR, Addis Ababa
Jowar Getahun Child Protection in Emergencies UNICEF, East Wollega	Hana Fantu Emergency Response Officer IRC, Addis Ababa
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MEETINGS HELD:

Dargie Gudeta Zonal Head of DRM Nekemte, East Wollega	Maria Simon Emergency Coordinator Ethiopia MSF-Spain, Nekemte
Beyene Iticha Woreda Head of DRM Sasiga Woreda, East Wollega	Focus Group Discussions with male and female IDPs at Balo and Angar IDP Site in Sasiga Woreda

OVERVIEW OF DISPLACEMENT

A total of 156,240 IDPs are settled in six woredas of East Wollega zone including Haro Limu (4 IDP sites), Limu (2 sites), Diga (1 site), Guto Gida (1 site) and Sasiga (6 sites). The IDP sites in Sasiga include: Haro Wata, Balo, Angar, Bareda, Balo Bareda and Agalo. The majority of IDPs are displaced from Benishangul-Gumuz region, while a smaller group of IDPs are displaced from the borders of Oromia



region. In Nekemte, there were approximately 3,078 IDPs in eight IDP sites before 1,009 IDPs were relocated to sites in Sasiga woreda the second week of January as per information received from Zonal DRM head. Currently IDPs are living in five IDP sites in Nekemte.

As per information received from authorities as well as IDPs, it is understood that the relocation of IDPs should not be referred to as return as the IDPs have not returned to their actual homes and properties but to their woredas of origin. IDPs are found in temporary shelters as their homes have been destroyed.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS WITH ZONAL AND WOREDA DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

- Reasons for relocation mentioned include the peace and reconciliation efforts by the Oromia and Benishangul-Gumuz regional governments along the border areas. Secondly, for IDPs to be able to revive their livelihoods (i.e. farming and agriculture) in their areas of origin and thirdly for the collective sites (government facilities) in Nekemte to be vacated and resume their normal functions (i.e. schools, etc).
- In regards to consultations that have taken place with the IDPs, it was reported that the government-led relocation initiative ensured that consent to return to (or near to) woredas of origin was obtained from the IDPs. DRM stated that follow-up discussions will be held to further discuss relocation and force will not be used. For some of the IDPs who resisted the relocation, ongoing discussions are taking place, to convince them to relocate. Some of the reasons mentioned why IDPs do not want to relocate to Sasiga were better assistance in Nekemte compared to Sasiga.
- In response to the inquiry made as to why Sasiga was the chosen woreda for relocation, it was explained that IDPs chose to go back to that woreda as this was closer to their homes which would allow them to cross into Benshangul-Gumuz and take care of their farmlands. Moreover, the reconciliation process that is currently taking place along the border areas of Sasiga woreda and Kamashi zone was mentioned to be the other factor to choose Sasiga for relocation. Additionally Sasiga woreda is fertile land that is good for farming and IDPs have opted to go to this woreda given they are either from Sasiga woreda, from a nearby woreda, or from neighbouring Benishangul-Gumuz region that borders Sasiga woreda.
- Although it was indicated that the relocation process was organized with places of relocation pre-arranged and temporary shelters set-up, the living condition in Sasiga are overcrowded and does not allow privacy for IDPs, particularly women.
- At the Nekemte zonal level, there are three committees established to handle administrative, sectoral and logistic matters related with the IDPs. Accordingly, the different services in terms of food, health and nutrition are managed by these government-led committees. Humanitarian partners have been involved through the provision of medicines. There have been issues related to delay of food distribution but this gap was addressed with support from the host community and local government institutions like the University of Wollega. However, further delay of food distribution will lead to serious challenges as the capacity of the community is now weakened. The basic services that are available in Nekemte are also available at the woreda level but to a lesser extent.
- With regards to documentation, it was reported that most IDPs have their legal identity documents. However, for those that do not have their documentation will also be registered as IDPs in order to



access services. Registration of IDPs takes place at zonal and woreda levels, which is a prerequisite to get support.

- In terms of security, it was explained that for all six woredas, a direction has been put in place for undertaking peace and reconciliation measures and focal points have been assigned both at zonal and woreda levels to facilitate the process. The peace and reconciliation process in Sasiga woreda is more advanced as compared to others such as Diga and Guto Gida woredas. The process has not yet started in Haro Limu woreda. In Sasiga, currently there is military presence providing security. Before the military's presence, there were militias to ensure the safety and security of the IDPs.
- Support has been provided in terms of NFIs in Sasiga and Haro Limu by different humanitarian partners including SCI, MSF, IOM, NRC and ICRC. Cash assistance has not yet started.
- In the IDP sites in Sasiga, there are different committees such as the peace committee and ration committee that support and facilitate these services within the sites. These committees report GBV incidents to the police if they occur.

BALO IDP SITE (SASIGA WOREDA)

FGDs WITH MALE AND FEMALE IDPs

- Balo IDP site is 70 km from Nekemte town. There are 10,201 IDPs in Balo out of which 401 IDPs have been relocated from Nekemte town.
- The IDPs indicated that some of them were originally from Soge in Benishangul-Gumuz region before they were displaced to Nekemte while some were from the borders of Sasiga woreda in East Wollega zone. It was indicated that most of the IDPs were not willing to relocate/return to Sasiga as they were not convinced they would be safe in Sasiga. However, the local authorities informed them assistance will be discontinued in Nekemte and that it is better for the IDPs to move from the collective sites in Nekemte to IDP sites in Sasiga. IDPs confirmed that there was limited discussion on the issue of relocation and they did not have any option but to move. A specific deadline to move was not given to IDPs, but transportation was arranged on a specific date.
- Furthermore, IDPs stated that they were told services, including shelter, would be arranged for them in Sasiga which has not fully materialized, according to the IDPs. Upon arrival the IDPs found one large shelter of plastic sheets to accommodate everyone under one roof, which did not allow for privacy.

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

WASH

- IDPs reported that they have to walk for about an hour and half to get to the river to fetch water. At the water point, there is always conflict as to who should get water first. They stand in line for long hours to get water. There are latrines segregated by sex, but upgrading is needed.



Shelter

- Shelter conditions are challenging for the relocated IDPs. IDPs are not able to sleep in the shelters during the day as it gets very hot and during night it gets very cold. There is lack of privacy and this is more challenging for women as all family members stay in one shelter.

Food

- 10 kg of wheat and rice is given per person for a month, due to the limited supply of food as the standard should be 15 kg per person. The authorities said the remaining 5 kg should be fulfilled soon as the supply is in stock currently.
- IDPs reported that the wheat they receive is not ground and there is a need to go to the mill. Because they do not have the money to have the wheat milled, they sell some portion of the wheat so that they can use the money to have the wheat milled.

Health

- There is a health center in the woreda and IDPs receive free services. There are however challenges with regard to drugs that are currently in low supply. It was also observed that there are children with skin and eye diseases which is probably related to the insufficient medical supplies.

SECURITY

- After the displacement in September 2018 from Kamashi zone and border areas of the East Wollega, there was insecurity in Sasiga woreda and reportedly, Gumuz people from Benishangul-Gumuz came to Sasiga and looted property and burned houses.
- IDPs who have tried to check on their property in Kamashi zone have been brutally attacked. Additionally, there are allegations that members of the EDF were selling produce that was stolen from the farms of the IDPs that fled Kamashi, in collaboration with the Gumuz people.
- On the eve of Ethiopian Christmas, there was an incident where one man was shot by a spear and lost one of his eyes while trying to rescue the villagers in Sasiga from an alleged attack Gumuz people. IDPs mentioned that even in the presence of the EDF, alleged perpetrators from the Gumuz people, burned down their houses and stole their cattle from the border areas.
- Women also said that they are afraid to sleep at night, because they are nearby the borders and anybody could come and attack them.

CHILD PROTECTION AND GBV

- There are some separated children living with relatives and unaccompanied children living with other IDPs in the site as the whereabouts of their parents is unknown.
- In terms of school, it was explained that the space is limited to allow IDP children to go to the school that children from the host community attend.
- Families also have continued safety concerns and keep their children from attending school in fear of the safety and security of their children.



- Attempted rape was reported by a woman inside the Balo IDP site in Sasiga. The alleged perpetrator escaped and the incident was not reported to the local police.
- Dignity kit have not been distributed to vulnerable women and adolescent girls.

OTHER PROTECTION CONCERNS

- With respect to targeting or prioritizing vulnerable IDPs, it was mentioned that no special treatment has been provided to persons with disabilities or older persons. The community supports the vulnerable persons in the community to the best of their ability.
- IDPs also indicated that when they were originally displaced most of them did not carry documentation including identification cards. But they did not face difficulties accessing services as they get IDP registration paper to enable them receive services, such as health.
- Many IDPs suffered trauma during their original displacement and reportedly witnessed serious human rights violations, including murder and rape.

ANGAR IDP SITE (SASIGA WOREDA)

FGDs WITH MALE IDPS

- The total number of IDPs in Angar IDP site is 4111 IDPs out of which 600 IDPs have been relocated from Nekemte town.
- Angar is 20 km away from Balo IDP site and 30 km from Sasiga woreda. Most of the IDPs in Angar have come either from Benishangul Gumuz Region or border areas inside Sasiga woreda.
- All IDPs who have been relocated from Nekemte to Angar IDP site of Sasiga woreda confirmed that their relocation was not based on their consent. The IDPs explained that they were told the necessary arrangements have been made in terms of basic services for them to relocate to the woreda. Some IDPs mentioned “the military was present when the local authorities were informing IDPs to move to Sasiga woreda.”
- IDPs reported that although some of them wanted to move to other woredas (not specified), Sasiga was the only option provided by the government. Some young male family members refused to be relocated and have stayed behind Nekemte.

ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES

Food

- IDPs reported they received 3 kg of wheat and 3 kg of rice per person and 2 kgms of Fafa flour for a month. IDPs sell some of this to get cash to pay for the wheat to be milled.

Shelter and NFI

- Relocated IDPs in Angar are living in a canvas made of plastic sheets which has not been partitioned for the different families living together under one roof. It was reported that all female and male IDPs live together indicating there is no room for privacy. IDPs also mentioned that they are facing difficulties as there has not been an NFI distribution.



Health

- Health centers are found close to the IDP site. Pregnant and lactating women report they receive better support from this service, but in general, it was reported there are limited supply of drugs. Furthermore, IDPs reported that although they get free medical services, they are often advised to purchase the medicine from the pharmacy as there is shortage of medical supply in the health centers. However, IDPs are not able to afford to purchase the prescribed medicine.

WASH

- Similar to the condition in Balo Woreda, there are challenges related to shortage of water in Angar IDP site. IDPs have to walk close to an hour and half to get to the river. Once they get to the water source, IDPs have to stay in line for a long time to fetch water because there is only one tap near the river where IDPs and host community members use to collect drinking water. IDPs are not able afford to purchase water. An incident was reported where a woman was walking very early in the morning to get to the water point but was attacked by a hyena.
- There are latrines segregated by sex, but upgrading is needed.

CHILD PROTECTION AND GBV

- After individuals were displaced from Benishangul-Gumuz Region and border areas between Benishangul and Oromia regions, IDPs were settled in different collective sites including schools. As a result, the children within the host communities were not able to attend school let alone IDPs. Once the IDPs vacated the school, learning resumed, however IDPs were not able to join other children from the host communities due to lack of space.
- There are unaccompanied and separated children with the IDP community and so far no support has been provided by the Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (BoWCYA). However UNICEF has recently started to work with BoWCYA to support them in the identification and provision of service for the children.
- With regard to GBV concerns, IDPs alleged that a 13 year old girl was raped by two federal police members who were assigned to one of the IDP sites in Sasiga woreda. These policemen have reportedly been apprehended. A second incident was also reported of a woman who was allegedly raped by a federal policeman in specific kebele in Sasiga woreda. However, the incident was not reported, due to general concerns of safety and security.
- IDPs insisted that they are not comfortable with the presence of the EDF and the military as they are a source fear. Preference as to which entities they would like present for security was not articulated.
- IDPs reported that there has not been any dignity kit distributed for women in the site.

OTHER PROTECTION CONCERNS

- FGD participants explained that there is no targeting or prioritization undertaken for vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities or older persons. As a result, IDPs with reduced mobility are not able to access services.



- With regard to documentation, most IDPs from Nekemte indicated that they did not get a chance to carry their identification cards when initially displaced. The IDPs tried to get replacement documents in Nekemte but the authorities did not facilitate this request. Once they were moved to Sasiga, the IDPs explained that they were not able to move freely as they are requested by the police for identification cards which they are not able to produce. However, the IDPs are able to get services such as health services through a document that is issued to them indicating they are IDPs.
- In terms of livelihood opportunities, IDPs mentioned they have tried to work as casual laborer in Sasiga town, however they were unable as these work opportunities are reserved for host community members and thus IDPs are not hired.
- IDPs in general do not feel safe as they hear about ongoing property looting and burning of houses in Benishangul-Gumuz Region.

FGDs WITH FEMALE IDPS

- The IDPs referred to previous displacement that started in September 2018 and mentioned most of the IDPs have come from Mite, Shenkora and Soge in Kamashi Zone while some IDPs were displaced from the borders of the Oromia region.
- The female IDPs explained that they were staying in Nekemte, at Hani Sasiga, Goto Geja and Ketena Amest collective sites (mostly government offices) until they were relocated to Sasiga woreda.
- IDPs mentioned that they were not properly consulted prior to the relocation. They expressed that they were just told by the authorities and some members of the IDP committee that a relocation will be underway and they would not get support if they refuse to comply.
- They recalled that they have raised their concerns regarding the security situation of the area to the authorities and have stressed that peace and reconciliation efforts are at an early stage. They have also expressed their fear for their lives and that most of the perpetrators are not under custody.
- The government provided transportation during the relocation. No special consideration for protection or assistance has been provided to women and children during the relocation.
- The IDPs highlighted the key issues they face in Sasiga woreda include, the remoteness of the sites and the distance to water sources; one health center in Sasiga woreda where free medical examination is available but there are no sufficient medicines and they are usually requested to buy their own medicines; children are not currently attending school and there is a limited food supply; IDPs receive 12 kg of wheat and 3kg of rice, 4kg of Fafa flour per child and 1.5 liters of oil per household; there is limited support to pregnant and lactating women as well as malnourished children; IDPs do not want to return to their original places and expressed that the peace and reconciliation efforts are not enough or effective; they request the Oromia regional authorities to resettle them within Oromia region.



KEY MESSAGES / RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR NATIONAL PROTECTION CLUSTER AND CP/ GBV SUB-CLUSTER

- In view of IDPs' lack of willingness to be relocated to Sasiga woreda from Nekemte, the Protection Cluster to advocate with the government/local authorities the protection principles that need to be taken into account such as proper consultation with IDPs prior to the relocation. Special assistance should be also be given to persons with specific needs during and after relocation.
- Request relevant agencies to prioritize Sasiga woreda for distribution of dignity kits.
- Advocate for a vulnerability criteria to be developed and applied by service providers (government and humanitarian) to facilitate the identification and prioritization of persons with specific needs.
- Advocate with other clusters to increase the provision of basic services and humanitarian presence.
- IDP registration takes place to ensure access to services, however IDPs continue to face difficulties in terms of movement within Sasiga woreda. Local police officials to be trained on the rights of IDPs and the types of documents they are issued by the government.

FOR BUREAU OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS AND PROTECTION ACTORS IN EAST WOLLEGA

- Identification of unaccompanied and separated children for possible family tracing and reunification.
- Provision of staff that are trained in SGBV prevention and response services.
- Due to the psychological stress and trauma of displacement, protection actors with support of BOWCYA, to provide psychosocial support services for IDPs. Integrating psychosocial support into health services is a best practice.

FOR OROMIA AND BENISHANGUL GUMUZ REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS OF ETHIOPIA

- Current peace and reconciliation efforts led by the government should involve the community at a grass roots level to ensure their views, options and needs are taken into considerations in any plans affecting them in the short or long term.
- An official investigation into murder and other human rights violations of IDPs and affected population by the conflict is required.

FOR NEKEMTE AND SASIGA WOREDA LEVEL GOVERNMENT IN EAST WOLLEGA

- Lack of police around the IDP sites put the IDPs at-risk, particularly at night. Local authorities need to ensure that there are security measures put in place in IDPs sites. In addition, it is recommended to mobilize communities to develop and implement community safety and security plans to protect women and children, particularly at night.

FOR SHELTER, FOOD, HEALTH AND WASH ACTORS

- Delays in provision of food rations should be resolved, or a phased approach adopted, which meets the most urgent needs and prioritizes groups at high risk. A second round of food distributions is urgently needed.
- Shelter conditions need to be upgraded as the plastic sheeting that is currently used as accommodation is not sufficient. The large open space do not allow for any privacy and partitions should be built. Latrine facilities also need to be upgraded.

- The WASH cluster to assess the current water source to determine if an alternative is feasible.
- Existing health centres need to be equipped with medical supplies because IDPs are not able to purchase medicines outside the health centres. In addition, the health centres should be equipped to provide sexual and reproductive health services.

Photos of Balo and Angar IDP Sites



RESPONSE PLAN

	Action Item	Focal Point	Timeline
1	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>Present return/relocation concerns with EHCT to support the Protection Cluster's further advocacy with the local government to abide by protection principles under the IDP Guiding Principles on returns as well as the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions</p> <p>Funding is needed for Protection services in the Wellegas.</p> <p>Protection cluster and CP/GBV to be activated in Oromia region.</p> <p>Advocate for a vulnerability criteria to be developed and applied by service providers (government and humanitarian) to facilitate the identification and prioritization of persons with specific needs.</p>	<p>Protection Cluster to raise concerns with EHCT.</p> <p>Protection Cluster and CP/GBV sub-cluster</p>	February-March 2019

2	<p>Child Protection and GBV</p> <p>Request relevant actors to allocate funds for construction of child friendly and women friendly spaces and distribution of dignity kits</p> <p>Train BOWCYA in CP and SGBV prevention and response.</p>	<p>UNICEF, UNFPA, SCI, IRC, CARE and others</p> <p>CP/GBV sub-cluster</p>	February – June 2019
3	<p>Psychosocial Support</p> <p>IDPs need to be provided with psychosocial support services to address their emotional distress caused by witnessing murder, rape and other abuses, prior to and during displacement. Request relevant actors to allocate funds for PSS.</p> <p>Capacity building to BoWCYA and social workers to be supported to undertake PSS activities.</p>	<p>Protection Cluster and relevant actors UNFPA, UNICEF, IRC, DRC and others</p> <p>CP/GBV sub-cluster</p>	February – April 2019
4	<p>Access to Basic Services</p> <p>Protection concerns arising from limited access to basic service e.g. limited medical supplies in health centres, lack of water sources close to IDPs sites, poor shelter condition, delay in food distribution, to be brought to the attention of relevant Clusters for rapid response.</p> <p>Advocate for protection partners to enhance capacity in East Wollega to identify, respond and address protection concerns.</p>	<p>Protection Cluster to share report with relevant Cluster (Health, WASH, Shelter and food) for rapid response.</p> <p>Protection an CP/GBV sub-cluster</p>	February 2019