



Joint Protection Monitoring Report

WEST GUJI ZONE - ETHIOPIA

AUGUST 2019

Overview

During the month of August two assessments were coordinated by the Protection Cluster in West Guji zone. This report outlines key findings from both the post-return assessment and protection monitoring during the month of August 2019. The first assessment was to map out the existence of IDPs, whom are referenced locally as “vulnerable people affected by the conflict”, because local authorities do not acknowledge presence of IDPs in the zone. The second assessment was the Joint UN Protection Monitoring project that is ongoing in West Guji and reports are produced by on a monthly basis.

Key Findings of Post-Return Assessment

Background

The IDP return process triggered by government officials in May 2019 resulted in thousands of people returning to their respective locations of origin. As a result of this government-led initiative local authorities now claim there are no longer IDPs living in West Guji zone. However, during protection monitoring missions, the presence of IDPs have been observed in four woredas of West Guji: Bule Hora, Kercha, Birbissa Kojowa, and Hambella Wamena.

To further understand the presence of IDPs in the zone, a protection team led by the Protection Cluster in West Guji, was composed of the UN joint protection monitoring teams (UNICEF, UNHCR, OHCHR, UNFPA), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International organisation for migration (IOM), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Plan International and Imagine One Day. The interagency assessment was conducted from the 13 to 15 August 2019 through key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Limitations of the Assessment

This protection assessment focused on the current protection concerns and needs of IDPs remaining in West Guji with the aim to advocate for their inclusion in humanitarian assistance. The volatile security situation and the ongoing military operations hindered the teams to conduct the assessment in Gelana woreda and four kebeles in Bule Hora woreda namely Chari Saphalisa, Chari Gololcha and Godo Sodu kebeles. Therefore, an additional assessment will need to be conducted in these additional locations in order to understand the estimated total number of IDPs in West Guji zone.

Table 1: Persons Reached During Post-Return Assessment

Activities	Profile of People Reached	# of Sessions	# of Participants
Key Informant Interview	Kebele administration, WoWCYA staff, health extension workers and partner agencies.	8	14
Focus Group Discussions	Men and women returnees/IDPs	17	143
Total		25	157

Table 2: Identified IDP Households by Assessment Team

	Woreda	Kebele	Estimation of IDP Households
1	Kercha	Bilida Saba	15
		Kercha Enshe	05
		Kercha 02	03
		Egu Abay	12
2	Bule Hora	Hera Lipitu	25
3	Hambella Wamena	Chorso Golja	12
		Bule Hambella	30
4	Birbissa Kojowa	Dimtu Burka	17
		Birbissa Chebi	20
Total			109 Households

Note: The assessment was conducted through FGDs and KIIs and therefore exact numbers of responses as to why IDPs have not returned are not provided in quantitative terms.

Reasons for Unwillingness to Return

- 90% of the IDPs interviewed shared their fear to return to their area of origin due to insecurity. Although some improvements have been observed to the overall security situation the IDPs are not confident in the continued improvement or longer-term stability of the security situation in their area of origin. IDPs reported that for the time being they can still visit their land back in their area of origin for farming.
- Some families have dual residence with land and/or homes in both zones (Gedeo and West Guji).
- Some families reported attachments to the host community (in laws, relatives, friends etc.) in the displacement area.
- Some families have intention to integrate into the host community and have applied for identity documents and/or made local arrangements for land.

Key Protection Risks Identified for IDPs

- Exclusion from humanitarian assistance including food and shelter assistance.
- The vast majority have lost their land holding certificates but may still be able to access their land.
- Some reported secondary occupation of their house by the host community.
- Some have reportedly swapped their land in their places of origin with lands of Gedeo but without any legal agreement.
- Loss of civil documentation such as birth certificates, national ID and land holding certificates have been mentioned across all the assessed kebeles.
- Early marriages were mentioned in Dimtu Burka in Birbissa Kojowa kebele and Hera Lipitu kebele in Bule Hora woreda.
- Lack of basic needs, food, shelter, NFI, and livelihood opportunities.
- Unaccompanied and separated children identified in almost all assessment areas as well as a few child-headed households.
- Urgent need for scholastic materials to start the new academic year that starts in early September.
- Persons with Specific Needs (PSN) have limited support across all areas assessed.
- During KIIs, the most reported SGBV cases were domestic violence and early marriages. Women are reluctant to report to authorities these cases out of fear.

Key Recommendations

- Ensure access to basic needs through inclusion of IDPs in humanitarian assistance and joint targeting efforts in the zone.
- Continue to advocate to humanitarian agencies for the registration and inclusion of IDPs in the government endorsed lists of target beneficiaries for humanitarian assistance distributions.
- Assess the magnitude of the land swapping phenomenon in West Guji and Gedeo.
- Protection partners should maintain protection by presence in the kebeles where IDPs have been reported.
- A second assessment should be organized in the areas that could not be reached during this assessment due to security reasons. These areas include: Gelana woreda and four kebeles in Bule Hora woreda, including: Chari Saphalisa, Chari Gololcha and Godo Sodu kebeles. The second assessment will give a better picture as to the number of IDPs that remain in West Guji zone.

Key Findings of Protection Monitoring

During the reporting period, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF conducted joint protection monitoring in 12¹ kebeles in four woredas (Birbissa Kojowa, Kercha, Hambella Wamena and Bule Hora). Within the monitoring project as methodology, protection monitors made use of focus group discussions (FGDs) with returnees and IDPs, as well as key informant interviews with government officials, kebele managers, humanitarian actors, social workers, health extension workers as well as with the host community.

Table 3: Number of Individuals Reached during Protection Monitoring

Activities	Profile of People Reached	# of Sessions	# of Participants
Key Informant Interview	Kebele administration, WoWCYA staff, health extension workers and partner agencies	12	34
Focus Group Discussions	Men and women returnees	11	91
Individual Interviews	Persons with specific needs (older persons, persons with disabilities, female-headed households)	2	2
Workshop on Role of Human Rights in Peace building in West Guji and Gedeo Zone	Government officials from Zonal and Woredas administration, traditional and religious leaders, Abagadas, Youth, etc from West Guji and Gedeo Zones	3	217
Total		28	344

Safety and Security

Fear and persistent rumours of potential attacks were reported in six conflict affected woredas. Attacks on public transportation and alleged killings of civilian by UAGs was reported. Security incidents are mainly characterised by the actions of unidentified armed groups (UAG). On 01 August, clashes between government forces and UAG were reported at the border between Birbisa Kojowa and Melka Soda woredas with some casualties reported.

Due to military operations, two kebeles in Bule Hora namely Chari Saphalisa and Chari Gololcha are under restriction since July. On the 10 August, in Gelana woreda, two persons were allegedly killed by an UAG in Kersa kebele. On the 12 August, fighting was reported between UAG and EDF in Marcu kebele, Bule Hora woreda. On the 16 August, shootings were reported in Lemi Kercha kebele in Kercha woreda, Soke kebele

¹ Hambella Wamena Woreda: Dakarbor, Tirtira Damu, Tirtira Guyo kebeles. Kercha Woreda: Lami Kercha, Banko Gudoba, Kercha 01, Gorro'mee kebeles Birbisa Kojowa: Darse Edera Kebele. Bule Hora Woreda: Gerba 01, Gerba 02, Hera Lipitu, Oda Muda kebeles.

in Gelana woreda where eight persons were reportedly killed. In Oda Muda kebele, Bule Hora woreda, returnees reported lots of mobile phones were seized by authorities because of suspicion of owners communicating with UAGs. The same situation was observed in Ela Dirma Badiya kebele in Birbissa Kojowa woreda.

Protection and Human Rights Concerns

Child Protection

- The FGD participants in Tirtira Guyo kebele, Hambela Wamena woreda reported that returnees' children were not enrolled in school during the previous academic year because they arrived when the school year was almost finalised. However, according to some of returnees interviewed, some of their children may not be attending school due to lack of clothes and scholastic material.
- In Dakabor kebele, Hambella Wamena woreda, some returnees said they did not return with the entire family and had to leave their children in the place of displacement in Gedeo because of the poor living conditions and shelter in the place of return.
- According to the returnee in Dakabor kebele, Hambella Wamena woreda, there are four unaccompanied and ten separated children who are relying on the assistance of their neighbour. It is reported that the unaccompanied and separated children are engaging in child labour by working as a daily labourer to make a living.
- In Gerba 01 kebele, Bule Hora woreda, the kebele official disclosed the presence of six separated children with their locations. These children are currently living with community members.

Gender-Based Violence

- Two cases of domestic violence were reported in Abaya and Hambela Wamena woredas and both cases were referred to WoWCYA offices for case management and psychosocial support.
- 1225 returnees, IDPs and host community members, were reached through awareness raising sessions on SGBV in Kercha and Gelana woredas by UNFPA and Government institutions (WoWCYA or ZoWCYA).
- A list of 43 health facilities that received Post Rape Treatment Kits (PRTK) was shared with protection monitors to facilitate referral during their protection monitoring missions.

Housing, Land and Property

- In Banko Guduba kebele, Kercha woreda, the Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA) commissioned by UNHCR and Bule Hora University, identified 106 houses damaged during the conflict.
- In Bilida Saba kebele, Kercha woreda, cases of secondary occupation have been reported by the returnees. When appropriate, referrals are made to the HLP service provider.
- In Tirtira Damu kebele, Hambella Wamena woreda, the kebele officials report that 120 houses were destroyed in the kebele during the conflict.
- In Dakabor kebele, Hambella Wamena woreda, returnees mentioned the seizure of their lands by some members of the host community.

- In Kercha Inshe kebele, Kercha woreda, returnees claimed the government for land title deeds issuance process collects the GPS coordinate of their land. A due diligence site assessment was conducted in Hebo Molicha, Kercha kebele prior to the shelter assistance.
- Information session on HLP rights commenced in Hambella, Chorso Golja and Chorso Bule kebeles where NRC reached 235 individuals reached during this first session. In this session, there was reluctance by local authorities to respect the HLP rights of women. Their reasoning was that women “belong in the kitchen.”

Humanitarian Assistance

It is noted that delivery of humanitarian assistance was negatively affected due to insecurity in West Guji during the first two weeks of August.

Food

- In Banko Guduba kebele, Kercha woreda returnees informed the last distribution of food received was in June 2019. In Tirtira Damu kebele, returnees said they have not received any food assistance since the last distribution round in May. In Gerba 02 kebele, returnees complain about some exclusion cases from food distribution. The last food distribution was held in June 2019.
- In Goro'mee kebele, Kercha woreda, the kebele manager stated that 1484 returnees have not received food assistance since June.
- In Kercha 02, Kercha woreda, food distribution resumed and is targeting 3280 individuals to be reached by early September, with the following items: 15 Kgs of wheat, 1.5kgs of white peas, 1.5kgs of corn soy blend (CSB) and 0.45 kgs of oil.
- Following complaints from returnees about lack of food in Gelana, Abaya and Kercha, food partners are planning to start a joint targeting exercise that will enable them to register and assist the returnees and the most vulnerable persons.

Health and Nutrition

- WFP is implementing Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme (TSFP), which targets children aged 6-59 months with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and Pregnant and Lactating women (PLWs) with acute malnutrition in West Guji zone. A total of 19,384 beneficiaries (8626 children aged 6-59 months with MAM and 10758 PLWs with acute malnutrition) are currently receiving treatment in West Guji zone. WFP has plans to respond to MAM cases in West Guji until December 2019 and beyond based on the availability of resources.
- In August, IOM launched a mobile clinic in Bule Hora woreda. It was agreed that their weekly schedule be shared with protection monitoring teams for referral purposes.
- In Tirtira Guyo kebele, Hambella Wamena woreda, there are health extension workers in the kebele but in case of serious medical conditions, returnees have to travel 1.5 hours to the nearest health facility which is in Dimtu kebele. Only one ambulance is available for the whole woreda which is insufficient to cover the needs of the entire community.

NFI and Shelter

- Returnees live in poor shelter condition and are in-desperate need of shelter reconstruction assistance. UNHCR's partner is planning to reconstruct 70 shelters in Kercha woreda.
- Reportedly, there is an inaccuracy in the total loss and damages documented by authorities.
- Returnees swapping lands is impacting the shelter reconstruction response and referrals are made to HLP actors to assist with the cases.

WASH

- Returnees in all the kebeles monitored shared their concern on hygiene and sanitation. With nonexistence of potable water point, communities always rely on spring or river water. It has also been reported that diseases related to poor hygiene or sanitation such as diarrhoea are common amongst children.

Response Update

Peace Building

- During the month of August, OHCHR organised a three-day workshop on the role of human rights in peacebuilding in West Guji and Gedeo zones. Government officials from various bureaus, traditional and religious leaders and the youth from both zones to discuss human rights and its role in peace building and conflict resolution. A total of 217 individuals participated in the three-day workshop. Participants appreciated the importance of the topics and requested additional similar workshops in woredas level. A group of youths formed an informal committee of youth for human rights in both zones to advocate inclusion of human rights in sustainable peace.
- Additionally, zonal authorities conducted a peacebuilding campaign in the woredas, initiating dialogue with communities and ensuring them measures are taken to provide them safety and security.

Persons with Specific Needs

- During the reporting period a total of 12 persons with specific needs were identified and referred to different service providers. A list of 185 persons living with disabilities has been provided by West Guji zonal Labour and Social Affairs office. They are requesting that partners to assist them with assistive and mobility devices. A verification and follow-up on the list of individuals in need of this assistance will be conducted by the protection monitors.
- A local medical partner in Birbissa Kojowa disclosed seven malnourished children with SAM have been identified and referred for nutrition support.

Humanitarian Actors

- Two water trucks were supplied in Kercha and Hambella Wamena. Funds have been provided to the zonal Water Office for the maintenance of eight water points and renovation of a 100M³ reservoir.

- Protection monitors attend the Cluster/Sector meetings on Shelter, Cash and Food, to ensure protection is mainstreamed across all the relevant sectors and that the concerns raised by Persons of Concern are shared with other partners.
- The cash partner in Kercha woreda reached 2847 HHs with transfer value 3850 ETB/HH.

Housing, Land, and Property (HLP)

- On 28 August, 21 protection monitors from the UN joint teams, DRC and EECMY took part in a capacity building session on HLP. The training helped increase knowledge of the protection monitors in order to help them identify and refer HLP issues to HLP partners.
- A referral form for HLP issues was developed by the HLP WG in Bule Hora in order to intervene where HLP issues have been raised.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Psychosocial Support (PSS)

- During the month of August, 38 individuals received group and individual counselling sessions in Bore Chare kebele in Abaya woreda.
- During the reporting period, awareness raising session on PSS for 13 Government staff (09 men and 4 women) from nine government sectors offices (WoWCYA, kebele administration, DRRM, Education, Health, Police, Justice, Labour and Social Affairs and the Peace Department) where it was agreed to have a coordination meeting bi-weekly.
- Out of the six woredas, only two are covered by partners offering PSS services which makes the case referral to PSS service providers very limited. A training on Psychological First Aid is planned for the protection cluster members during the month of September.

Child Protection/Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- 2240 dignity kits have been procured by UNFPA with a plan of distributing 600 kits per woreda (Gelana, Bule Hora, Kercha, Hambella Wamena, Abaya and Birbissa Kojowa) and 640 pre-positioned in health facilities as a contingency measure.
- The child protection referral pathways are being updated due to a turnover in ZoWCYA and WoWCYA staff.
- There are limited child protection partners. Out of 163 kebeles in the six woredas, only 32 are covered.