



Joint UN Protection Monitoring Report

WEST GUJI ZONE - ETHIOPIA

JUNE 2019

OVERVIEW

During the reporting period OHCHR, UNHCR, UNFPA and UNICEF conducted joint protection monitoring in nine kebeles¹ of four woredas (Gelana, Kercha, Hambella Wamena and Bule Hora) in West Guji zone. This report outlines key findings from discussions and interviews with government officials, kebele managers, humanitarian actors, social workers, health extension workers and with the affected population including women, children and people with specific needs.

Number of Individuals Reached

Activities	Profile of People Reached	# of Sessions	# of Participants
Key Informant Interview	Kebele administration, WoWYCA, health extension workers, partner agencies	10	10
Focus Group Discussions	Men and women returnees	10	59
Individual Interviews	Persons with specific needs (older persons, persons with disabilities, female-headed households)	N/A	27
Awareness Raising Sessions	Awareness-raising session on human rights and protection concepts for returnees	03	116
Capacity Building Sessions	Woreda and kebele leaders, military officers, focal persons from the departments of WoWCYA, Woreda officials, DRMOs and humanitarian partners	04	98
	Training on basic human rights and rights of IDPs for public prosecutors and police from seven woredas of Gedeo zone	01	60
Total		28	370

¹ Tore Badiya, Tore Megala, Wachu and Quersa kebeles in **Gelana woreda**. Chari Saphalisa, Gadu Jabasire, Hera Lipitu, Gerba 01 and Gerba 02 kebeles in **Bule Hora woreda**. Dimtu and Goro Badessa kebeles in **Hambella Wamena woreda**.

Key Findings

1. Population Movement

The protection monitoring teams identified 1,204 IDP households (HHs) of Guji ethnicity dispersed within four woredas (Bule Hora, Gelana, Kercha and Hambella Wamena) in West Guji zone. Of this number, 65% (784 HHs) were mostly unwilling to return to their various places of origin/residence in Gedeo zone for reasons varying between insecurity and difficulties accessing their land and properties. The IDPs that were interviewed are living in the community either with relatives or in rented houses. About 19% (227 HHs) reportedly acquired properties in West Guji before the conflict and consider themselves dual residents of Gedeo and West Guji. A total of 12% (143 HHs) opted for reintegration and acquired land through private arrangements where they planted cash crops (false bananas, coffee, etc) and built houses. According to the West Guji kebele officials they are registered as residents of the kebeles.

During the reporting period, no restrictions or coercive actions from the local authorities in West Guji, were reported by IDPs. However, according to individual interviews conducted, 164 Guji IDPs residing in Cheri Saphalisa kebele (Bule Hora woreda), were returned from Gedeb (Gedeo zone), as they were not in possession of their landholding certificate.

2. Safety and Security

The communities in West Guji continue to experience fear of displacement due to the insecurity caused by various military operations. In Gadu Jabasire kebele (Bule Hora woreda) a significant presence of Oromia regional special police was observed. A kebele administrator reported that Ethiopian Defense Forces (EDF) launched an operation against Unknown Armed Groups (UAGs).

During the second week of June, UAGs in Quersa kebele (one of kebeles where IDPs are still located) in Gelana woreda, destroyed properties and displaced 17 families/relatives of the kebele officials and zonal leaders. Currently, the security situation is very tense in the Gelana woreda as UAGs continue to carry out sporadic attacks against government officials in the woreda.

3. Protection and Human Rights Concerns

Child Protection

- The woreda office of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (WoWCYA) in Gelana reported 4,195 returned with their families to their place of origin. Protection monitors identified 33 unaccompanied and 35 separated children (UASC) in Gelana woreda including children living on the street. In Tore Badiya kebele of Gelana woreda, kebele administrator reported eight unaccompanied children, but he could not provide a list of the children of concern. Child protection partners have not received a referral regarding these unaccompanied minors but continue to follow-up.

- Currently child protection partners are in the process of tracking UASC in order to verify all UASCs and other vulnerable children in each woreda. The key challenge to the exercise has been the limited resources available and the low coverage by partners in some kebeles.
- Parents have expressed concern about the enrolment of their children in the next academic year as they do not have financial means (or income) to purchase scholastic materials.

Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

- It was observed that early marriage and domestic violence are occurring at a higher rate in Gelana woreda as compared to other woredas.
- Key informant Interviews with the WoWCYA indicate the need to foster interventions in the kebeles by the deployment of additional social workers at the kebele level and providing transportation to facilitate follow up of survivors. Preliminary findings from the mapping of the WoWCYA representatives at the kebele level shows that WoWCYA representatives have not returned since the conflict subsided.
- Security concerns in some of the kebeles have hindered survivors' access to adequate and timely interventions where possible.

Civil Documentation / Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

- The absence of landholding certificates is an obstacle for some returnees to access their land and property in Gedeb woreda (Gedeo zone). Some of these returnees have returned to displacement in West Guji they lost their land certificate during the conflict. The issues of missing documents were reported to the kebele officials. Returnees were requested to hold onto their complaints until there was sufficient capacity at the local level to address their concerns.
- Secondary occupation was reported in Hera Lipito kebele, Guji IDPs reported that their land and other properties were taken over by Gedeos in Gedeb woreda. HLP cases are referred to NRC's HLP team.
- In Gadu Jabasire kebele, Bule Hora woreda, of the 350 HHs Gedeo returnees, 162 HHs lost their houses to fire and are in need of urgent shelter assistance. According to the ES/NFI cluster, there is no partner working in Bule Hora woreda at the moment and the prioritized woredas are Kercha and Hambella in West Guji zone and Gedeb in Gedeo zone.
- Similarly, in Wachu kebele (Gelana woreda) the returnees constructed temporary shelters because their houses were destroyed but they are able to access their land for cultivation.

People with Specific Needs (PSN)

- During the reporting period 34 PSNs were identified and referred to appropriate services.

Human Rights

- Government authorities claimed that they have arrested over 300 people allegedly involved in the violence and conflict in West Guji zone. The protection monitoring teams were not able to collect more detailed information from authorities during the reporting period.

4. Humanitarian Assistance

While humanitarian interventions are underway, substantive gaps in the provision of food and shelter were reported. The zonal authorities stated they have conducted targeting in Kercha woreda and requested humanitarian partners to complete the exercise in the following prioritized woredas (Bule Hora, Gelana and Hambella) and then conduct verification of the list from Kercha.

Food

- The local authorities prioritized food distribution in Kercha due to a large number of returnees.
- In Gelana woreda, the government distributed 15kg of maize per individual four months ago. Since this time, there has been not been any distributions conducted, which has led to a serious food shortage in Gelana woreda.
- In Tore Badiya kebele (Gelana woreda) it was reported that about 300HH returnees did not receive any food assistance since their arrival. In addition to access to food, the returnees reported that there were inclusion errors on lists used by the partners for food distribution.
- In Wachu and Chari Saphalisa kebeles (Bule Hora woreda) a shortage of food was also reported. According to the kebele managers, the returnees have not received any food assistance, since their arrival in the kebele.

Health

- According to focus group discussion with women, it was highlighted that many women deliver at home as health facilities are non-existent or non-functional.

WASH

- Similar to health providers, portable water and latrines are limited or non-existent in some kebeles. In Hera Lipitu kebele (Bule Hora woreda) there is one water pump functional about one hour away. It is difficult to reach by people with specific needs including pregnant women, persons with disabilities and older persons with limited mobility.
- Women at Tore Badiya kebele (Gelana woreda) reported walking more than two hours to fetch water from a spring.
- Open defecation was also observed in several kebeles.
- In some locations in Kercha, Hambella and Bule Hora, partners are distributing dignity kit/hygiene materials. However, during focus group discussions, the need for those items were raised by the affected population.

NFI/Shelter

- Cooking stoves, solar lamps, dignity kits and some shelter items, were distributed to returnees, in particular those with specific needs, in Kercha and Bule Hora. However, the items to not reach all of the returnees in need. An information campaign on the limited resources is recommended to avoid complaints and misunderstanding among the affected population.

5. Constraints and Gaps

- Low coverage of partners in the sectors of psychosocial support, child protection, SGBV, dignity kit provision and assistance to persons with specific needs.
- Prevailing insecurity, as well as heavy rains and bad road conditions, hindered humanitarian access to the affected population and areas of intervention.
- Serious disruption of internet services affected coordination and information sharing with key actors and stakeholders during the reporting period.
- In June, the protection monitors observed the replacement of several government officials at the zonal level, which impacted the relationship and collaboration the protection monitoring teams have with the government. It hindered information sharing and access to data on the local population.
- Several security incidents took place in Bule Hora and Gelana woredas where military operations were launched by the federal security forces against unidentified armed groups (UAG) operating in the area. The security incidents resulted in movement restrictions for the protection monitoring teams.

Response Update

Persons with Specific Needs (PSN)

- The total of 272 PSNs were identified by the protection monitors and referred to service providers.
- The Zonal office of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (ZoWCYA) registered 12,022 PSNs, including women and children at-risk, adult and children with disabilities, older persons without family support, persons with serious medical conditions. The number includes the host community and the affected population within the woredas.
- The data provided by ZoWCYA on PSNs is yet to be finalized in all woreda and segregated according to the different categories and among the returnee population. The data will be used by the protection monitoring teams for targeting, follow-up and referral, as needed.
- The protection monitors are working with the WoWCYA to establish a referral pathway for the PSNs. The Protection Cluster's inputs to the zonal response plan will target 3500 PSNs for multipurpose assistance aimed at mitigating protection risks while advocating for the integration of their needs in different services provided.

Child Protection

- The child protection referral pathway recently published by the CP AoR was widely shared with the partners and used to sensitize the community during the training conducted by the team. This should enhance the involvement and engagement of the community.
- Meanwhile, the training provided enhanced the capacity of the different stakeholders to involve them in responding to their own protection concerns including the identification and response to child protection issues and concerns.
- The protection monitors are working in close collaboration with child protection partners for the referral of UASC. A meeting was held between child protection partners and the protection monitors to update them about the ongoing strategy to manage the cases of UASCs.

Capacity Development

- During the month of June, capacity building initiatives were launched in four woredas, which reached 98 government counterparts from different departments including military officers, kebele and woreda leadership and community representatives, with the aim of strengthening the protection environment in West Guji. Topics covered include protection and humanitarian principles, child protection, SGBV, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA).
- OHCHR organized a two-day training on basic human rights and rights of IDPs and returnees with police and public prosecutors from all seven woredas of Gedo zone from 12-13 June 2019. Altogether 60 (46 males and 14 female) participants participated in the training. The training enhanced the knowledge on human rights standards applicable for IDPs and returnees. It stressed state obligation to protect, respect and fulfil the rights of affected populations. The participants raised concerns associated with political interference, lack of resources and technical skills, that negatively affect their ability to address accountability on alleged human rights violations.

Links with Other Sectors

- Due to the support of the protection monitoring teams, the shelter strategy in West Guji, now entails the verification of land ownership documents before any intervention or individual assistance.
- The Protection Cluster included a question on the number of PSNs in the joint targeting questionnaire.
- Protection monitors attend cluster meetings of other sectors as a means to ensure protection is mainstreamed across the humanitarian response. An action plan for PSEA was developed.
- Projects are targeting 20-30% of the host community to ensure community cohesion amongst the affected populations.
- Protection monitors supported hygiene promotion activities in Kercha.
- The protection monitors developed tools to refer and follow-up on basic services gaps identified shared with relevant authorities and clusters.
- Bilateral meetings were held with the Health and Nutrition Cluster lead to follow up on cases referred. The protection monitors were advised to work with health extension workers who are present in the kebeles for referrals and alert of health issues. It was noted that despite the absence of health workers and operational health facilities in some locations, the health extension workers are liable and have the capacity to provide all necessary support.