Humanitarian Bulletin
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OCHA

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ongoing hostilities in Benishangul Gumuz Region continues to affect the lives and livelihood of communities and to increase humanitarian needs. The conflict was contained in Metekel Zone since mid-2020, but has spread to Kamashi and Assosa zones, as well as to Mau Komo Special *Woreda* in recent months.
- Volatile security situation in East, West and Haro Guduru Wollega zones of Oromia Region is leading to displacement, including to neighboring Benishangul Gumuz Region. Field data indicates that more than 250,000 people in East and West Wollega zones require relief food assistance but the response so far is inadequate and has limited coverage.



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Ongoing hostilities in western Ethiopia is increasing humanitarian needs

Ongoing hostilities in Benishangul Gumuz Region in western Ethiopia continues to affect the lives and livelihood of communities and to increase humanitarian needs. The conflict was contained in Metekel Zone since mid-2020, but it has spread to Kamashi and Assosa zones, as well as to Mau Komo Special *Woreda* in recent months. Hundreds of thousands of people have fled looking for safety and assistance, with the majority displaced inside Metekel Zone, while some have fled to neighboring Amhara and Oromia regions. The Government and humanitarian partners continue to address the identified needs of the conflict-affected population, but the response is hampered by the highly volatile and unpredictable security situation making it difficult to access some areas. Except some parts of Assosa Zone, all other conflict-affected areas are not easily accessible for humanitarian operators. Due to lack of access and insecurity, refugees in Gure Shombala and Tongo camps have not received assistance since mid-December 2021 when the camps were attacked and looted by armed elements.

Emergency shelter, non-food items, health, water, sanitation and hygiene services, education, and protection are identified as priority needs among the affected population. It is estimated that more than 50,000 malnourished children under five years and 18,000 malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women need nutritional food supplement; more than 31,000 internally displaced households have critical need of core relief items; more than 70,000 students, including more than29,000 girls, have dropped out of school and require educational support; at least 210 schools were damaged, including about 120 that fully destroyed, and need to be rehabilitated once the security situation permits. Medical supplies for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are also required.

Similarly, volatile security situation in East, West and Haro Guduru Wollega zones of Oromia Region is leading to displacement, including to neighboring Benishangul Gumuz Region. Field data indicates that more than 250,000 people in East and West Wollega zones require food assistance, including IDPs and returnees, but the response so far is inadequate and with limited coverage. More than 37,000 households also require emergency shelter and non-food item support, but only nearly half of them received assistance since January 2021. While routine nutritional screening is compromised due to limited access to conflict-affected areas, malnutrition amongst children under five years and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers is alarming. Partners have provided some nutritional supplies in some IDP-hosting

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- Very hot and dry weather conditions continued to be reported in Somali, most parts of SNNP and Sidama as well as across the lowlands of southern Oromia, particularly in Bale, East Bale, Borena, Guji and West Guji zones.
- The impact of the drought on pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in eastern and southeastern Ethiopia continues to deepen. A recent needs assessment in East Hararge Zone (Oromia) indicated that some 627,000 people across 11 *woredas* require urgent water assistance.

woredas, but the intervention needs to be expanded to support new locations. Access to clean water is a challenge for IDPs who are mostly relying on unprotected or contaminated surface water and rivers as main sources of water. Transportation of life-saving medical supplies and the provision of routine health services have also been limited by insecurity. Tens of thousands of students are estimated to be affected by the closure of schools.

Update – Drought in southern and eastern pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas in Ethiopia

Very hot and dry weather conditions continued to be reported in Somali, most parts of SNNP and Sidama as well as across the lowlands of southern Oromia, particularly in Bale, East Bale, Borena, Guji and West Guji zones. Rain shower was however received in 32 *woredas* across SNNP (21 *woredas)* and Sidama (11 *woredas)* regions last week, albeit limited in amount and coverage. This will slightly contribute to the replenishment of water sources and rejuvenation of pasture. Similarly in Somali Region, good rains were unexpectedly received in Dawa Zone mid-last week and have reportedly improved water availability in four *kebeles* in Moyale *Woreda* and five *kebeles* in Kadaduma *Woreda*. The rains have replenished some water sources and have eased the burden on the limited functional boreholes and the six water trucks currently delivering water to affected populations in these areas.

Overall, the impact of the drought on pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities in eastern and southeastern Ethiopia continues to deepen. A recent needs assessment in East Hararge Zone (Oromia) indicates that some 627,000 people across 11 *woredas* require urgent water assistance. At present, only 18 out of 44 water trucks required are providing services to drought-affected communities in the area. Similarly, only seven of 29 water trucks required are providing services in six *woredas* of West Hararge Zone (Oromia). More than 80 per cent of the livestock in the lowlands of East and West Hararge zones have migrated to Mojo, Ramis, Gobele, and Erer rivers, located 30-50 kms away from affected areas. This migration has impacted the schooling of students who were forced to drop-out and migrate with their families. Latest data has put the number of livestock deaths at 260,000, worsening food insecurity as it is the main source of livelihood and nutrition.



Figure 1 Government-implemented water trucking support to drought-affected people in Kohle, Afder Zone, Somali Region. Photo credit: Somali Disaster Risk Management Bureau

With reduced food and income source, millions of vulnerable pastoralist and agro-pastoralist households are struggling to make ends meet and to survive.

Ongoing Government-led and humanitarian partners-supported drought mitigation and response efforts need to be scaled up, particularly amidst indications that the next rainy season in March 2022 may also be well below normal, making it the fourth consecutive failed season. Should this materialize, there will likely be complete exhaustion of milk production and increased livestock death.

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- Like many of the IDPs in Ebinat Town, South Gonder Zone in Amhara Region, Fetsum came from Dahana *Woreda* in Wag Hemra Zone fleeing conflict in his area. A health officer by profession, he and his displaced colleagues have put their skills to good use in the IDP site.

Stories of disaster-affected people

"A health officer by profession, Fetsum and his displaced colleagues, have put their skills to good use in the IDP site."

Story collected towards the end of December 2021

Like many of the IDPs in Ebinat Town, South Gonder Zone in Amhara Region, Fetsum came from Dahana *Woreda* in Wag Hemra Zone fleeingconflict in his area. A health officer by profession, he and his displaced colleagues have put their skills to good use in the IDP site. They are providing health service to more than 18,000 IDPs in the site, including assisting nine women to safely deliver their babies so far. "We treat the IDPs in three categories: children under five years, pregnant and lactating women as well as general medical service to all. But we are facing significant shortage of medicines and medical equipment," Fetsum said.

Fitsum and his colleagues are grateful to Ebinat Health Center and the humanitarian agencies that are supporting them with supplies, but the needs surpass the ongoing response. "We usually refer patients who require specialized medicine or acquire chronic diseases to Ebinat Health Center and to Ebinet Hospital" he added, as they do not have the means to treat complicated medical cases.

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