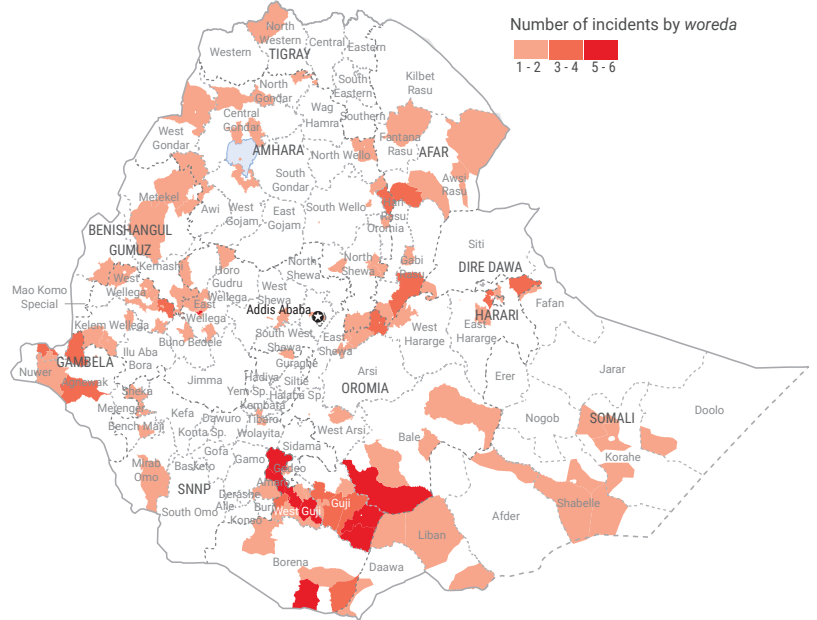


This report is produced by OCHA Ethiopia in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period January to March 2020. The next report will be issued in June 2020.

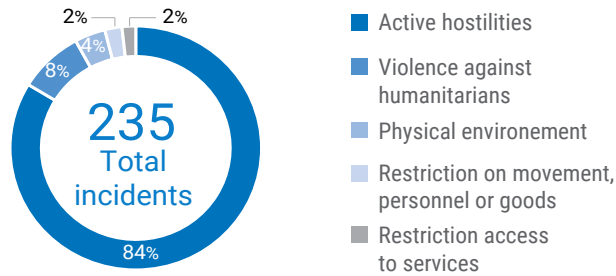
### OVERVIEW

- The operational environment to relief operations remained permissive through the reporting period. Most access impediments continue related to hostilities, intra-community conflicts or social unrest, hindering the quality of the humanitarian response, and to COVID-19.
- Humanitarian partners are committed to support the government response to COVID-19 and ensure that critical activities are sustained. Partners are actively implementing precautionary measures to ensure the safety of aid personnel and the population.
- The humanitarian community is working with government counterparts to ensure that partners can continue movements and operations throughout the country, bearing in mind restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19.
- Ongoing security operations in West and Southern Oromia had a serious impact on the ability of partners to deliver assistance, with dozens of projects temporarily suspended impacting thousands.
- Intra-community violence has escalated between ethnic Gumuz and Amhara in Benishangul Gumuz, and between Afar and neighboring Somali, Amhara and Oromo communities, prompting new displacements and limiting humanitarian access.
- Elsewhere, localized violence and social unrest challenged relief operations on an intermittent basis. During Epiphany celebration, inter-religious conflict erupted in various places, particularly Dire Dawa and Harar, causing the suspension of activities and hibernation of staff.
- On 31 March, the government lifted the restriction on communications in Western Oromia in place since January, which had significantly impacted relief operations in the region.
- Whilst UN and NGO partners are not directly targeted in the violence, the likelihood of suffering collateral damage is high, either during road movements or programme delivery. Partners have reported an increase of incidents with security forces, comprising cases of intimidation at check points and forceful commandeering of their vehicles.
- Amhara and SNNPR authorities have taken positive steps towards enabling assistance to IDPs. In Awi zone, Amhara, food aid has been distributed to IDPs for the first time in nine months, while in SNNPR, authorities have authorized the roll-out of the Displacement Tracking Monitoring (DTM) system.

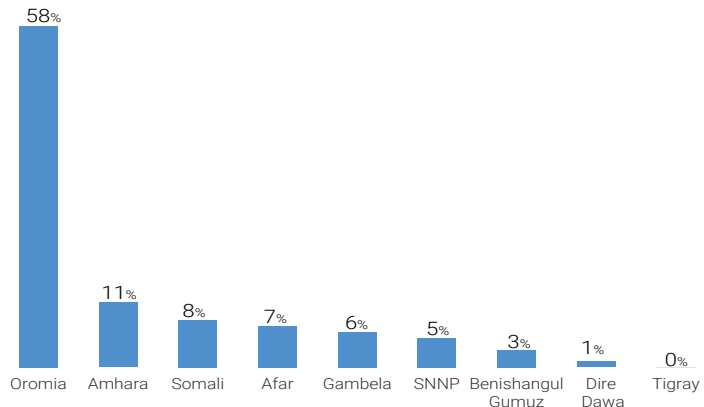


Source: Access Incidents database  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

### REPORTED ACCESS INCIDENTS BY TYPE



### REPORTED ACCESS INCIDENTS BY REGION



## Afar - (Zone 1 and 3) – Somali (Siti zone) – Eastern Oromia (West Hararge)



Since January, fighting between ethnic Afar and Somali Issa clan has intensified in boundary areas between the two regions, causing dozens of casualties and displacing communities on both sides. EDF intervened rapidly upon each clash and reestablished control, but did not prevent the continuation of deadly clashes, 12 in total since January. According to IOM – DTM round 20, there are 63,000 IDP from areas affected by violence in Afar, all living with host communities. The situation in the three contested kebeles of Gedamaytu (Amibara woreda), Undufo (Gewane woreda), and Adaytu (Mille woreda) in Afar, remains very volatile and the centre of hostilities, with EDF in control of the areas and partners' access constrained by insecurity (see "OCHA Access Snapshot - Afar region / Siti zone, Somali region – as of 31 January" for further details, <https://bit.ly/39OqXib>).

Afar regional authorities have reported that some 35,500 people have been displaced since end January, some 18,500 from zone 1 "Awsi" (2,200 in Afambo, 4,000 in Mile, 11,700 in new woreda "Garani", and 600 in Chifra) and from some 17,000 from zone 3 "Gabi Rasu" (4,200 in Gelalo, 1,200 in Gewane, and 11,600 in new woredas "Hanruka"). At the time of writing, regional authorities in collaboration with NDRMC have provided one round of emergency food assistance to 46,000 IDPs, while significant gaps remain in terms of emergency NFIs, WASH, health and nutrition.

In Sitti zone, some 78,000 people have been displaced by violence since the beginning of 2019. At the end of February, an inter-agency humanitarian mission to Sitti zone, revealed the dire situation of some 26,900 families, displaced from June - November 2019, and currently scattered in Afdem (3,800 HHs), Alale (4,500 HHs), Biyo'ad (2,700 HHs), Erer (4,200 HHs), Mieso (3,200 HHs), Karef (3,000 HHs), Kala'ato (5,000 HHs), and Hariso woredas (500 HHs). Partners' projects on health, nutrition and WASH in Afdem, Mieso and Dembel Woredas remain suspended since last year due to the insecurity. In addition, the mission identified serious gaps on access to health (insufficient medical supplies, shortage of personnel, recurrent measles outbreaks, etc.) Physical access by road to IDP sites from Dire Dawa is very challenging, alternatively, access through the contested villages under EDF control is possible. Humanitarian actors have not such villages from either Afar or Sitti side since 2019.

In mid-March, clashes were reported between ethnic Afari and Oromo in Amibara woreda, Gabi zone, causing an unknown number of casualties on both sides and limiting humanitarian access. The fighting escalated and spilled over into Gumbi Bordode woreda, West Hararge zone. Reportedly, at least 26 people were killed on both sides, some 3,700 people displaced, and 122 houses burned. A similar conflict was reported in the same area in November 2019, displacing over 3,600 people. At the time of writing, access to the area is challenging, while food and emergency non-food items remain critical priority needs for IDPs.

## Amhara region



Sporadic fighting between security forces and UAGs has been reported in various areas in Central and North Gondar zones, including major towns, limiting partners' operations and movements. In Gondar and surrounding areas, clashes between security forces and groups of armed youth in February and March resulted in an undetermined number of casualties. These groups are accused of killings, extortion, abduction, and weapons smuggling. On 17 March, a security operation kicked-off, with government restricting access to communication services and limiting population movements. Meanwhile, restrictions related to the conflict between ethnic Qemant and Amhara were lifted during the reporting period.

Numerous violent clashes have been reported between Afar – Amhara and Afar – Oromo communities in North Shewa, Oromia Special zone, North and South Wollo, and adjacent areas in Afar region provoking many casualties, and triggering intermittent movements restrictions and forcing security forces to intervene. This notwithstanding, partners operational on the ground have reported that the humanitarian response was not affected, and the fourth round of emergency food assistance could be completed. The conflict among these groups relate to claims over territory and natural resources and involve low-level skirmishes and revenge attacks. The scale and severity of the conflict have increased over the last three months due to a shortage of water and pasture.

Through the region, reports of criminality and proliferation of small arms continue. In one incident, aid workers were temporarily detained at a checkpoint for refusing to give a lift to security forces. In February, in Gonder town, some foreign health workers were arrested and later released on bail for having allegedly prescribed expired medication.

### Amhara (Awi zone) – Benishangul Gumuz region (Metekel zone)



Simmering tensions and retaliatory killings between ethnic Gumuz and Amhara in Metekel zone as well as in boundary areas with Amhara persist. At the end of January, a flare up in inter-communal violence took place in Wenbera woreda lasting several days, causing dozens of casualties, population displacements and an undetermined number of houses burned. In February, violence spread to Dangura and Mandura Woredas, resulting in loss of life and the displacement of some 400 people. Only in Manbuk town, Dangura woreda, 49 houses were burned, the victims are temporarily sheltered with relatives and friends. According to the evaluation done by the zonal government, those affected and displaced remain in need of assistance, including food, emergency shelter, water, and non-food items. As a result, plans to return ethnic Amhara IDPs from Awi zone displaced since 2019 were halted. Violence has limited partners' movements in rural areas, and assistance to 10,500 IDPs (3,600 in Guba, 5,000 in Dangura, 1,700 in Mandura, and 150 in Pawe woredas). In March, clashes reached Gilgel Beles town, an attack in a school left several students injured. At the time of writing, the security situation remains tense and volatile.

In Jawi woreda, Awi zone, retaliatory violence against ethnic Gumuz took place in March, impacting regional governments' plans to return some 1,800 Gumuz IDPs from Gilgel Beles. Government and humanitarian partners established the IDP Technical Committee in Awi zone to coordinate the response. Following sustained advocacy, 70 per cent of the estimated 22,000 IDPs in Awi zone received emergency food and non-food aid. However, unmet needs in terms of health, water, and shelter remain.

### Eastern Oromia (Hararges) - Dire Dawa - Harar – Somali region (Fafan zone)



Social unrest linked with ongoing political dynamics, and ethnic/ religious affiliation issues continue to impact the safety of the population and aid workers in the region, in particular in Dire Dawa or Harar. In January, the Epiphany celebrations led to significant public disorders and demonstrations in Dire Dawa, following the burning of a mosque in Amhara, forcing partners to stop movements and hibernate staff. Large scale peaceful demonstrations took place through the region in protest to security forces' operations in the Wellegas and Guji zones.

At the end of January, inter-communal clashes erupted in Harar over disagreements regarding the decorations to be put up during the Epiphany celebration ("*Timket*") and the use of the old national flag. An unknown number of casualties were reported, and several houses and businesses attacked. In the following days, violence spread to Dire Dawa and other parts of East Hararge, such as Girawa woreda, prompting the intervention of security forces. Further, violence between Amhara and Oromo youth reignited in February in Dire Dawa, causing deaths and injured.

In February and through March, intercommunal violence between Gari - Somali and Jarso - Oromo communities took place in Tuliguled woreda, Fafan zone (Somali) and Chinaksen woreda, East Hararghe zone (Oromia Region), in a number of villages causing casualties on both sides. A UN mission to Fafan zone (Somali region) was forced to retreat urgently after gun shots were heard. The situation at the time of writing remains tense. In a number of kebeles in Chinaksen woreda, partners were forced to suspend operations due to insecurity. Over 24,000 Jarso Oromo IDPs are currently hosted in Chinaksen woreda for the past two years, unable to return to their original place in Tuliguled due to unresolved security issues. Regular food and NFI distributions remain a critical gap.

The situation of IDPs in the 'Millennium park' site in Dire Dawa remains critical. The site, which is located on land slated for development by the Dire Dawa Municipality, with World Bank funding, is included in the Somali Regional Government's durable solutions planning, though the timeframe for potential relocations to Somali Region is not yet known. In the interim, many basic humanitarian needs are unmet, including water provision and latrine coverage. IDPs complained about irregular food distribution in the second half of 2019, which has been addressed in 2020. IDPs living in overcrowded sites such as the Millennium park, are highly vulnerable to COVID-19 due to the difficulties in ensuring social distancing measures.

## Gambela region



Traditional, inter and intra communal tensions continue to pose a challenge to relief operations for refugees and host communities in the region. In January, a clash between South Sudan's SPLA-IO and General Ochan Puot group in South Sudan spilled over into Ethiopia causing some casualties. At the end of February, a conflict between the Chie-Waw and Chie-Chaany Nuer sub-clans in Jikawo woredas, Nuer zone, resulted in many deaths, some 6,800 people displaced, and 400 houses burnt. Clashes continued for several days before federal and regional security forces brought the situation under control. Those displaced people have received food assistance but other needs such as emergency shelter remain. The clashes also reportedly triggered disturbances between the two sub-clans in Nguenyiel refugee camp in Itang special zone. Movement along the Gambella - Makuey road was restricted due to the conflict and banditry for many years.

Since February, incursions from armed Murle groups from South Sudan were reported in Jor, Gog and Dimma woredas, Agnuak zone, and along the international border. These groups have traditionally engaged in raiding cattle and abducting children, and their presence caused a disruption of the livelihoods of local communities such as farming, fishing, while women can no longer collect firewood. In March, a number of killings and retaliatory attacks took place, including the kidnapping of 10 children in Jor and Gog woredas. At the time of writing, their whereabouts remain unknown. Taking into the past previous ethnic-featured violence in 2018 and 2019, there is a potential for these attacks to lead to generalized violence, including in Gambella town.

Relief operations in refugee camps continued without major disruptions, however, partners continue to operate in high risk environment. The perpetrators of the September attack against an INGO in which two aid workers were killed, remain at large and the motives behind the attack remain unknown. Partners are putting in place some mitigation measures that include movement coordination and information sharing, while UNDSS conducted security trainings for UN and INGO staff.

## Southern Oromia (West Guji) – SNNPR (Gedeo)



Gedeo authorities have announced that there are no IDPs left in the zone, all having returned to formerly conflict areas in West Guji. While some may have remained scattered across the zone, there are currently no ways of reliably determining their numbers and whereabouts. Authorities maintain that those remainees have locally integrated and refused to return for reasons unrelated to the conflict. In this sense, some 500 IDP households from boundary areas with West Guji are deemed locally integrated after obtaining land and receiving shelter and livelihoods support in Chiriku kebele (Yirgacheffe woreda). On the other hand, some 6,000 families who voluntarily returned from West Guji to Gedeb and Kochari woredas in July 2019, have still not received assistance. Partners continue to follow up with regional and federal authorities their inclusion in food aid schemes. In March, SNNPR regional authorities agreed for the first time to allow the conduct of the displacement tracking exercise by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This is expected to result in more actionable data and increased humanitarian outreach.

Since early January, security forces scaled up operations against UAGs, impacting relief operations and blocking access intermittently to parts of Gelana, Bule Hora, Kercha, Abaya, Dugda Dawa and Melka Soda woredas. Authorities allege that UAGs engage in robberies, indiscriminate destruction of residential and other property. Thus far, no deliberate attack has been registered against humanitarian partners in the zone. Conflict between ethnic Guji and Amaro communities has occasionally hindered access to parts of Suro Berguda and Gelana woredas. In late January, a UN-rented truck returning from a non-food items (NFI) distribution in Odala Oda kebele, Gelana woreda, was stopped by militia gunmen in Amaro woreda and threatened for not having distributed the items in Amaro (SNNP). In March, a rapid needs assessment in Amaro woreda, pre-identified 8,000 IDPs in a vulnerable situation (out of 24,000 in total), authorities have provided some limited assistance.

Overall, tensions between communities in West Guji have noticeably decreased thanks to enhanced community-level security and to peace and reconciliation efforts. Partners have stepped up recovery efforts to hundreds of thousands of IDP returnees from Gedeo. However, many returnees are yet to have their full livelihoods recovered, with gaps in shelter and NFIs as well as farming tools (particularly for coffee production) destroyed during the conflict. In some kebeles, returnees have complained about the lack of sustained food distribution, access to water and scholastic materials. Similar to Gedeo, thousands were not adequately or at all registered during joint verification exercises and remain in need of support. Since February, regional authorities have been deliberating on the zonal request for inclusion of 12,500 people from Bule Hora and Abaya woredas. Similarly, 19,000 left-out IDPs in Suro Berguda woreda (affected by inter-communal conflict) have been in

dire need of support for over a year. Except for partial food distribution covering some 6,000 IDPs, no additional assistance has been provided due to limited partners' presence/ coverage in the area; the official zonal request for food assistance to the left-out has been pending before regional authorities since January.

### Southern Oromia (Bale, Borena, and Guji zones)



The humanitarian situation has worsened due to security operations against UAGs and a limited response. Since June 2019, the intensity and the geographic area of clashes increased to Aga Wayu, Gora Dola, Gumi Eldelo, Liban, Odo Shakisso, and Saba Boru woredas. Some 80,000 people are displaced, in addition to some 40,000 from the previous conflict with Somali region. IDPs and host communities have raised lack of security and food aid as the most urgent needs. Kebele capitals have become collective centres hosting thousands of IDPs, putting a strain on available resources and social cohesion.

The security situation remains precarious, Guji and Borena are under command-post administration since August 2019. Security restrictions and general insecurity are limiting population movements, and access to farmland, water, and pastures. There are reports of targeted killings of local officials, traditional leaders or local militia members by UAGs, and arbitrary arrests and harassment by security forces to alleged UAGs supporters, and the use of schools by security forces. IDPs and host communities have lost access to their livelihoods and markets. At the time of writing, regional authorities have started to dispatch food to IDPs amidst enhanced mitigation measures for COVID-19. Projects in health, nutrition, health or agriculture are temporarily suspended. Partners have reported cases of intimidation and misappropriation of their assets by parties to the conflict. Security restrictions on the use of vehicles and motorbikes are in place, impacting aid operations (see "OCHA Access Snapshot – Guji zone (Oromia) - as of 28 February" for further details, <https://bit.ly/2yBNOjX>).

In Bale zone, according to zone officials, there are 108,000 IDPs and returnees, 64,000 of whom displaced from border areas with Somali region since 2017. The presence of UAGs in neighboring areas with Guji's Liban, Gumi Eldelo and Goro Dola, woredas, has raised concerns in terms of access to some 50,000 people. Emergency food distributions are suspended as a result of insecurity in Sawena, Lega Hidha, Rayitu, Dawe Kachen, Dawe Serer and Gura Dhamole woredas, impacting some 50,000 IDPs. In both Bale and Guji zones, water availability for human and livestock is a serious concern, mainly in lowland woredas.

In Borena, in March, fighting erupted in Dhas woreda between ethnic Gari - Somalis and Borana - Oromo causing casualties as well as the looting of livestock. In addition, fighting was also reported between security forces and UAGs in Miyo woredas as well as in Moyale town. Restrictions to UN agencies movements remain in Guchi and Wachile woredas since 2019, which host 35,700 and 248,000 IDPs and returnees respectively.

### Western Oromia (Wellegas) – Benishangul Gumuz region, BGR (Kamashi zone)



Since January security forces intensified operations against UAGs in Western Oromia, particularly in West and Kelem Wellegas, many casualties reported. The region is under command-post security administration, measures such as curfews are impacting the civilian population, while reports indicate massive arrests of alleged supporters of UAGs and cases of arbitrary beatings following security incidents in Nekemte town. During the reporting period, two targeted killings by unknown people were reported in Nekemte. Operations in Jardega Jarte and Horo Buluk woredas, Horo Guduru Wellega, were suspended due to insecurity. The security situation in East Wollega is calm, though tensions in some boundary areas between with West Wellega and Kamashi persist, restricting Gumuz people from travelling to Oromia.

Since January, partners have reported an increase of incidents, including cases of intimidation and commandeering of their vehicles by security forces, which put them at risk in light of ongoing conflict dynamics with UAGs. Over 50,000 IDP returnees in boundary areas between West Wellega and Kamashi are out-of-reach to aid partners on an intermittent basis. Emergency cash, health, nutrition, agriculture, shelter/ NFIs, protection, water and sanitation programmes are temporarily suspended. Zone authorities have taken months to recognize the secondary displaced people in East Wellega (Haro Limu and Sasiga woredas), while in West Wellega the response was stalled by insecurity, impacting an estimated 33,000 people in both zones. At the time of writing, assessments to these vulnerable groups have been halted due to COVID-19.

In Kamashi, operations are ongoing, however, access is often hampered by insecurity in West Wollega. Only few partners are operational in the zone, and some areas have not received any assistance. Many returnees have not yet returned to their habitual residence areas due to security concerns, and partners struggle to locate them. Access to health and education services is yet to be fully re-established since 2018 violence (see "OCHA Access Snapshot - East and West Wellega (Oromia), Kamashi (Benishangul Gumuz) - as of 28 February 2020" for further details, <https://bit.ly/3aNKhgX>).