

Amhara Flash Update



01 March 2019

Key Highlights

- More than 90,000 people are currently displaced in Amhara region, the majority since September 2018. The IDPs are living with host communities (70 per cent) and in temporary, sub-standard settlement sites (30 per cent).
- The IDPs lack adequate access to basic services such as food, water and sanitation, education, health, shelter and livelihoods. The most pressing need articulated by IDPs is security and protection, followed by food, shelter and household items.
- Nearly all IDP sites in Central Gondar are accessible, while some sites in West Gondar remain inaccessible due to security concerns on the road. Basic social services (schools, health, and other Government services) were suspended due to insecurity.
- NDRMC started dispatching food and non-food relief supplies to Central and West Gondar since 12 February, but needs surpass resources available.
- Central and West Gondar zones are historically less affected by climate variability (drought/flood) and the small holder farmers are, for the most part, able to sustain themselves. For this reason, there is absence of humanitarian partners in the areas, which is posing a significant challenge in the current situation.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Longstanding tensions and sporadic conflict between the Amhara and Qemant communities spiked in September 2018 across the Central and West Gondar zones of the region, leading to the displacement of some 56,000 people as of the 4th week of February 2019.

The Amhara Region Disaster Prevention and Food Security Coordination Office (RDPFSPCO), in collaboration with sector bureaus, NGOs and UN agencies, conducted a multi-sector assessment in affected areas in October 2018. The assessment identified an estimated 6,000 IDPs, who were newly displaced in September 2018. By December 2018 however, the regional government announced that the number of displaced people in the region had reached at least 43,000. The region subsequently sent out an official request for support to all partners, stating that nearly US\$8 million was required to address prioritized life-saving needs of 43,000 IDPs from December 2018 to May 2019.

About the Qemant in brief

Qemant is part of Amhara region with a population of 172,000 (1994 Census). The Qemant community lives along an axis stretching from Ayikel in Chilga woreda to Kirakir north to Lake Tana in Lay Armacho, Qara, Dembia, Metema and Wogera woredas.

Following years of self-administration claim by the Qemant community, the Amhara regional Government granted self-administration status for 42 kebeles/sub-districts in Gondar and surrounding. However, self-administration claims by additional Qemant-community inhabited kebeles led to a referendum, held on 17 September 2017. The result of the referendum indicated that seven of the eight kebeles voted in favor of the existing Amhara administration, while one kebele - Quaber Lomye – voted to join the Qemant self-administrative zone.

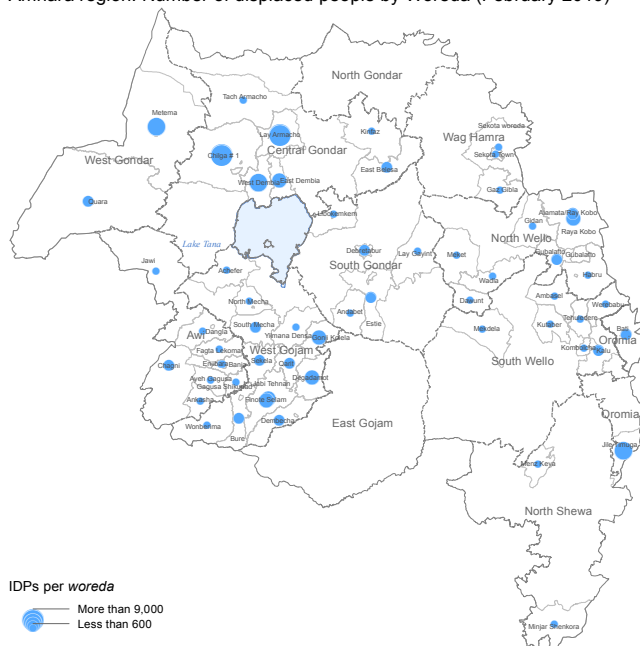
To confirm the displacement figure, gauge the level of humanitarian needs and identify response gaps, a Government-led multi-agency and multi-sector rapid needs assessment was conducted from 22 to 28 January 2019. By this time, the number of displaced population had reached an estimated 80,000. The initial Response Plan was revised based on the assessment findings, and the requirement was increased to US\$18 million.

Ongoing violence continue to displace civilians from their homes, and as of the last week of February 2019, the number

of IDPs in the region had reached 90,000 according to regional authorities. The vast majority of the IDPs (some 60,000) are displaced in Central and West Gondar zones.

While the recent inter-communal conflict contributed to the sudden and drastic spike in the number of IDPs in the region since September 2018 (contributing to more than half of the IDP caseload in the region), displaced Amharas in the region also come from Oromia (Buno Bedele, Jimma, Nekemt and Kelem Wollega zones), Benishangul Gumuz (Kamashi zone), SNNP (Bench Maji zone), Afar, Somali and Tigray regions since October 2017. The IDPs are scattered across 11 zones of Central Gonder (49,312), West Gonder (7,480), South Gonder (3,088), North Wollo (3,275), South Wollo (2,097), Oromo zone (4,760), West Gojam (15,842), North Shoa (516), Wag Hemira (236), Awi (2,919) and East Gojam (1,211).

Amhara region: Number of displaced people by Woreda (February 2019)



HUMANITARIAN NEED

While the majority of the IDPs (70 per cent) are living with host communities, the remaining IDPs are living in temporary, sub-standard settlement sites and require shelter and non-food item support. The regional Government has arranged free medical services and referral systems for the IDPs, but most woredas have limited capacity to provide the required service. The risk of outbreak of communicable diseases is very high given the shortage of safe drinking water reported in most collective sites, the poor personal hygiene, lack of latrine management and open defecation, coupled with the poor nutritional status of the population and the sub-standard shelter condition. The overcrowded and poor living conditions also present a protection risk, especially for women and girls. The most pressing need articulated by IDPs is security and protection, followed by food, shelter and household items.

ONGOING RESPONSE

Upon the request of the Amhara region Disaster Prevention and Food Security Coordination Office (RDPFSP-CO), the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) dispatched emergency food and non-food supplies to some 46,000 IDPs in and around Central Gondar.

Accordingly, 851 metric ton of relief food items consisting of cereals (wheat and rice), Corn Soya Blend (CSB), oil, as well as 20 tents, 8,000 plastic sheets, 18,369 blankets and 73,474 different utensils were distributed to some 42,619 IDPs as of 25 February 2019. NDRMC has recently dispatched emergency food and NFIs for 7,500 IDPs located in West Gondar zone. NDRMC has also deployed a team of experts to Central Gondar to support the implementation of food assistance activities.

Meanwhile, on 13 February 2019, the Amhara Regional Government stated that the region has allocated ETB 35 million to respond to the needs of the internally displaced persons in the region. However, addressing the needs of the growing number of IDPs is far beyond the capacity of the region, according to Ato Asemahegn Asres, Head of the Regional Government Communication Affairs Office who called on the support of humanitarian partners and the community at large to provide in-kind and financial assistance. A regional task force is set up to lead resource mobilization efforts and a bank account has been opened for this purpose. ICRC/ERCS has also provided some limited quantities of ES/NFIs.

CHALLENGES

The security situation has improved following the deployment of the Ethiopian Defense Force (EDF) to restore peace and security in the area. Nearly all IDP sites in Central Gondar are accessible, while some sites in West Gondar still remain inaccessible due to security concerns on the road. Basic social services (schools, health, and other Government services) were suspended due to insecurity.

Central and Western Gondar zones are historically less affected by climate variability and the small holder farmers are, for the most part, able to sustain themselves. This area has been targeted by development partners while humanitarian partners have a stronger presence in the eastern parts of the region. The absence of humanitarian partners remains a significant challenge.

COORDINATION

Regional Government-established coordination structures in Bahir Dar and Gondar are currently overseeing the IDP response. OCHA has also deployed a field staff to Amhara to support the coordination.

Meanwhile, on 18 February, 2019, the Ministry of Peace and NDRMC representatives went to Bahir Dar, the regional capital, to assess the situation and to consider the possibility of restoring peace and prepare a rehabilitation plan for the displaced population. The intention of the region is to enable the return of the IDPs in two months time.

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