

Highlights

- Government return operations continue at full scale and sites are being dismantled.
- Where security is assured and rehabilitation support provided, IDPs have opted to return to their areas of origin. IDPs who still feel insecure and have experienced trauma prefer to relocate elsewhere or integrate within the community. Management of IDP preferences differs in every IDP caseload.
- There is minimal to no assistance in areas of return. Local authorities have requested international partner support to address the gap. Meanwhile, public-private initiatives continue to fundraise for the rehabilitation of IDPs.
- The living condition of the already vulnerable host communities has deteriorated having shared their limited resources with the IDPs for over a year.

I. Displacement context

Government IDP return operations have been implemented at full scale since early May 2019 following the 8 April 2019 announcement of the Federal Government's Strategic Plan to Address Internal Displacement and a costed Recovery/Rehabilitation Plan. By end May, most IDP sites/camps were dismantled, in particular in East/West Wollega and Gedeo/West Guji zones. Humanitarian partners have increased their engagement with Government at all levels aiming to improve the implementation of the Government return operation, in particular advocating for the returns to happen voluntarily, in safety, sustainably and with dignity.

Overall, humanitarian needs remain high in both areas of displacement and of return. Most assistance in displacement areas is disrupted following the mass Government return operation and the dismantling of sites, while assistance in areas of return remain scant to non-existent, affecting the sustainability of the returns. The majority of the returnees require assistance pending full recovery and rehabilitation of damaged houses, properties and livelihoods. This calls for continued humanitarian assistance in the interim and a scaled-up recovery and rehabilitation support in the large areas where this kind of support is viable. Secondary displacements of returnees have been reported in most areas of East and West Wollega zones due to lack of assistance and insecurity in areas of return. In other areas of the country where returns have taken place, most IDPs have returned to their damaged homes or to areas nearby.

Oromia and Somali regions host the largest number of displaced population followed by Tigray and Amhara regions that have far smaller IDP caseload, according to DTM. While 80 per cent of the IDPs are living with the host community, 20 per cent are sheltered in sub-standard collective sites/camps. The two major recent displacements (Gedeo/West Guji and Benishangul Gumuz/Wollegas), where there is a greater focus and the situation is still volatile, constitute 31 per cent of the total IDP caseload. The remaining 69 per cent are in areas with fewer reported constraints (security, access, services). Where security is assured and rehabilitation support provided, most IDPs opt to return to their areas of origin. IDPs who still feel insecure and have experienced trauma prefer to relocate elsewhere or integrate within the community.

The Government' and partners' primary goal with regards to the IDP crisis in the country has been to provide lifesaving assistance where needed, and to facilitate durable solutions, preferably in areas of origin. However, severe funding constraints have negatively impacted sustainable solutions of the current crisis. There is a need for an immediate scale up of support for the most vulnerable irrespective of their categorization and location.

II. Displacement hotspots, needs, response, gaps

Overall, given the large number of IDPs, the high volatility of the situation and the vast expanse of area where returns are happening, it is still very difficult to provide a general and accurate picture, not least due to the specificity of localized reality, return process and experience.

Gedeo and West Guji

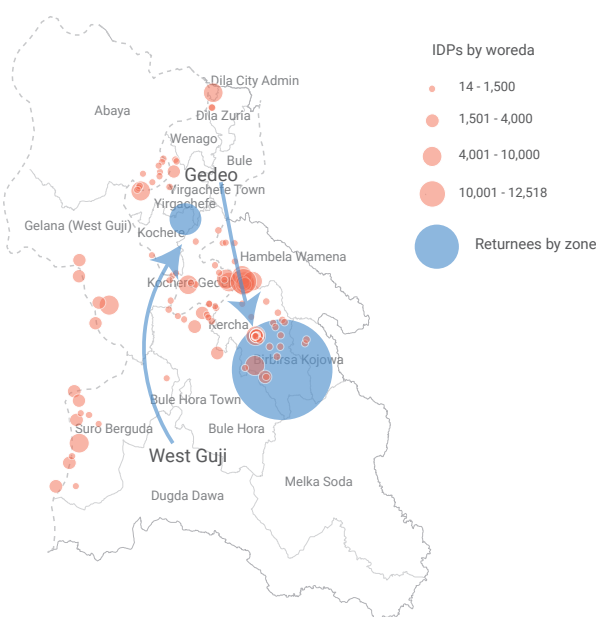
As of 22 May, Gedeo zonal government reports indicate that some 320,000 IDPs have returned from Gedeo to West Guji zone, the majority from Gedeb woreda, while nearly 20,000 IDPs have returned from West Guji to Gedeo zone. But there are still discrepancies in the official return figures provided by the zones. The fact that the large majority of the returnees moved in with host communities might be one explanation for the discrepancies.

Site Management Support (SMS) team reported that 16 sites were closed in Gedeo zone (Gedeb woreda: Asgori, Chichu Buna Gebeya, Dibandibe, Gedeb Dadatu Harojitu School, Gedeb Dadatu Harojitu Mender, Kalehiwot Kifle Mahber, Rohobot Church, Kalehiwot Church, Konasho, Maze-gaja Maekel, Mekaneyesus Church, TVET college and Warka Health Center. Yirgachefe woreda: Yirgachefe Stadium); and 20 sites closed in West Guji zone (Kercha woreda: Banko Korke, Badessa Ilala, Borotu Irba, Birhanehiwot Church, Bukisa Kalehiwot Church, Dobi kalehiwot Church, FTC Site 1, Goro Admin Office, Goro Dugo, Koke Gaba Buna, Kebele Office Suke Chiga, Kebele Office Ela Farda Badia, Mechaneyesus Church, Lami Irba Office, Lami kercha Office, Worko Kalehiwot Church and Zemach kalehiwot Church. Bule Hora woreda: Gadu Jaba Sire Kebele Office) as of 22 May. Some vulnerable groups (the elderly, the sick, pregnant mothers) are reportedly allowed to stay in the site, including in Chelechele (210 people), Hawariat Church (15 households), Mokonisa (10 households), Youth Centre (200 people), as well as very few people in Kalehiwot Kifle Mahber, Kidus Keranyo and Spring sites.

Returns continue amidst reports of minimal to no assistance in areas of return. While the vast majority of the returnees have reportedly gone back to their respective houses or lands and living in makeshift shelters, few IDPs are temporarily sheltered in collective sites in return areas.

The Government has been providing limited food and non-food supplies in return areas. Local authorities have requested international partner support to address the gap. In Gedeo zone, the WaSH Cluster, in collaboration with the SMS team, agreed to start de-commissioning stances of latrine in all sites in Gedeb and Yirgachefe. Continuing WaSH activities in return areas is also crucial given the ongoing rainy season and the high risk for a cholera and other outbreaks. The health and nutrition clusters will continue nutrition screening and treatment activities to avert further spikes in malnutrition in the zone. WFP has prepositioned supplies to treat moderate malnutrition for the next six months. JEOP has been providing food for 436,000 beneficiaries (IDPs/Returnees and HRP) in Gedeo. The second round distribution will start upon the completion of the joint targeting exercise for returnees. The agriculture and education clusters are also considering farming supplies support and renovation of damaged schools respectively, but lack of funding is limiting their intervention so far. Meanwhile, the Gedeo zone authorities informed that there are 8,056 damaged houses that need rehabilitation support. The ES/NFI Cluster indicated a capacity to support the reconstruction of 6,858 and to provide 3000 shelter materials immediately.

In West Guji zone, CRS (in Bule Hora) and IOM (in Kercha woreda) have started the reconstruction of 500 damaged



houses each, this project has started before the current return operation. JEOP food distribution is ongoing in the zone but based on the caseload prior to the returns. Discussions are ongoing on possible joint targeting for returnees. While sites have been emptied, de-commissioning activities have not started yet. Meanwhile, UNDP launched its Recovery and Rehabilitation Program on 29 and 30 May in Bule Hora, West Guji zone. The program aims to undertake several activities to support the rehabilitation of the returnee population in West Guji zone, including house reconstruction and peace building activities. The program will run for three years until 2022. Public-private initiatives also continue to fundraise for the rehabilitation of IDPs in both Gedeo and West Guji.

At least 690,364 people were displaced by the Gedeo/West Guji communal conflict since April 2018, including 374,872 in Gedeo and 315,492 in West Guji. While the large majority of the IDPs have been living with host communities, only 21 per cent have been living in 94 collective centers/camps (92,939 IDPs in Gedeo and 54,078 in West Guji). The living condition of the already vulnerable host communities has deteriorated having shared their limited resources with the IDPs for over a year.

Benishangul Gumuz and East-West Wollega

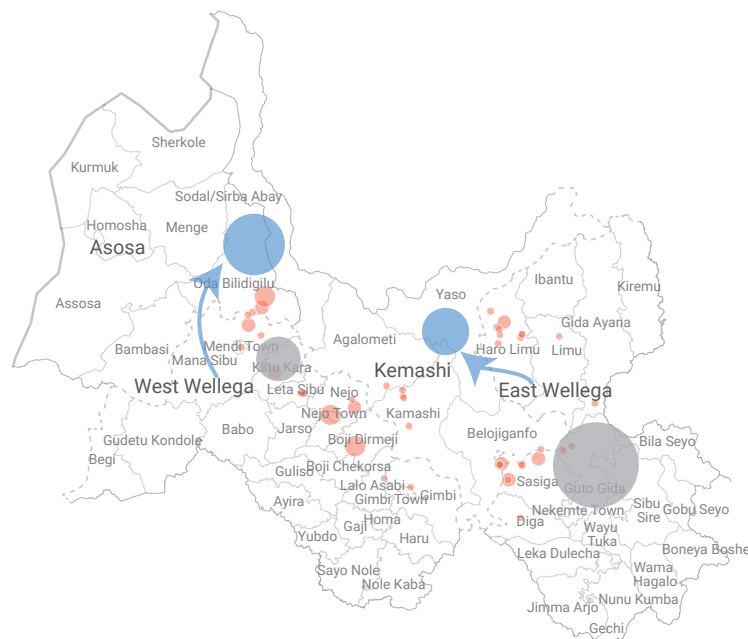
As of 21 May, 51,120 IDPs in West Wollega zone reportedly returned to Benishangul Gumuz and 24,404 IDPs returned to border areas of West Wollega zone, making it 90 per cent of the targeted (83,269) IDPs for return. IDP sites are dismantled. The security situation in a number of woredas in West Wollega zone continues to be volatile, hampering full and continuous humanitarian access.

Similarly in East Wollega, zonal authorities reported that 89,265 IDPs were returned to their areas of origin within Oromia region (along the regional boundary with Benishangul Gumuz) as of 20 May. An additional 26,985 persons (13,361 female) were also returned from East Hararge to Yaso and Belojegenfey woredas of Kamashi zone in Benishangul Gumuz region as of the same date. According to East Wollega zone authorities, some 97 per cent of the targeted IDPs for return were returned. IDP sites are being dismantled.

Meanwhile, there are already reports of secondary displacements where 1032 individuals reportedly went back to Sasiga woreda of East Wollega zone after having been returned to Anger Shenkora kebele, Belojegenfey woreda of Kamashi zone. They cite lack of assistance in areas of return and insecurity as their reason for opting for secondary displacement.

Similar to the Gedeo/West Guji situation, the returnees are mostly sheltered in sub-standard collective sites in areas of return or integrated with already poor host communities, pending rehabilitation support. Significant multi-sector needs were identified in assessed return areas. In parallel to engaging with authorities to improve and fast-track the implementation of the other components of the durable solutions strategy, including access to justice, reconciliation and recovery, life-saving assistance need to be urgently scaled up.

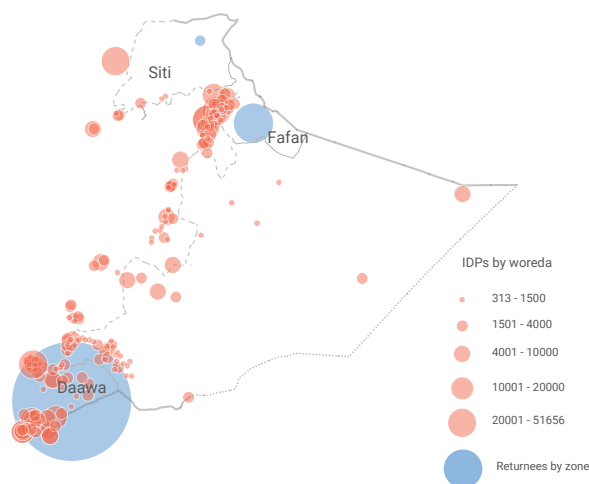
Prior to the return, localized inter-communal violence in Kamashi zone of Benishangul Gumuz region and in East and West Wollega zones of Oromia region at the end of September 2018 is believed to have displaced an estimated 250,000 people, the majority (120,000 IDPs) in East Wollega, followed by West Wollega (83,000 IDPs). The remaining IDPs were displaced internally in Kamashi zone. Only 27 per cent of the IDPs in East and West Wollega were



in collective sites/camps and the rest were living with host communities. While some NGOs have had intermittent access to Kamashi zone, the UN has not been able to access the zone for the last eight months. UNDSS has now lifted the travel ban to the area. An inter-agency mission assessed needs of returned IDPs in East Wollega from 21 to 23 May 2019. The team identified several lifesaving as well as early recovery needs (farming tools, fertilizers and seeds, shelter rehabilitation; and non-food items) critical to curtail the situation of secondary displacement. The IDPs reported challenges to access health services due to irregular services, long distances to reach the health facilities and lack of transport. Damaged WaSH facilities in areas of origin also need urgent repair. The assessment team advised that Government peacebuilding activities need to continue, including efforts to deepen community engagement aimed at creating social cohesion. Another inter-agency mission from Asossa, Benishangul Gumuz region is planned to visit Kamashi from 6 June.

Somali

An inter-agency ‘go and see’ mission in return areas in Dawa zone (Somali region) witnessed the dire situation of some 22,708 displaced households that have returned closer to their areas of origin. Shortage of food has already led to high rates of severe and moderate malnutrition, especially amongst children. The returnees are living in makeshift and overcrowded shelter site and lack basic non-food items. There is a marked absence of water purification chemicals, in the visited sites. People are fetching water from unprotected water source putting them at risk of water-related diseases. Other basic facilities and services are also lacking calling for urgent scaled up rehabilitation and interim basic support. The 22,708 displaced households in Dawa zone have spontaneously returned from their areas of displacement across the border in Oromia over the past three months following peace initiatives between the Somali and Oromia regional governments.



A similar “go and see” mission in Fafan and Siti zones observed some 1,980 returned households. The mission identified significant needs of the returnees, priority of which is shelter. In Fafan zone, plans are underway to relocate 82,830 IDPs (from Qoloji camps) based on intention surveys. In May 2019, the region mobilized ETB 71.1 million (\$2.6 million) from the public, private sector and regional government to support IDP rehabilitation efforts.

Overall, IDPs are keen to return where community peace deals are sealed and where interim basic assistance is provided together with long term recovery support. Ongoing peace building initiatives between the Oromos and Somalis are encouraging returns.

Oromia

East and West Hararge zones

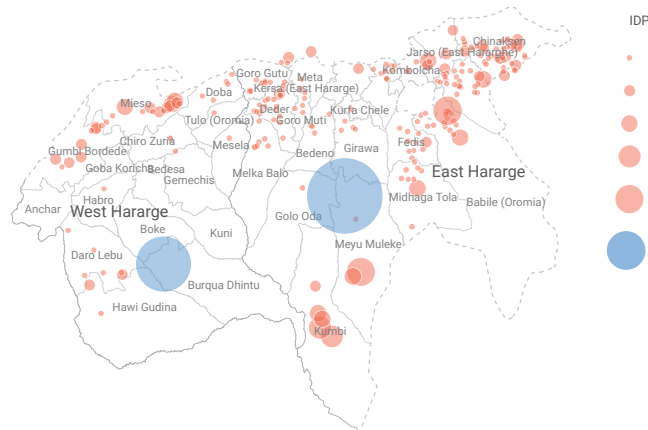
According to East Hararge zonal and Babile *woreda* authorities, at least 59,177 displaced people have returned to Babile woreda, including around 48,957 IDPs who were displaced within Babile *woreda* of East Hararge and an additional 10,222¹ Somali IDPs who were also displaced from Babile woreda² (returned from Dhandhama woreda of Somali region). The return operation was preceded by two meetings conducted in Dire Dawa followed by a peace conference held in the woreda on 27 February 2019. The return to Babile was reportedly completed by end April 2019. By mid-May, East Hararge zonal authorities reportedly returned 102,000 IDPs (of the 310,000 total IDPs reported by the zone and 240,000 IDPs according to DTM 16) throughout the zone.

Government preparations are also underway in West Hararge zone to resettle around 4,000 IDPs displaced from ur-

¹ The Somali region reports 17,000 Somalis to have returned to Babile.

² The figure shared by East Hararge zone is lower by some 5,000.

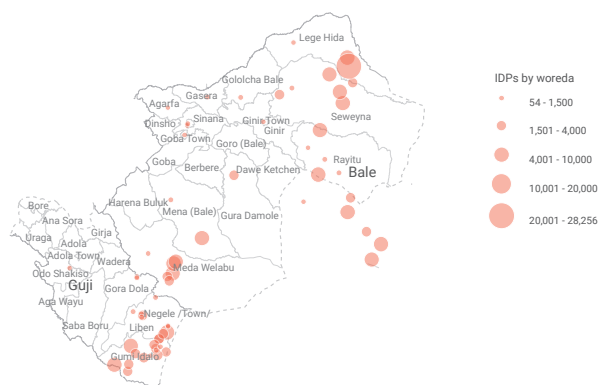
ban cities of Somali region to Gumbi Bordode and Mieso woredas of West Hararge zone. Peace conferences in Doba, Gumbi Bordode and Mieso *woredas* are also underway to facilitate the return of 53,000 IDPs mainly from border *kebeles* of Dobba, Gumbi Bordode and Miesso *woredas*. Following improvements in the security, more than 54,000 IDPs from within the two *woredas* returned without any support (spontaneous/self-arranged) to Hawi Gudina and Daro Lebu *woredas* of West Hararge zone by end of February.



Ongoing peace building initiatives between the Oromos and Somalis are encouraging returns. The return process in East and West Hararge zones seems to be better planned and implemented, with active partners involvement. Some partners are currently supporting return process, but overall, assistance to the returnees remains limited. Shelter, household items (including clothes) and productive assets are urgently needed at the household level, in parallel to the requirements related to public infrastructure rehabilitation. Inadequate support has contributed to malnutrition, health outbreak and protection challenges.

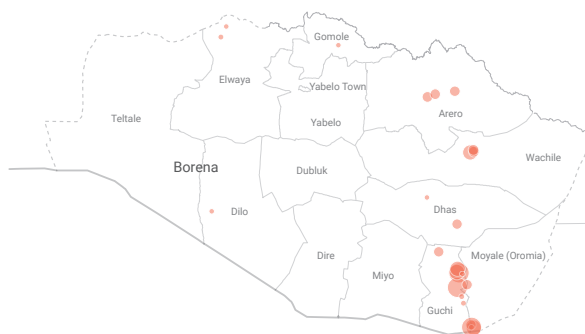
Bale and Guji zones

Bale zone hosts some 137,000 IDPs mainly in nine *woredas*, while Guji zone hosts around 60,000 IDPs in four *woredas*. Government return operations are ongoing with limited success due to persisting insecurity along the border with Somali region. Most of the IDP sites/camps in Bale and Guji zones are very far from health posts or health centers. The only reported support is the NGO-run mobile health and nutrition teams, which includes outreach. However, given the immensity of the areas hosting IDPs and the extent of needs, these activities are not sufficient. Insufficient medical resources, security and logistics are amongst key challenges reported in both zones. Some 21,468 households in Bale zone and 9,000 households in Guji zone require shelter assistance. The construction of IDP temporary houses are not yet completed, but the shelter materials provided to the IDPs two years ago have deteriorated and are in deplorable shape.



Borena zone

Some 285,000 IDPs in five *woredas* of Borena zone who were displaced from Moyale in December 2018, returned to their places of origin. This was independently verified in three *woredas*. There are some anecdotal reports of people who remain displaced, however partners have been unable to confirm their locations. In March 2019, some 4,000 IDPs were displaced into Elweye *woreda* along the Oromia-SNNP boundary and are sheltered in four sites. Of the 4,000 IDPs displaced in Elweye *woreda*, an estimated 2,500 IDPs (2 sites) returned to their areas of origin spontaneously. There has been no verification in their areas of origin.

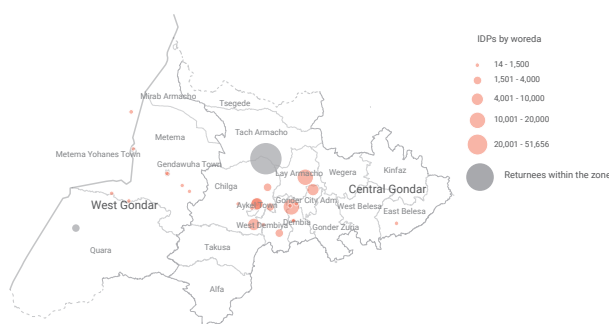


Overall, federal, zonal and *woreda* officials, together with community elders, religious leaders and political

activists, have had numerous peace conferences between Oromos and Somalis to ensure the safety and security of the returnees, with varying degrees of success.

Amhara

Following the launch of Government return operations, some 51,383 IDPs have returned (48 per cent of total caseload), including 43,778 IDPs in Central Gondar and 7,605 IDPs in West Gondar as of 20 May. Support to rehabilitate the returnees remains inadequate compared to needs. The Regional Recovery and Rehabilitation Plan estimates ETB 1.5 billion are needed for this purpose. ETB 600 million was pledged and over 50 per cent mobilized from the private sector (through pledges and cash donations). The Government is currently rebuilding damaged houses in Central and West Gondar zones – the plan is to rebuild 6,652 houses in both zones. Public-private initiatives continue to fundraise for the rehabilitation of IDPs in support of Government efforts. On 16 May, the Global Alliance for Ethiopia – a local non-profit charity – donated US\$1.1 million it had mobilized for the rehabilitation of IDPs in Gondar. The charity partnered with the INGO World Vision to implement rehabilitation work.



Amhara region hosted 107,097 IDPs prior to the current return operations. More than 60 per cent of the displacement occurred when longstanding tensions and sporadic conflict over territory between the Amhara and Qemant communities spiked in November 2018 across Central and West Gondar zones. Out of this particular caseload, over 90 per cent have returned. The remaining IDPs were displaced from Oromia (Buno Bedele, Jimma, Nekemt and Kelem Wollega zones), Benishangul Gumuz (Kamashi zone), SNNP (Bench Maji zone) and Somali regions since October 2017. The IDPs were scattered across 11 zones of Central Gondar (46,430), West Gondar (7,525), South Gondar (3,186), North Wollo (3,750), South Wollo (1,598), Oromo zone (4,207), West Gojam (15,842), North Shoa (517), Waghimra (806), Awi (2,461) and East Gojam (1,194).

The majority of the IDPs (70 per cent) are living with host communities, and the rest are living in temporary, sub-standard settlement sites and require shelter and non-food item support. Some *woredas* are providing medical services to IDPs and there are facilities close to the IDP sites that provide nutrition services, but their capacity is highly limited. 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 and latrine management and open defecation, coupled with poor nutritional status of the population and the sub-standard shelter condition. The overcrowded and poor living conditions also present protection risks, especially for women and girls. IDP children also don't have access to education in most collective settlement sites. The most pressing needs articulated by IDPs is security and protection, followed by life-saving and livelihood support in the areas of return shelter and household items.

Tigray

Tigray region hosts some 112,000 conflict IDPs across 52 *woredas*, 45 per cent female. The IDPs fled violence from different parts of the country, the majority (70 per cent) from Oromia and Amhara regions. The influx of IDPs into the region started in 2016 when 16,000 IDPs were displaced from Gondar area of Amhara region. The majority of the IDPs are dispersed within the host community. Although this living arrangement is better than living in camp settings, without adequate and inclusive rehabilitation assistance, it puts a strain on the livelihood of vulnerable community members. At least 27 per cent of the population in the region fall under the poor and very poor category.

Overall, the IDPs in Tigray region have not received due attention for assistance. Food assistance to the IDPs has been irregular and only 13 per cent of the IDPs have received essential non-food items support since 2016. Even though the Regional Health Bureau has circulated a letter to all Government-owned health facilities ordering that they treat IDPs free of charge, the lack of medicine and other medical supplies in the facilities force IDPs to buy ex-

pensive drugs from privately owned pharmacies using their meager resources. Without adequate multi-sector assistance, women and children, accounting for 70 per cent of the IDPs, are exposed to various protection risks. Some 35 per cent of IDP children in the region are not going to school.

There are however several private and local administration-led initiatives to support the rehabilitation of the IDPs. For example, *woreda* administrators and other sectors are trying to support the IDPs by providing them farming plots in the South Zone and also engaging them in Income Generating Activities (IGA). Although encouraging, these initiatives are inadequate compared to the vast need. Through the initiative of the regional government, at least ETB80 million was also raised by Tigrayans in-country and abroad to support the IDPs. The primary goal of the regional government remains to repatriate the IDPs to their respective areas of origin. This has not yet materialized due to the absence of a permissive environment. The Tigray and Oromia regional governments have started discussions on possibilities for returns. A recently planned visit by a high-level delegation from Oromia region to Tigray region was postponed. Meanwhile, spontaneous voluntary returns continue.

