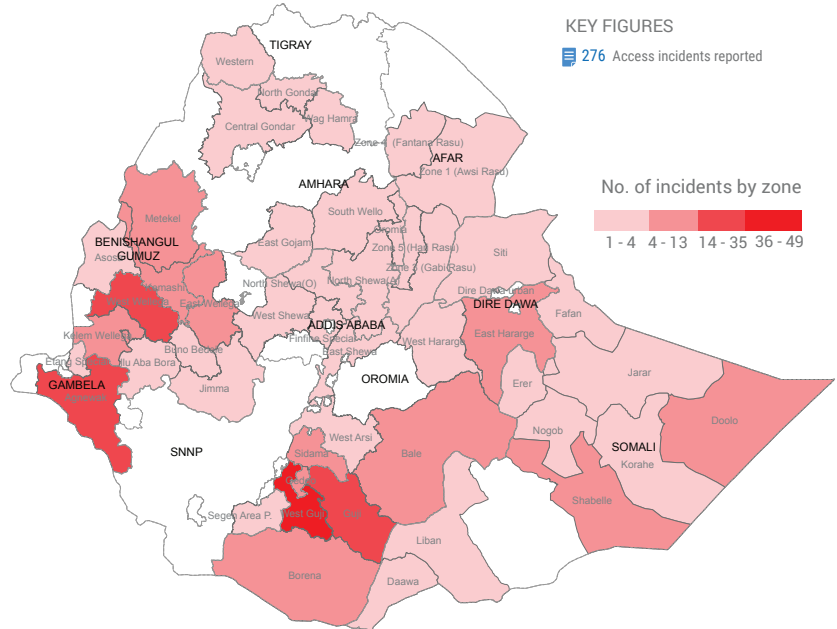


This report is produced by OCHA Ethiopia in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period June - July 2019. The next report will be issued around September - October 2019.

OVERVIEW

- In June - July, Ethiopia experienced an attempted government overthrow in Amhara, socio-political unrest in Sidama (SNNPR), and a rise in security incidents in Southwestern Oromia and Gambella. The quality of access declined, limiting assistance to people in need, against a backdrop of massive government-led returns of IDP to areas of origin.
- Hostilities between Ethiopian Defense Forces (EDF) and Unidentified Armed Groups (UAGs) as well as inter-ethnic, remained the main access obstacle, with 197 incidents (out of 276), mostly in Southwestern Oromia (110). The Wellegas, West Guji (Oromia), and Gambella, were the most insecure areas for aid workers.
- In June, conflict in the Wellegas scaled up, with explosive devices attacks causing civilian casualties in urban centres. In July, violence intensified in Southern Oromia and border areas with Somali. Ethnic violence in Gambella reached critical levels, with 36 incidents involving refugees and host communities, 19 in Gambella town.
- The IDP return operation constrained IDP rights, prompting cases of involuntary returns, limiting access to aid with the dismantling of previous sites, and the denying of partners' access to IDPs who did not return/re-displaced. In some areas, partners lacked safe and unimpeded access to IDPs.
- In West Wellega, in June, thousands of IDPs were returned to Kamashi zone (BGR), many moved back to West Wellega in July, citing insecurity and lack of assistance. In Nedjo, partners have reported cases of IDPs resorting to unacceptable coping mechanisms such as transactional sex and child trafficking due to lack of assistance.
- The poor state of roads during the rainy season has cut access to parts of Kamashi and East Wellega. Impassable roads have also affected operations in Gedeo (SNNPR), Bale and West Guji (Oromia), Dawaa and Liban (Somali region), and Afar Zone 3 (Gabi Rasu).

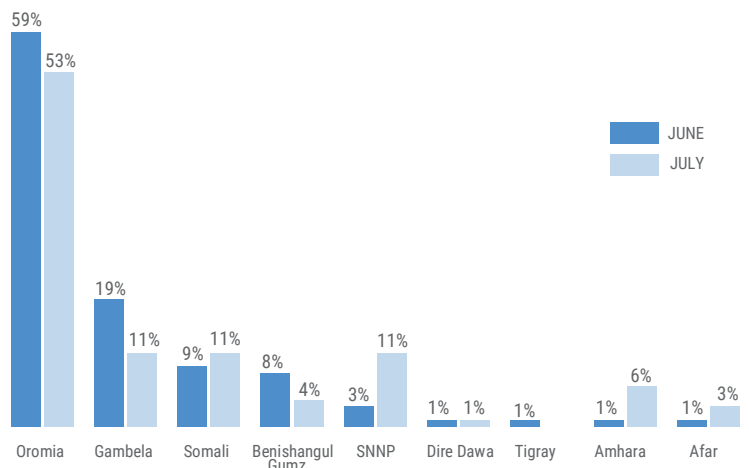


Source: Access Incidents database
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

REPORTED ACCESS INCIDENTS BY TYPE



REPORTED ACCESS INCIDENTS BY REGION



SITUATION OVERVIEW

Afar region



The four INGO staff detained since March while conducting a humanitarian programme in Sitti zone, were released without charges on 4 July. During the reporting period, the conflict between Afar Special Forces and Issa Somali communities that escalated in May largely abated, last clashes occurring on 9 June in Adaytu kebele, Mille *woreda*, with still some 30,000 people displaced. In July, there was inter-communal conflict in areas between Gila Tomoga *woreda* (Oromia) and Dewe *woredas* (Afar's zone 5 - Hari Rasu), causing a number of casualties and hampering relief operations. A peace conference was held on 18 - 19 July, attended by high officials, religious and clan leaders, with an agreement to end the violence. Lastly, in May and June, important floods in the region hindered access to the estimated 36,000 people affected.

Amhara region



The security situation in Amhara was marked by the attempted government overthrow and targeted killings of high-level government officials that took place in Bahir Dar and Addis Ababa on 22 June. These events prompted partners to adopt preventive measures for the security of their staff and operations, adapting to government-imposed security restrictions, road blocks, and communications blockages. Humanitarian activities were temporarily discontinued, though the impact on the beneficiary population was limited.

Metekel zone (Benishanghul Gumuz region, BGR) – Awi zone (Amhara region)



The overall security situation in Metekel zone remains concerning, with a number of ethnic attacks reported, as the killing of dozens of people in one single attack perpetrated by unknown armed men in Dilbanj Village, Dangur *woreda*, on 24 June. In July, thousands were newly displaced from Metekel to Chagni, Jawi, Dangla, Fagta Lekoma, Banja and Enjibara *woredas* (Awi zone). An estimated 27,000 were reportedly displaced across Metekel (BGR) and Awi (Amhara) zones, majority of whom in Awi zone (21,000) by the end of the reporting period. Reportedly, regional authorities in Amhara did not officially recognize the newly displaced neither authorized partners to register them. Overall, seven security incidents were reported by partners, most of them in Dangura *woreda*, prompting UNDSS to maintain restrictions for UN Agencies. On a separate note, a planned inter-agency assessment in Sedal and Belojigonfo *woredas* was interrupted by a river overflow.

East and West Wellega (Western Oromia) – Kamashi zone (BGR)



Partners' operations in West Wellega and Kamashi were affected by the conflict between EDF and UAGs. In June, a number of deadly attacks were reported in Gimbi, Leta Sibu, and Kilta Kara *woredas*, including the use of hand grenades, prompting partners to cancel operations and relocate staff. In Nekemte town (East Wellega), between March and June, there were a number of explosive attacks, including the 5 June bomb in a hotel that injured some civilians and caused pandemonium in the area. By mid-July, increased Government security presence and the subsequent reduction of security incidents, allowed for the resumption of UN road movements between Nekemte – Assosa. However, in some instances, aid workers were intimidated by military elements while conducting security patrolling, road check-points, and staff searches in their accommodation. Elsewhere, an increment of UAG attacks was reported in Kelem Wellega, while in East Wellega, the security situation remained calm and conducive to aid operations.

With the return of thousands of ethnic-Oromo IDPs from East and West Wellega to Kamashi, partners have progressively shifted operations and established a permanent presence in Kamashi, and others operate from Assosa or through East Wellega. IDPs access to assistance has been constrained by the dismantling of previous IDP sites and limited assistance available in areas of return. Sporadic cases of intimidation and violence against IDP returnees were reported. Considering the scale of devastation to houses and other properties during the 2018 conflict, it is difficult to conclude that all IDPs returned to their previous homes. Further, IDPs who did not return to areas of origin or moved back to Oromia (some 14,000 IDP returnees moved back to West Wellega in July, some 6,000 IDPs in Kiltu Kara and 8,000 in Nedjo *woredas*), citing persistent insecurity and limited access to their former lands as well as to shelter and basic services. In such areas, IDPs have noted tensions with the host community over the collection of fire wood or water, and partners have reported cases of IDPs resorting to transactional sex and child trafficking. Zone authorities have not allowed partners to register them, arguing that aid would create a "pull factor" prompting further displacements.

Limited recovery and livelihood activities for IDP returnees and host communities in Kamashi risk compromising the sustainability of returns and ongoing reconciliation efforts. For instance, access to health is highly constrained due to the absence of personnel (most of them have not returned since they were displaced) and the fact that most health posts are partially or totally damaged. Lastly, a major impediment to operations in Kamashi has been the poor state of roads due to the rainy season, with partners unable to access Sedal, Sirba Abay, Agalometi, and Yaso *woredas*.

East and West Hararge (Eastern Oromia)



Conflict along the northern boundary areas between Oromia and Somali regions has largely subsided in 2019, with Government investing significant efforts in peace and reconciliation, and EDF deploying to boundary areas. However, pockets of violence along the shared un-demarcated border remain (see below: Somali region analysis). Massive Government-supported IDP returns were conducted from March to May, some 154,000 IDPs returned in East Hararge and 94,000 to West Hararge (95 per cent). This notwithstanding, pockets of instability remain in some border areas with Somali region, hampering the return of some 17,800 IDPs to Meyu and 28,000 to Kumbi *woredas*. Partners report that parts of Gursum *woreda* (Bakaka, Warra Ali, Noliye, Kulmiye and Warra Guyye) also remain inaccessible. Partners have reported physical access constraints in Kombolcha and Jarso *woredas*. In West Hararge, the return of IDP to some *kebeles* in Doba and Miesso *woredas* was not completed also due to insecurity.

Gambela region



The Security situation in Gambela continues highly volatile - linked to tensions between the various ethnic groups. Tit-for-tat attacks between ethnic Agnuak and Nuer continued through June and July. Ordinary civilians were stabbed, beaten or shot - based on their presumed ethnicity - and while conducting day-to-day activities, in a spiral of violence that seems to never end. This violence has impacted the nature and quality of humanitarian activities as well as road movements along the axis Itang - Gambela. Thirty-four security incidents (18 in June, 16 in July) were reported by partners, over fifty per cent of which in Gambela town. In addition, there were reports of Nuer intra-clan fighting in Itang Special *Woreda*, impacting partners' movements to the refugee camps. Partners have reported three incidents of violence and intimidation to aid personnel, including threats posted on social media. Taking into consideration the availability of weapons and current state of mind of the parties involved in the violence, there is a risk for larger civil unrest and/or armed conflict with a potential to further constrain humanitarian access.

Gedeo (SNNPR) and West Guji (Southern Oromia)



The humanitarian landscape in Gedeo - West Guji remains complex, marked by the most urgent needs of thousands of IDP returnees. The main access impediment is hostilities between EDF and UAG in West Guji, with 38 incidents, restricting partners' operations in Bule Hora (10 incidents), Gelana (7) and Kercha (8) and to a lesser extent in Abaya, Dugda Dawa, Melka Soda, and Suro Bergueda *woredas*.

The situation in some IDP return areas is dire, with insufficient aid provided. During the return operation, coordination challenges and limited information sharing by government counterparts, coupled by bureaucratic delays by authorities in getting partners' MoUs changed from areas of displacement to those of return, have slowed the response. The situation of IDPs who chose not to return to areas of origin is worrisome; authorities have denied partners' access arguing that "there were not IDPs left". In Gedeo zone, an estimated 40,000 remaining IDPs were not included in the "joint targeting exercise". In June, the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country team (EHCT) IDP Advisory Group commissioned for operational purposes a "Risk analysis in areas of IDP returns", which identified 33 *kebeles* in West Guji at high-risk from a protection and conflict-analysis perspective ("do no harm") and with insufficient level of services available to IDPs.

Physical access constraints related to the poor state of roads and damages by rains have hampered the delivery of health and nutrition supplies in Gotiti, Bako Tatatu and Moralyu in Gedeb *woreda*, as well as partners' road access to Chiriku *kebele*, Yirgachefe *woreda*.

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



There has been a spike of violence in southern Oromia, mirroring the conflict dynamics of West Guji, with an increase number of UAGs attacks, road blockages, and large scale EDF presence. In Guji zone, there were 23 security incidents, including in Gora Dola (3 incidents), Gumi Idalo (10), Liben (3), and Saba Boru (6) *woredas*. UAGs have conducted attacks impacting

the civilian population, targeting public transport vehicles, government infrastructure, and kidnapping local officials. Public demonstrations denouncing such actions were held in various *woredas* in Guji zone. In June, humanitarian partners temporarily suspended operations, impacting the delivery of assistance to 55,000 IDPs in Liban, Gumi Eldelo, and Goro Dola *woredas* (Guji zone) and to 30,000 IDPs in Meda Wellabu *woreda* (Bale zone).

Tensions in some parts of Borena zone remain high, with ten security incidents reported by partners, mainly in Miyo and Guchi *woredas*. Hundreds of arrests were conducted among community members for their alleged support to UAGs. In Moyale town, the security situation remained calm, enabling aid operations. In July, EDF stopped the reconstruction of houses to people affected by conflict following complaints from Somali clans not included in the programme. In Moyale *woreda*, fighting between Gari (Somali) and Gebra (Oromo) ethnic-groups was reported in June, causing a number of casualties.

In Bale zone, there remained security concerns for IDP returnees in Sawena *woreda* (Qillissa and Haxawi kebeles) as well as in Lega Hida *woreda* (Salan kebele) due to sporadic clashes and tensions with Somali communities. Rains and road damages prevented partners access to Medda IDP site (Meda Welabu *woreda*) 30km from Bidire town hosting 30,000 IDPs, and Berak IDPs site (Delo Mena *woreda*) 80km from Dello town to Berak hosting 10,000 IDPs. Access to Berak site, cut off in 2018 for six months, remained unresolved. The number of partners operating in Guji and Bale zones is decreasing due to resource constraints, despite outstanding humanitarian needs.

Sidama zone (SNNPR)



On 19 July, violence between EDF and “Ejjetto” (Sidama youth) followed the region’s earlier-made announcements to unilaterally declare a regional state (in the absence of a federally organized referendum). Government buildings and Ethiopian Orthodox churches were set on fire, non-Sidama people were attacked, thousands were displaced to Oromia region (mostly ethnic Amharas, Gurages and Siltes), properties were looted, and roads blocks erected in the main roads. Hawassa remains a major operational hub and the key entry road to large-scale relief operations in Gedeo and West Guji. Movements restrictions were imposed for UN agencies along the road between Hawassa and Dilla, and partners based in Hawassa advised staff to work from home and avoid road movements. In one incident, four aid workers were rescued safe and sound by EDF after their car was attacked by a mob and spent the night in a police station. By the end of July, with the establishment of a Federal Command Post, law and order was restored and partners’ movements and operations resumed as normal.

Somali region



Over 1 million people remained displaced in 419 sites in Somali region, and some 59,000 families returned to areas of origin within the Somali region in Dawa, Fafan and Sitti zones. The operational environment remains largely stable, with localized violence related to unresolved boundary issues with neighboring Oromo communities as well as between clans over access to resources and land disputes. Partners reported sporadic violence between Chinaksen, Babile and Tuliguled *woredas* (Fafan zone) and Gursum and Babile *woredas* (East Hararge, Oromia), and between boundary *woredas* of Erer zone and Meyu Muleke and Kumbi *woredas* (East Hararge). Access to these border areas has been restricted to UN Agencies since November 2017, NGOs had intermittent access. Despite EDF deployment, the situation remains tense, including by the presence of demobilized Somali Liyu police and armed youth groups, the “Kero” (Oromo) and “Nego” (Somali). A pull-out of EDF could prompt renewed violence.

Traditional inter-clan conflict - exacerbated by seasonal pastoralist movements - was reported in Doolo and Shabelle zones. In early July, one person was killed and two injured following the clash between Somali region police forces and Bantu local communities, after the latter set up a new settlement in Dhoomaale village, an area claimed by both Cabudwaq and Bantu clans. Another land-ownership related clash took place between Cabudwaq and Bah-Geri clans in Kalafo and Shilabo *woredas* (Shabelle zone) with four people killed, impacting critical nutrition activities in southern parts of Kalafo *woreda*. The situation in the southern boundary areas of Liban and Dawa zones remained unpredictable, with a reported spill-over of violence by UAGs from neighboring Borena and Guji zones (Oromia). In July, previous movement restrictions for UN Agencies in Moyale, Hudhat and Dhekasuftu *woredas* (Liban zone) were lifted, while those for Guchi *kebele* (Moyale) remained in place.

The rainy season has impacted operations in Somali region, in particular, access to the corridor areas such as Nogob and Korahe, from Gode to Dolo Ado, as well as movements through the Galuun Bridge connecting Daawa and Liban zones.