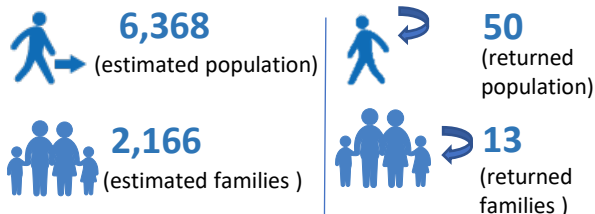


Protection Update

Forced Displacement in Montepuez

28 February 2023

Key Figures



Disaggregation

- 2,764 children
- 1,823 women
- 1,820 men

Vulnerable persons identified

- 13 persons with disabilities
- 50 pregnant women
- 126 elderly
- 29 unaccompanied and separated children

Source: District SDPI of Montepuez



Source: Protection Cluster Partners



CONTEXT

On 4 February 2023, non-state armed groups (NSAG) attacked the villages of Namoro in Montepuez district, thus forcing families from Namoro, Nacalolo, and Nairoto villages to flee to neighboring villages within Montepuez such as (Nacaca approximately 832 families, Chimoio with around 814 families and Marrarange with 478 families). The fleeing IDPs reported that they had witnessed killing, burning of houses, beheadings, kidnapping, and rape of civilians.

IMMEDIATE PROTECTION RISKS

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION: During their flight, the displaced families lost their civil documents (*bilhete de identidade*, birth certificates) as a result of the ongoing conflict in the district, and this lack of civil documents further exposes them to protection risks. Some IDPs also reported cases of extortion as a result of a lack of civil documentation.

CHILD PROTECTION: Displacement has resulted in children abandoning schools, and more than 2,000 children were reported to be displaced across the villages of Namoro, Nairoto, Nacalolo as well as in Chimoio, Nacaca, and Marrarange IDP sites within Montepuez district. In addition, more than 29 children were reported to be separated from their families as a result of displacement.

PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS: The persons with specific needs identified by the Protection Cluster partners included elderly persons with no family support, persons with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women and persons who have either lost their civil documentation or never had them in the past.

PROTECTION INCIDENTS: There were cases reported of gender-based violence, including women being kidnaped and forcibly recruited including children in the affected areas (Namoro, Nairoto, and Nacalolo). In addition, in places where people took refuge, they are exposed to various protection risks such as over-crowdedness in shelters (no separation between men and women) and lack of lighting in the sites especially in Chimoio IDP site further exposing people to GBV risks.

MHPSS: Displaced families reported cases of high psychological distress due to some having witnessed violence. Therefore, there is a high demand for psychological first aid and other types of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for the displaced people.

RETURN: On 20 February, 13 families (50 people, including 19 children, 13 women, 8 men, and 1 elderly person) returned to Nacalolo village. Main reasons for the returns included the dire conditions in displacement areas, even though the security situation in the area of origin remained uncertain. Many people have alerted that they are not willing to return because of lingering fear of the current security situation. IDPs have also reported selling their humanitarian kits to be able to pay for transport to be able to return from Montepuez to Nacalolo (estimated at 300 to 700 Meticals).

EXPOSURE TO RISKS: Many newly displaced people are sleeping in the open air due to a lack of shelters. At the Nacaca IDP site, there is a high demand for tarpaulins since people are sleeping in the school with no separation between men and women. There is a need to improve the lighting in the Chimoio IDP site, as communities complained about the risk of snakes and ensure separation between men and women in the emergency shelters.

FOOD SECURITY: There is increased demand for food, communities reported that only the first arrivals managed to receive food. The lack of food was also mentioned as one of the reasons why some IDPs preferred to return to Nacalolo village despite security concerns in that area.

WASH: With an increased number of people in the IDP sites there is also increased demand for WASH. In Chimoio IDP site there is only one water fountain. IDPs have mentioned that more sources of water are needed.

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ONGOING-PROTECTION RESPONSE

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION: There is no specific response in terms of recovery or issuance of civil documentation to newly displaced people. Although UNOPS has been providing some support in renewals of civil documentation in Nacaca, Mararange, and Mapupulo, there are still gaps in other areas such as Chimoio. Therefore, there is a need to map partners providing this type of response in Montepuez district as a whole

CHILD PROTECTION: There are protection partners in Nacaca IDP site (Save the children and Wiwanana Foundation) providing case management. In Chimoio and Mararange IDP sites, only the ICRC provides family tracing and reunification services. Many children identified as separated were able to reunify with their respective families as a result of the coordination of protection partners.

PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS: IOM provides support through identification and referral of persons with disabilities and to other services. The Protection team also noticed that partners on the ground have prioritized people with specific needs in all three sites with some being provided with shelters. There is a general need to increase support and specialized assistance to people with disabilities.

GBV: CUAMM is providing case management through women and girls safe spaces in Nacaca IDP site. The NGO "For Africa" has distributed dignity kits to 478 families in Mararange and 600 families in Chimoio out of the 814 recently arrived families while in Nacaca 701/832 families benefited from dignity kits. In addition, there a planned distribution of reproductive health kits to Nacaca by FDC.

MHPSS: IOM has been identifying and providing PFA services in all three sites (Nacaca, Chimoio, and Mararange) as well as case management for advanced cases.

RETURN: There was no clear indication if people should return or not. But the authorities during the assembly meeting in Nacaca on 22 February 2023 have been cautioning IDPs about early returns to the conflict-affected areas.

GAPS

UASC: Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) is an urgent priority in the area, partners such as Save the Children are addressing the issue but require scale-up and support for child protection response. In addition, Save the Children International as well as social action mentioned lack of means of transport for FTR when families are far away. The limited number of child protection partners in Chimoio and Mararange is another identified gap given that only ICRC provides FTR response in both sites with no partner providing either case management or families with alternative care.

PERSONS WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS: Support for people with disabilities is a gap in the area. In Massasse, people with disabilities face difficulties in constructing their shelters. IOM is the only known partner providing a response to people with specific needs but also mentioned delay in response to some partners once cases are referred. Finally, constant displacement and movement of IDPs can lead to some of them returning to places of origin without being provided with assistive devices on time.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION: There is a need to improve information sharing and engagement with the affected communities both in terms of available services as well as the condition. Limited prevention against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) materials were observed during field visits even though activists do provide awareness raising on PSEA before distribution, there is a need to have fixed poster materials. IDPs returning to their place of origin had no clear information on the exact condition of the place of origin.