

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The main shocks driving humanitarian needs in Ethiopia in Q3 2023 continued to be conflicts, climatic shocks, and disease outbreaks. The multiple overlapping humanitarian shocks over the past few years, coupled with the high inflation rate, have contributed to worsened protection risks in the country; the severity and scale of which is among the worst in the world.

A major challenge in responding to the humanitarian needs in the country is limited funding. As of Sept. 2023, the protection cluster has been funded to around 12%.

Despite the improvement of security situation in Tigray following the November peace agreement, the already vulnerable internally displaced persons across the Northern Ethiopia including those affected by the recent situation in Amhara are still with high needs for protection services. As the impact of Tigray conflict is still not reversed and needs are not met, new caseload in Amhara. Similarly, in Benishangul, Oromia, Gambella, and Somali faces increasing protection needs due to inter-communal conflict, food aid pause, conflict between government forces and unidentified armed groups, drought, flooding, and cholera.

Children are particularly affected by protection risks, with child marriage, family separation, child labor including children attached to street, and abandoned children on the rise, and access to education limited by the presence of explosive ordnances. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by Gender-based violence (GBV) and negative coping mechanisms in both drought/flood prone areas and conflict-affected areas. Internally displaced persons (IDPs), especially those living in sites, have experienced limited freedom of movement and access to resources, opportunities, and services, among other reasons due to lack of civil documentation, legal identity, and justice. In conflict-affected areas, IDPs and host communities have suffered from attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, leading to increased levels of distress and trauma due to violence witnessed or endured, loss of livelihoods, property, and loved ones.

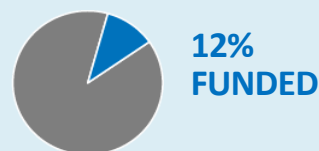
MAIN PROTECTION CONCERNS

Protection of civilians: Cases of kidnapping, killing, and arson were reported in various areas in the country, leading to a heightened sense of insecurity and sometimes tensions. In particular, killings of civilians in Oromia, Benishangul, and Amhara were recorded. In addition

to conflict, other factors such as drought, flooding, cholera, and malaria have compounded the protection needs of vulnerable populations. Humanitarian aid vehicles and private trucks carrying construction materials were stolen in the Wollega, hindering the delivery of essential assistance to those in need. Protection actors must be granted unrestricted access to affected areas to provide critical support. The international community must also continue to prioritize

KEY FIGURES

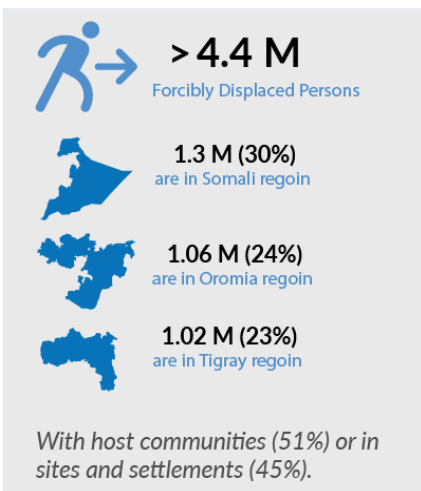
PEOPLE IN NEED	10.4 M
IDPs*	4.4 M
IDP RETURNEES*	3.2 M
PERSONS TARGETED	4.9 M
PERSONS REACHED	2.8 M
FUNDING REQUESTED**	344.5 M
FUNDING MET	42.7 M
UNMET NEEDS	301.8 M



*DTM National Displacement Report 16

**Funding figures as of September 2023

support for humanitarian efforts in Ethiopia to address the protection needs of affected civilians.



Internal Displacement: According to IOM DTM, internal displacement in Ethiopia has increased from 1.7 million in 2020 to 4.4 million in August 2023. The rapid increase is recurrent conflict and also the country's prolonged drought and flooding, which have forced many people to flee their homes in search of new food and water sources. Furthermore, ongoing violence in various parts of Ethiopia have resulted in the displacement of numerous civilians.

Vulnerability and persons with specific needs: Conflict and displacement, compounded now by natural disasters such as drought, flooding, and cholera outbreaks have created new vulnerabilities as a result of, among others, loss of heads of households, family separation and the breakdown

of community structures. This has led to an increase in resort to adverse coping mechanisms, and increase in the risk of GBV especially for women and girls, and growing needs for mental health and psychosocial support for the population. The breakdown of community structures has resulted also in a lack of access to necessities such as food, water, and healthcare. Vulnerable populations are often in a state of constant uncertainty and danger. It is crucial that appropriate support and protection are provided to these groups to ensure their safety and well-being.

PROTECTION CLUSTER RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

Despite gaps in funding and constraints on humanitarian access, Protection Cluster partners continue to respond to the protection needs of the conflict-affected and displaced population.

Recent highlights include:



121 (136 K People Covered)
Woredas covered by Protection Monitoring

7,284 (14% female; 86% male)
UASC reunited with their extended family

8,342 (45% female; 55% male)
Individuals received counselling on HLP

118,763
Women & girls received dignity kit

319,500 (26% female; 74% male)
Children & caregivers received MHPSS

400 (33% female; 67% male)
Mine survivors reached

IN FOCUS: MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT NEEDS:

Tigray ([UNHCR Ethiopia | Protection Monitoring and Solutions \(PMS\) Report #10 | Tigray Region | August 2023](#)):

- 9 out of 10 key informants reported to have observed signs of distress among the different populations in their locations;
- Amongst IDPs and IDP returnees, women emerged as the group showing more signs of distress.

Assosa ([IRC, UNHCR: A Synopsis of the MHPSS Rapid Situational Analysis in Assosa, Ethiopia 2023](#)):

- 47% of the respondents stated having experienced mental health problems related to forced displacement. Epilepsy, psychosis, depression, other mental disorders were found to be common.
- 22% of the respondents shared having experienced suicidal ideation in the camp. 44% of those who experienced suicidal ideations reported having attempted suicide.
- Barriers to accessing MHPSS services include distance (29%), feelings of shame (22%), language barrier (22%), lack of services (19%), and lack of medications (17%).
- Coping mechanisms to distress included talking to families, friends, humanitarian workers, or traditional healers, using holy water, and praying to cope with stress. Some respondents mentioned substance use to cope with stress.

Useful link: [Rapid Assessment on Humanitarian Situation of Persons with Disabilities in Tigray](#)

ETHIOPIA PROTECTION CLUSTER STRATEGY 2023 -2025

Provide **life-saving protection assistance and services** to vulnerable, conflict-affected individuals, including children and gender-based violence survivors to prevent harm to persons at risk of or mitigate harm to persons who have suffered life threatening events, violence, abuse, or serious neglect, and support the restoration of people's capacity to live a safe and dignified life.

Promote Age and diversity inclusion among cluster members through increased attention to planning, targeting, and designing protection activities and services meaningful for people with different impairments or disabilities, through strengthen participation of OPD within the cluster.

Develop **community-based responses** to ensure that interventions reach those who are disproportionately affected. By placing affected people at the center of operational decision-making, and building protection strategies in partnership with them, they will be better protected; their capacity to identify, develop and sustain solutions will be strengthened, and the resources available will be used more effectively to prevent, mitigate, or address protection needs and risks, and enhance individual and community coping strategies and conflict resolution.

Localization approach and improved linkages with the development and peace actors, to support timely and quality service delivery, in a meaningful and culturally appropriate fashion, while paving the road for structural responses.

Strengthen the capacity of duty-bearers, partners, service providers, civil society, and authorities on protection.

Mainstream and integrate protection into all sector and cluster-specific humanitarian responses.

Monitor key protection issues (including violations of IHL/IHRL, displacement, vulnerable populations, gender-based violence and child protection) to **identify persons in need of assistance**, inform the humanitarian response and advocate for the protection of civilians.

For further detail, please find the full strategy document in [this link](#).