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ETHIOPIA

Protection Analysis Update

Update on conflict and climate-related protection risks trends

MARCH 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The situation in Ethiopia continues to be characterized by **multiple compounded crises**, with conflict, violence, and climate change shocks, such as drought and flooding, exposing vast segments of the population to protection risks and human rights violations. Disease outbreaks and the impact of conflicts and climate change shocks affecting neighboring countries add to an already complex humanitarian situation in several areas in the country. As a consequence of these multiple shocks, **Ethiopia is among the African countries with the highest number of internally displaced persons and returnees**. These movements are results of the shocks affecting the country, and in turn increase people's exposure to protection risks and their resorting to negative coping mechanisms. While different regions present different dynamics and shocks, the Protection Cluster has identified five main protection risks requiring immediate attention at country level:

1. **Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, attacks on civilian objects**
2. **Child and forced family separation**
3. **Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access**
4. **Gender-based violence (and associated harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage)**
5. **Impediments and or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice**

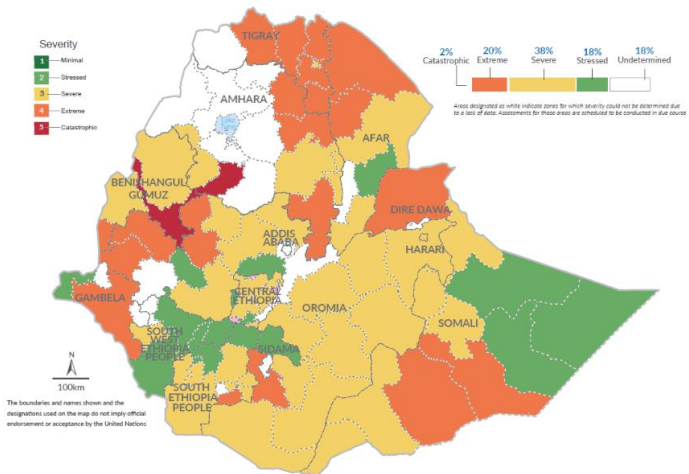


Figure – Protection needs severity map 2024
Source: HNO 2024

URGENT ACTIONS NEEDED

Urgent action is needed to decrease people's exposure to protection risks and their resort to negative coping strategies, driven by conflict and violence, as well as climatic shocks, with the ensuing displacement and exposure to multiple protection risks. It is of utmost importance to:

- Respect and protect civilians and civilian objects, including medical facilities and schools;
- Ensure people's access to humanitarian assistance, including by allowing safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors to people in need;
- Scale up the multi-sectoral integrated response to Gender-Based Violence and to child and family separation, including case management, Mental Health, and Psychosocial Support, but also prevention and risk mitigation interventions.

UPDATE ON TRENDS IN PROTECTION RISKS SEVERITY | JUNE – DECEMBER 2023ⁱ

MINIMAL	Disinformation and denial of access to information Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment
STRESS	Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects Child and forced family separation Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice Presence of Mine and other explosive ordnance Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement
MODERATE	Child, early or forced marriage Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access
SEVERE	Gender-based violence

CONTEXT

BATTLE INCIDENTS	CIVILIAN FATALITIES	DROUGHT INDUCED IDPs	CONFLICT INDUCED IDPs	TOTAL RETURNEES
447	636	612,250	2,237,195	2,530,101
Source: ACLED 2023	Source: ACLED 2023	Source: IOM DTM Round 34	Source: IOM DTM Round 34	Source: IOM VAS Round 17

The situation in Ethiopia has been characterized for years by **multiple compounded crises**, with conflict, violence, and natural disasters, such as drought and flooding, exposing vast segments of the population to protection risks and human rights violations.

CONFLICT DYNAMICS EXACERBATED BY CLIMATIC SHOCKS SINCE 2020

In November 2020, an armed **conflict** started **between the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) on the one hand, and on the other, Government forces**, with the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) supported by Amhara and Afar regional forces, militias, and the Eritrean government forces. The hostilities in Tigray spilled over in June 2021, creating long-lasting humanitarian consequences also in the neighboring regions of Amhara and Afar. In November 2022, the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement to put an end to the conflict. However, months of hostilities, as well as severe restrictions to humanitarian aid, trade, banking system, and communication system in Tigray had engendered long-lasting consequences, and despite the signing of the agreement, reports of ongoing human rights violations in the following months continued. Close to one million people remained displaced in Tigray as of January 2024 ([OCHA SitRep Jan 2024](#))ii. Moreover, key issues of contention remain unresolved, such as the status of “contested areas” (in the West and South of Tigray), plus, foreign forces would still be present in some areas (impeding returns), and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to impact humanitarian access and recovery activities, impeding access to essential services and threatening civilian lives in the northern regions of Tigray, Amhara and Afar.

The humanitarian needs in Northern Ethiopia have been further exacerbated by the outbreak of **hostilities between the Government of Ethiopia and armed elements in the Amhara region**, since April 2023 and then again August 2023. A six-month state of emergency was declared on 4 August 2023 and renewed in February 2024 for four months, allowing the Government security forces to take various measures of control against its citizens, including to restrict their rights to freedom of movement, expression, and assembly, and to carry out searches and arrests. Climate shocks have further affected people

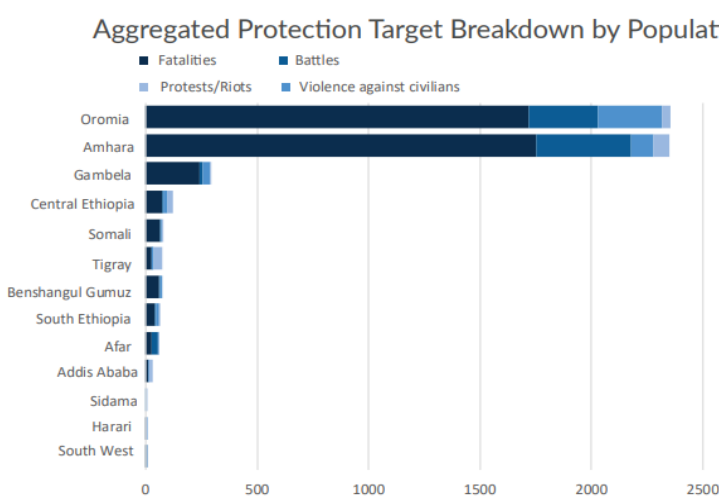


Figure – Conflict events per Region in 2023
Source: The Armed Conflict Location & Events Data Project (ACLED)

in Amhara, in particular **drought-like conditions** in Eastern Amhara, which also extended to Southern Tigray, and an additional complicating factor has sometimes been the lack of access for humanitarian actors due to the security situation.

Other regions in Ethiopia are also affected by multiple overlapping humanitarian shocks, in particular **hostilities/violence and natural disasters** such as drought and flooding. The impact of inter-communal clashes in **Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, and Somali regions, and of clashes between armed groups and Government forces in Oromia region**, has been compounded by climatic shocks.

Both in **West and South Oromia**, clashes continued to be reported between non-state armed groups and Ethiopian Governmental forces. A second round of peace talks between the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) — referred to by the government as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane (**OLA/OLF-Shane**) and the Government of Ethiopia took place in Tanzania in November 2023, but ended without an agreement. Humanitarian access has remained challenging in various parts of the region. **Benishangul Gumuz** has been characterized by an improved security situation, with a peace process started in the second half of 2022 and peace agreements signed by the regional Government with two different armed groups, the Gumuz People's Democratic Movement (GPDM, October 2022) and the Benishangul People's Liberation Movement (BPLM, December 2022). However, humanitarian needs for IDPs who have returned to their places of origin remain important.

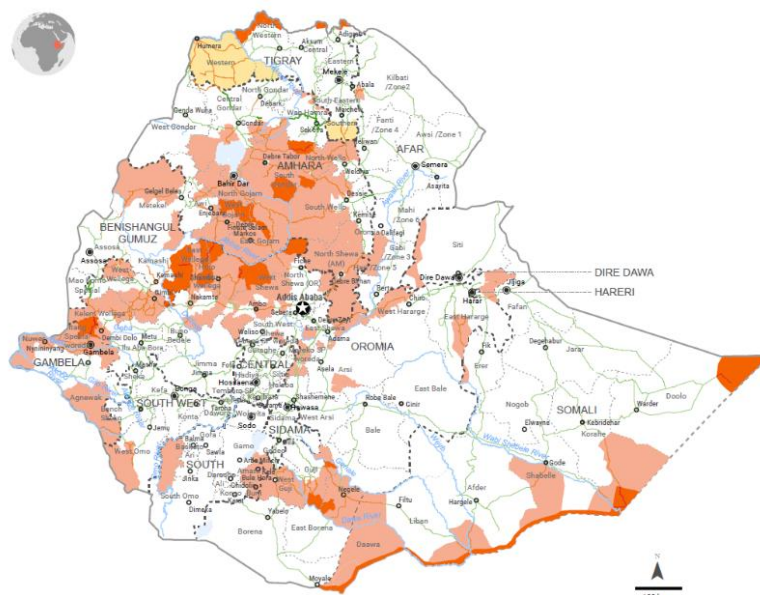


Figure – Snapshot of Ethiopia National Access Map
as of 31 January 2024

Source: OCHA, [Ethiopia National Access Map](#)

Also, sporadic clashes and violence have been reported in Benishangul Gumuz in 2023, and **ethnic violence** has similarly continued to flare up, with clashes and attacks against ethnic minorities in border areas between **Oromia and Amhara**, specially in June 2023, which impacted the humanitarian operations. In addition to internal dynamics and displacement, Somali region is also affected by the threat from Al Shabab and by dynamics in Somalia – some 100,000 refugees arrived in the Doolo zone in February 2023, due to conflict in Laas Caanood city.

Similarly to Amhara, climatic shocks have added to the impact of these conflict dynamics on affected people. Due to three consecutive failed rainy seasons since late 2020, Ethiopia has experienced one of the most severe **droughts** in East Africa, lasting until 2023 and leading to displacement, acute malnutrition, and widespread acute food insecurity. As of January 2024, about **4 million people** in drought affected **Afar, Amhara, Tigray, Oromia, South Ethiopia, and Southwest** needed urgent food assistance, according to the Government of Ethiopia and the Food Cluster (1.7 million in Amhara, 1.4 million in Tigray). **Flooding** also repeatedly affected parts of the country, with a first wave in February and a second one in November 2023 in **Gambella, South Ethiopia Regional State, Somali, Afar, Southwest Ethiopia Peoples' Region (SWEPR), and Oromia**. The second wave, induced by El Niño, affected an estimated 1.5 million people, mainly in the Somali region (more than 1 million), and displaced an estimated 632,700 people.

Climate disasters and constraints to access due to violence and conflict have also exacerbated the situation in terms of **disease outbreaks**, with malaria, measles, and cholera in various parts of the country worsening an already dire humanitarian situation.

As an additional stressor, the **conflict that erupted in Sudan in April 2023** has led to an inflow of returnees, refugees and third country nationals in Ethiopia, especially in Metema - West Gondar Zone (Amhara), and Kurmuk - Assosa Zone (Benishangul Gumuz), where transit centers emerged. Between April and the beginning of December 2023, over 91,500 people entered from Sudan: 43% Ethiopian returnees (including 3,341 Ethiopian refugee returnees), 39% Sudanese nationals, and 18% third country nationals. In the first quarter of 2024, clashes took place in the Al Jazirah and Sennar State in East-Central Sudan, so that it is not to be excluded that new waves of displacement might lead to more arrivals in Ethiopia.

DISPLACEMENT, THE FOOD AID PAUSE, AND INFLATION: EROSION OF LIVELIHOODS AND COPING CAPACITIES

The aforementioned shocks all contributed to waves of **forced displacement**, which added to the people that had been already displaced in previous years (so-called protracted IDPs). Extensive forced displacement has followed all the humanitarian shocks, making it the central underlying dynamic that contributes to and accompanies the other protection risks identified in this analysis.

As of October 2023, almost **4.6 million people** were calculated as **internally displaced in Ethiopia**, the majority displaced as a result of **conflict** (2.24 million IDPs or **64.66%**), followed by **drought** (0.61 million IDPs or **17.70%**). The majority of IDPs primarily displaced by conflict are in Tigray region (almost 0.95 million IDPs or 42.16% of the conflict-related IDPs), while the majority of those primarily displaced by drought are in Somali region (more than 0.4 million IDPs or 67.09% of the drought-related IDPs). **Returning IDPs** are estimated at **more than 3.2 million** as of October 2023, with the highest number in Tigray (more than 1.5 million or 43.91%), and Amhara (almost 0.39 million or 15.41%). However, these numbers do not include IDPs and returning IDPs in areas that were inaccessible at the time of the surveys (i.e., parts of: Amhara, Tigray, Somali, Benishangul Gumuz, and Oromia), thus the real numbers are likely to be higher.

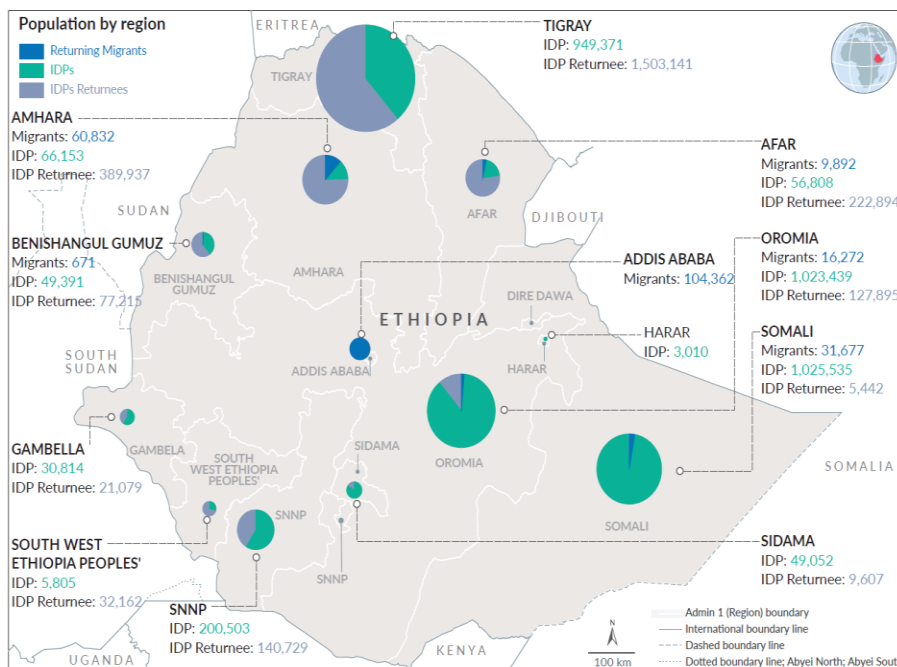


Figure: Displaced population by Region as of September 2023

Source: DTM Site Assessment Round 34, DTM VAS Round 17 and IOM

Also, the search for solutions to displacement (return, relocation, or local integration) has posed serious challenges, especially in terms of respect for the principles that all return or relocation need to be voluntary, fully informed, safe, dignified, and sustainable (for example, see reports on returns/relocations from Amhara to Oromia, [Addis Standard](#) 21/03/2024).

The **level of inflation in the country throughout 2023** has further exacerbated people's vulnerability and diminished ability to react to shocks. The inflation slightly declined in 2023, and is projected to further decline in 2024, but its consequences remain, with a decrease in individuals' purchasing capacity ([AFDB](#) last accessed 15/01/2023, [APA News](#) 29/11/2023, [UNDP](#) 02/03/2023). Similarly, the **suspension of food aid** by USAID and WFP in May and June 2023 in Tigray and the entire country (maintained for almost seven months), due to concerns related to aid diversion, has had a significant impact on the population. Food aid distribution has restarted in October for refugees and in December for IDPs and host communities. During the food pause, the Ethiopian authorities continued their food distributions, but they could not cover all the needs, and the impact of the food pause has been severe and has continued also after the distribution restarted, given the time needed to deploy the new operating model to reach all beneficiaries. Families already affected by conflict and drought have been pushed into extreme poverty, with their coping and recovering capacity further limited, in addition to an increase in the risks of acute malnutrition primarily for children under five years of age, pregnant and lactating women, and older people. An increase in **negative coping strategies** has been reported (i.e., child labour, child begging, gender-based violence including child marriage and transactional sex, selling materials received from humanitarian agencies, collecting Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) /Unexploded Ordinances (UXOs) for sale as scrap metal), with female-headed households bearing the brunt of the burden.

Finally, another major concern is the **psychosocial impact on affected people**. Having gone through traumatic experiences, lost loved ones, witnessed violence, or been subjected to violence, reduced access to healthcare as a result of conflict, climate shock and disease outbreaks, many affected people report needs for specialized and non-specialized mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services. Examples include; an assessment in Tigray conducted in 2023, where 9 out of 10 key informants reported to have observed signs of distress among the different populations in their locations ([UNHCR, Aug 2023](#)), an assessment in Assosa reported that 47% of the respondents stated having experienced mental health problems related to forced displacement, and 22% of the respondents shared having experienced suicidal ideation in the camp (among which, 44% reported having attempted suicide ([IRC, UNHCR 2023](#)), and an assessment in Amhara in October 2023 reported mental health issues as the main child protection issue arisen in 22% of assessed locations) ([MIRA assessment](#)).

PROTECTION RISKS

RISK 1 Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, attacks on civilian objects

Given the situation of violence and insecurity in various parts of the country, civilian deaths and injuries are reported, as well as damage to public infrastructure and private property, and consequences on civilians due to the presence of UXO).

Civilian deaths are recorded due to targeted killings and crossfire during or following clashes between armed non-state actors, particularly the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) — referred to by the government as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane (OLA/OLF-Shane) and Fano militias and government forces. ACLED recorded **more than 3,500 fatalities** across the country in 2023, with the region most affected being West Oromia (East Wollega, West Shewa zones, East Shewa, Huru Gudru Wollega, North Shewa, Qellem Wollega zones) and Amhara (North Shewa and Oromo Special zones), as well as South Oromia (Guji and West Guji, Borana and East Borana zones) ([ACLED](#) last accessed 26/12/2023).

Since the beginning of the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, the use of fatal **air-delivered munitions (including through the use of drones)** by Ethiopian government has been reported, as far back as November 2021; such incidents have been reported in **Tigray, Amhara and Oromia** regions.ⁱⁱⁱ **Fighting** between OLA/OLF-Shane, Fano militias and the government remains ongoing.^{iv} The **risk of ethnically motivated attacks on civilians** in Amhara and Oromia also remains high.^v All these dynamics have led to reported deaths and injuries to civilians.

Civilian deaths have been recorded also in Tigray's north-western and western zones, reportedly due to the presence of Amhara Special Forces, Fano militias and foreign forces. The two zones represent some of the areas that are contested by both the Amhara and Tigrayan regional states. Moreover, localized **inter-communal violence** has also caused civilian deaths and injuries, as reported in Benishangul Gumuz (ACLED database), in Afar and Oromia, around the Afar-Somali border, in Gambella and in Central and Southern Ethiopia (Gurage, Konso) ([UNFPA July 2023](#), [EPO](#), [EPO 14-20/10/2023](#)).

Attacks on medical personnel, ambulances and the medical mission^{vi} have exacerbated people's health needs and impacted their access to healthcare, in particular in Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray, where the population has been facing multiple health crises due to the conflict and drought (cholera, malaria, measles and conflict-related casualties) and their impact on access to essential health services ([WHO 24/11/2023](#), [ICRC 16/08/2023](#), [ICRC 22/06/2023](#)).

In addition to civilian casualties, the fighting and violence have had a significant **impact on essential infrastructure**:

- In Amhara, the Angasa bridge, which connects the regional capital of Bahir Dar to Addis Abeba, suffered significant damage, leading to a complete halt of transportation services and obstructing farmers from transporting their harvest to the market at the end of 2023 ([Addis Standard](#) 04/12/2023).
- **Health facilities** have also been impacted by conflict and violence, for example with a November 2023 assessment in the North Shewa zone of Oromia, reporting damage to 53 health posts as well as 12 ambulances rendered unusable ([OCHA SitRep 12/2023](#)). As a result of the Tigray conflict, 514 (80.6%) of the health posts, 153 (73.6%) of health centers, 16 (80%) of the primary hospitals, and 12 (85.7%) of the hospitals were damaged or looted either fully or partially (Meher Assessment 2023). Insecurity and limited access to certain zones have also impeded the regular delivery of medicines.
- Education has been similarly impacted by the security situation in both Oromia and Amhara, with 2.6M children out of school and over 1,400 **schools damaged** in Oromia, as of December 2023 ([Ethiopia Education Cluster](#) 12/2023). As of January 2024, in Amhara, more than 2.7 million children remain out of school because of the impact of the Northern Ethiopia conflict and the ongoing armed hostilities in the region, while in Tigray 94 schools remain used by IDPs (education cluster data 12/2023). In addition to being utilized by IDPs, numerous schools across the country are reportedly repurposed for military activities.

Similarly, attacks have led to largescale **destruction of private properties**, with reports of property damages and presence of armed actors in civilian infrastructure in Amhara ([EHRC 14/08/2023](#), [OHCHR 17/11/2023](#)), as well as ongoing consequences of the conflict in Tigray and Afar ([GSC - Ethiopia](#) 01/06/2023, [UNHCR 28/02/2023](#)), and looting in Oromia ([GPC - Ethiopia](#) 14/09/2023, [WHO](#), [OCHA](#), [UNICEF](#), [Save the Children](#), [World Vision](#), [UNHCR](#) 31/08/2023).

Civilian deaths and injuries due to UXO have also been occurring, mostly in conflict affected areas in Northern Ethiopia. This includes larges sections of Tigray and Afar. Since the start of information collection mid-July 2023, close to 100 locations in accessible areas in the Tigray and Afar regions were recorded where unexploded ordnances were identified. This excludes all legacy mine fields in the border areas with Eritrea. 1,041 devices, including but not limited to projectiles, mortars, rockets, grenades, and air bombs were registered, marked, and/or removed and disposed of for destruction, with the help of local

authorities. Based on survey efforts undertaken by various operators, the Ethiopian Mine Action office has recorded 1,500 individuals that gotten injured by anti-personnel mines and/or other explosive remnants of war since August 2023, of which 1,014 male and 486 female, although not all cases were verified. It is understood that many more accidents go unreported. Initial analysis informs though that children make more than 25% of all casualties known. Most accidents happened while tampering with explosive devices, stepping on or touching them, or during herding. The absence of coherent, systematic, and continued victim assistance activities, compounded by the inaccessibility of certain areas in the North-Western part of the country and in Amhara, will only aggravate the likelihood of mine action incidents to happen and go unreported and unattended.

Despite the long-term nature of the contamination in Ethiopia and extensive efforts to develop a mine action capability, the national **capacity to manage and address the EO contamination** nationwide (both active and legacy contamination) is insufficient to address the current scale. The national Ethiopian Mine Action Authority Office (EMAO), overseeing and coordinating mine action interventions in the country, has a limited capacity to address the EO contamination. The registration and accreditation of international clearance partners will soon be completed, allowing them to commence activities in Ethiopia

Attacks, risks of attacks and insecurity have led to psychosocial distress, displacement, loss of shelter and livelihood, and family separation, with the ensuing increased exposure to violence and protection risks, especially for vulnerable individuals. The limited availability of protection services for affected populations, such as services for GBV survivors, child protection services, support related to the lack or loss of civil documentation and housing, land and property documentation, and mine action activities, hinders the capacity to support affected people and mitigate the consequences of attacks and/or related displacement.

RISK 2 Child and forced family separation

The displacement caused by the shocks affecting Ethiopia has led to widespread family separation, affecting primarily children but also, for example, people with disability and older people.

Around 60,000 **children have been separated from their families** across Ethiopia primarily due to conflict-induced displacement and drought- and flood-related displacement. As per data from Child Protection partners, it is estimated that 1.3-1.5% of children in Ethiopia are unaccompanied and separated children (UASC). However, the exact extent and scale of the problem of UASC remains unknown and is likely to be higher. Indeed, there is weak documentation and filing system, no proper record on UASC children, and children have no identification documents, which challenges the verification of caseload.

Incidents of separation and unaccompanied children have been on the rise particularly in Northern Ethiopia **due to the conflict**, as many children were separated from their parents while fleeing the conflict. Others have lost parents to the violence, leaving the children with no caregivers. Between January and June 2023, ICRC reported having facilitated almost 121,000 contacts (phone calls, oral messages, etc.) between family members separated by conflict and violence (ICRC 24/07/2023).

Given that Amhara is one of the regions most impacted by conflict in Ethiopia in 2023, it is likely that a considerable number of separated children exists. In Bahir Dar alone, Amhara region, one month after the recent conflict, 15 newborn babies were found abandoned. Overall, it is estimated that there are 8,000 **children in street situations** in Amhara and 5,000 in Tigray. This caseload is part of the UASC caseload with higher protection risks. Families are also broken up when family members are detained, leaving the households depending on one source of income. The spouse or relatives are forced to raise and support the children and other family members alone, bearing the related economic burden and becoming more vulnerable to poverty and exploitation (GPC 23/06/2022). According to an assessment conducted by child protection partners on the situation of children attached to street in Tigray and Amhara, ongoing conflict was the major reason for displacement, disruption of livelihood, loss of their families, lack food and other factors. Only 1% of the street children mentioned that they joined street life due to family disagreement/divorce. The majority of the street children tried to earn an income on a daily basis (shining of shoes, selling of small items across the routes and bars – during the night). Through the engagement of in such activities, they reported earning ETB 50 to 100 per day, sometimes up to ETB 200. 50% of the interviewed children did not feel good with their working environment, only 27% ate three times a day and 73 % twice a day regardless of its quality and quantity. 27% of interviewed children were affected by food-related diseases like poisoning and bloating. 73% of the interviewed street children, particularly children between 11-14 years of age, expressed high willingness to reunify with their families.

Family separation has also been reported **across drought-affected areas**, in Oromia and Somali regions, as some individuals leave their households in search of livelihood opportunities, food, and safe water. Families are forced to move to various locations, resulting in women, children and elderly persons being left behind as they could not move fast (WHO 22/09/2023,

ACAPS 07/02/2023, WHO 22/03/2023, [Save the Children](#) 04/05/2021). Children remain without caregivers, and people with disabilities and older people who are left behind face increased vulnerability.

Family separation impacts the mental and physical wellbeing of children, as they lose the support of extended families and neighbors. This is reflected for example in a recent rapid assessment conducted in Somali region, where psychological distress was reported as resulting from multiple displacements and family separation. Separated children also face enormous challenges in meeting their basic needs, missing the people in their lives who would usually help them find food, water, and shelter. Individuals who have become separated from their families can also be vulnerable to other protection risks such as child labor, sexual harassment, child recruitment, gender-based violence ([RDRMB](#) 31/08/2023, [Save the Children](#) 04/05/2021). Having said that, the extent of the vulnerability of the separated members depends on the degree of separation – whether they are separated from a close relative or extended family. Also, the reasons for separation and the characteristics of those separated can impact their level of vulnerability. For example, children and people with disabilities or older people can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation when separated. Also, circumstances around displacement itself can increase the children's vulnerability to separation from caregivers, such as the loss of documentation.

In terms of **response to family separation**, the ICRC in 2023 found 2,563 missing people and reconnected them with their families, and it has been conducting family reunifications in Ethiopia and internationally. Also, according to the first post-reunification monitoring assessment carried out by CP partners in Tigray in August 2023, 94.4 % of the visited children remained with the family/extended family after reunification while 5.6% of the children were subject to secondary separation to various locations by different reasons. On the governmental side, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs issued the Directive on Alternative Childcare and Support in October 2023, which serves as a Legal framework for alternative childcare service provision, standardizes the service provision and prevents children from being unnecessarily placed in institutional care. It also provides clear guidance on response during emergencies.

However, challenges remain, in particular:

1. Lack of capacity among child protection actors for family tracing and reunification.
2. The main family tracing actor is ICRC and ICRC covers only children separated by conflict who are willing to be reunified with their parents).
3. Lack of Child Protection partners in some locations.
4. Majority of the reunited children engaging in different types of child labor activities due to poverty, the consequences of the food aid pause and food insecurity, and CP partners having very limited capacity/resources to provide support after reunification.
5. Weak documentation and filing system, with no proper record on UASC.
6. Lack of identification documents for children, which challenges the verification of the caseload.

RISK 3

Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access.

In areas affected by conflict and violence, damage to public infrastructure and private property (see analysis Risk 1), as well as the ensuing displacement, have impacted on people's access to resources and on their livelihood opportunities. Similarly, drought and floods have led to severe loss of assets: Just as an example, more than 86,000 livestock were reported dead in Amhara due to drought, only 37% of production was harvested during the Meher season 2023 in Tigray, and global acute malnutrition rates surged above emergency threshold in Afar, Amhara and Tigray (OCHA SitRep Jan 2024).

The damage to or destruction of public infrastructure has created additional barriers to access to basic services:

- In terms of **barriers to access to healthcare**, in addition to attacks/damages to healthcare structure and workers (see analysis Risk 1), floods in the last quarter of 2023 damaged 150 health facilities in Somali region, 55 in West Guji (Oromia) and 14 in South Ethiopia Region ([OCHA SitRep Dec 2023](#) and [OCHA Oct-Nov-Dec rainy season Flash Update 1, 12/2023](#)). Furthermore, stigma and cost hamper access to **healthcare services and MHPSS for GBV victims** – see analysis Risk 4.
- Children, especially girls, also face numerous cultural, social, and economic **barriers in the way of accessing education**, and once in education, there is a high dropout rate among girls. Additionally, many schools lack basic infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, and toilets. In addition to the damages to school infrastructure due to conflict (see analysis Risk 1), floods also impacted access to education: For example, in Somali region, following the flood in November 2023, over 66,000 children (32.3% girls) saw their schooling disrupted, with 56 out of 146 flood-affected schools damaged or destroyed (OCHA SitRep Jan 2024). This infrastructure gap can have a significant impact on the quality of education, with overcrowded classrooms and inadequate facilities hindering students' ability to learn ([PIN](#) 13/02/2023, [Brokenchalk](#) last accessed 16/11/2023).

- Previous months also witnessed limits in access to food assistance for people in need. USAID and WFP **suspended the distribution of food aid** in May and June 2023 in Tigray and the entire country, due to concerns related to aid diversion ([ABC News 08/08/2023](#), [Reuters 08/08/2023](#)), at a time in which Ethiopia's food crisis was deepening as a result of conflict in the North and Horn of Africa's worst drought in decades. Distributions resumed in October for refugees and in parts of Tigray, and in December for IDPs and host communities. This pause however exacerbated families' negative coping mechanisms such as skipping meals, consuming low-quality food and reduced quantity, begging, child labour, child marriage, sale and exchange of sex (transactional sex) ([OCHA 04/08/2023](#)). The resumption of aid came after reforms were introduced to prevent diversion, such as GPS tracking of food delivery trucks, spot checks of grain warehouses and mills, and insisting that humanitarian partners share joint approval with Ethiopian officials of the beneficiary lists for donated grain and other food aid ([UNHCR 22/11/2023](#), [AP 15/11/2023](#), [Reuters 14/11/2023](#)). While some of these measures will likely ensure better tracking of food aid, the strict criteria for distribution, the time needed to implement the changes, and reduced access to certain areas, lead to the risk that a significant part of the population in need may not be reached.

Even when assistance is available, **additional barriers and obstacles** exist for people, especially vulnerable ones, to access it.

People with disabilities (PwD) often suffer attitudinal challenges within their community and face different **barriers during aid delivery**. For example, in Tigray, humanitarian staff's behaviour is reportedly influenced by factors such as poor cultural practices during aid delivery, lack of awareness of the socio-economic contribution of women with disabilities, and noncompliance with the internal code of conduct of humanitarian staff. Data shows that the intersections of poverty and inequality in access to basic services can have a disproportionate impact on women and girls with disabilities. This is reflected in findings from Tigray, where 44% of respondents reported positive attitudes from humanitarian staff toward women with disabilities, while 33.5% witnessed negative attitudes. Also, girls with disabilities can be at risk of child marriage due to poverty, as families often marry off their daughters to alleviate financial pressures ([GPC - Ethiopia 30/06/2023](#), [HRW 22/02/2023](#)). Existing institutions fail to include active participation of PwD in policy formulation, decision-making, and socio-political representations, with institutional barriers such as inadequate laws, policies, standards, and systems which further exclude PwD. These barriers prevent PwDs from having an adequate standard of living, equal rights, and opportunities ([GPC - Ethiopia 30/06/2023](#)).

Similarly, **older persons face multiple and intersectional** (age, disability, and gender, as well as other diversity factors) **forms of discrimination**, which can be exacerbated in times of humanitarian crises, such as chronic poverty, social isolation, denial of their rights, lack of access to community support services, lack of accessible communication and information, denial of their legal capacity, barriers in accessing justice, and attitudinal barriers such as stigmatization. According to two reports by HelpAge on older people's perspectives on humanitarian assistance, the vast majority of older people interviewed stated that they are excluded from needs assessments and decision-making mechanisms in humanitarian settings, and that they face physical, attitudinal and institutional to accessing humanitarian assistance and services, with women who seem to be under greater strain than men (HelpAge 2019, HelpAge 2020). A Rapid Needs Assessment conducted by HelpAge International in Tigray in October 2023 revealed that 49% of interviewed older people affirmed facing denial of resources. Ageism and discrimination violate the human rights of older persons, exacerbate inequalities, and can result in serious consequences during humanitarian crises by increasing their vulnerability to protection and health risks, malnutrition, and social isolation.

Humanitarian access is an additional factor affecting people's ability to access basic services and humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian access in northern Ethiopia has gradually but significantly improved since the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in November 2022. Humanitarian operations have expanded in some previously hard-to-reach areas in Afar, Amhara and Tigray Regions. However, some **areas remain hard-to-reach**, such as contested areas, and parts of Amhara region have been newly classified as "hard-to-reach" due to the ongoing conflict. Also, humanitarian access is still challenging in parts of Oromia and Benishangul Gumuz, mostly due to insecurity ([OCHA last accessed 16/11/2023](#), [OCHA 15/08/2023](#), [OHCHR 03/10/2023](#)).

Moreover, ongoing restrictions on humanitarian operations continue due to **attacks on humanitarian workers**, particularly in in Tigray, Oromia, and Amhara regions. Since 2019, 36 humanitarian workers have been killed, most of them national staff, in addition to the arrest, detention, harassment and intimidation of humanitarian workers. According to the Aid Worker Security Report, despite a decline in overall incidents in Ethiopia, more aid workers were kidnapped in 2022 (13 people) than ever recorded for the country. One carjacking of an aid convoy - in which eight aid workers were kidnapped – contributed to the increase. Most of the reported kidnapping incidents occurred in Oromia. Hospitals and ambulance were also reportedly looted and damaged in Oromia. Impunity for such attacks further exacerbates risks to aid workers and humanitarian operations ([CDCB 17/10/2023](#), [OHCHR 03/10/2023](#), [Humanitarian Outcomes 17/08/2023](#)).

Even in areas where access is possible, needs exceed the Government and humanitarian partners' capacity to respond.

RISK 4 Gender Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a key concern in communities affected by displacement due to conflict, drought, and floods, but also among those who are affected but not displaced. The extent of GBV in Ethiopia remains unknown, partly due to underreporting. Pre-crisis data from the Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS 2016), indicates 35% of ever married women aged 15-49 experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual violence from their husband or partner, 68% agreeing that wife-beating can be justified and about 65% of women aged 15-49 having undergone FGM. Humanitarian shocks exacerbate the incidence of GBV, undermine the rule of law, and heighten the vulnerabilities of women and girls to violence. According to the yearly Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) documents, countrywide, the number of People in Need (PIN) for GBV services increased from 5.8 million in 2022 to 6.7 million in 2023 to 7.2 million in 2024. million.

People who live in areas that remain exposed to **conflict and presence of armed actors** are especially at risk of GBV, as well as displaced women and children ([UN Women](#) 18/08/2023, [RDRMB](#) 05/04/2023). Certain highly militarised areas are hotspots of GBV incidents, as reflected in reports from Hawzen, Tigray ([UNHCR](#) 28/02/2023). Indeed, the main perpetrators of GBV are **armed actors, but also community and host community members**. In the case of children, sexual abuse occurs most often by people the child knows and trusts ([UNICEF](#) last accessed 05/01/2023, [NCBI](#) 03/2012). According to data collected since the start of the Northern Ethiopia conflict between November 2020 and June 2023, 96% of perpetrators were identified by survivors as armed actors ([PHR](#) 24/08/2023). Also, in Amhara region GBV incidents have increased at an alarming rate and increasing numbers of GBV cases (including child marriages, bigamy, sexual and physical violence, and abductions) are reported also in West Hararge zone in Oromia ([OCHA SitRep](#) 25/03/2024).

Lack of food and displacement occasioned by conflict, ravaging drought, and flooding, exacerbated by the suspension of the food distribution, has led to an increase in the incidence of GBV, and heightened risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), as **women and girls have been forced into negative coping mechanisms** including sell and exchange of sex, and child marriages. Studies conducted by FEWSNET, indicate that 57% of female headed households are food insecure, compared to only 18% of households with male-headed households ([FEWS NET](#) 30/05/2023). Specifically, the suspension of food aid and the current drought-like conditions in certain areas of the country have further exacerbated household economic shocks at a time when the conflict-affected regions are yet to recover from, among other factors, inflation, and an aid blockade. These issues have caused challenges in accessing markets for local goods and farm produce, resulting in cash shortages, reduced purchasing power, and a declining household economy that has pushed up individual and household poverty levels.

Child marriages and sometimes associated **FGM** are among the common negative coping mechanisms, often in conjunction with promotion of these practices by faith leaders ([UN](#) 17/08/2023). Ethiopia is home to an estimated 18.6 million child brides, with over 8 million married before age 15. An increase in child marriages, compounded by the practice of FGM, has been reported for example in Afar, a region affected by crisis, including inter-ethnic conflict, drought, and flooding, desert locusts, exposing communities to displacement and food insecurity ([GPC - Ethiopia](#) 14/09/2023). FGM is a widely prevalent social-cultural harmful practice done as a prerequisite for social acceptance, and marriage eligibility; evidence shows that this is a generational practice, where mothers have also undergone the procedure, and expect their daughters to undergo it ([GPC - Ethiopia](#) 14/09/2023). Even though FGM is practiced everywhere in Ethiopia, the highest prevalence was reported in Afar (91.6%), in Somali region (97.3%) and in Dire Dawa (92.3%). In contrary, the lowest prevalence was identified in Gambella and Tigray ([BMC](#) 05/03/2022).

In addition to displacement (and lack of segregated sleeping areas), other key factors contributing to GBV risks include **lack of firewood and potable water**, which forces women and children to walk for long distances to fetch them. For example, an assessment conducted in some woredas of Fafan and Siti of Somali Region, 66% of women and girls were reported to be at risk of physical and sexual violence while fetching water or collecting firewood. This is against a backdrop of underreporting, due to low access to services and social protection institutions, social stigma, and low awareness ([RDRMB](#) 31/08/2023, [HEKS/EPER](#) 12/06/2023, [GPC - Ethiopia](#) 31/05/2023, [RDRMB](#) 05/04/2023, [OHCHR](#) 29/10/2022).

Survivors of GBV suffer from **short- and long-term consequences** affecting physical (bruising, injuries, traumas, etc.) and mental health (depression, humiliation, low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, etc.). GBV consequences also include unwanted pregnancies, exposure to sexually transmitted infections such as HIV, and reports of suicide. For children, consequences of sexual abuse can also impact their relationship with adults as they feel unsafe and less trusting of them. Currently, the lack of services to GBV survivors, especially specialised services for children, hinders recovery and reintegration into the community.

Survivors also fear **stigmatization and rejection** from their communities, which discourages them from reporting or sharing their experiences. Women and girls in conflict-affected areas, express overall state of fear and distrust, likely due to the

violence they experienced and witnessed. This can discourage them from reporting to humanitarian workers and to the authorities ([GPC - Ethiopia](#) 14/09/2023, [UN Women](#) 18/08/2023, [OHCHR](#) 29/10/2022). Despite the different institutions that address these threats, such as the Bureau of Women Affairs (BoWA), survivors often resort to local support networks like women's support groups.

Barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services include: violence and threats for accessing them, due to religious and cultural taboos; high levels of poverty; lack of appropriate service providers; expensive cost of modern contraceptive methods; destruction of health care infrastructures; long distance to access services; poor knowledge of SRH; and limited access to information and Services ([WHO](#), [OCHA](#), [UNICEF](#), [Save the Children](#), [World Vision](#), [UNHCR](#) 31/08/2023). Furthermore, some survivors are unable to afford legal expenses related to GBV cases ([Al Jazeera](#) 12/11/2021). Institutions exist in Ethiopia to provide services to GBV survivors, but the gaps in response remain critical, due to factors that include the limited number of one-stop centers and safe houses/shelters, as well as limited capacities of local authorities and funding for protection partners. Just as an example, Amhara has only 10 one-stop centres and six safe houses/shelters, indicating significant resource and response gaps ([OCHA SitRep](#) 25/03/2024).

RISK 5 Impediments and or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice

Displacement often results in the loss or destruction of personal documentation and civil- and other registries. Lack of documentation and other means to prove one's identity can have serious consequences for individuals and communities, including restricted freedom of movement, limited access to life-saving services, and exposure to harassment or arbitrary arrest and detention ([UNHCR](#) last accessed 14/11/2023). In Ethiopia, widespread displacement has led to the loss or destruction of personal documentation and civil- and other registries for many IDPs. Additionally, the **lack of access to civil documentation impacts access to justice and to essential services such as legal, health, education, and livelihood**. Some civilians have been deprived of their liberty due to unlawful **arrest or detention** in the areas where there are clashes between government forces and unidentified armed groups (UAGs).

Lack of civil documentation compounds the challenges that IDPs face to exercise their **housing, land, and property (HLP) rights** during displacement. Returnees may also struggle to assert their right to restitution or compensation for their HLP upon return, particularly when documentation is lost. In circumstances where IDPs may face relocation or secondary displacement, the risk of violations of HLP rights increase. HLP issues are relevant during all stages of displacement and if not adequately addressed, the potential for continued and increased conflicts over land will remain high ([OCHA](#) 01/2020).

Positive developments in this field will hopefully follow the **domestication of the Kampala Convention** by the Ethiopian Government,^{vii} through the adoption of a proclamation that is currently in draft state and, if adopted, will provide a comprehensive legal framework for the protection and assistance of IDPs.

Ethiopia also presents a specific issue regarding **birth certificates and birth registration**, with a reported lack of birth certificates increasing the risk of statelessness and creating challenges in accessing social services. This lack is partly due to Ethiopia not having a functioning national vital events registration and vital statistics system: only 7% of children under five have been registered at birth. The lack of formal mechanisms to register has been likely exacerbated with the ongoing conflicts and resulting displacement. Some humanitarian organisations have been working to increase registration, such as UNICEF which supports initiatives to expand birth registration services for children in IDP settings. UNICEF has been also working with the Ethiopian government to remove procedural barriers and ensure expansion of birth registration and certification services to all IDP children. The government has made efforts to establish a standardized vital events registration system in the country, and the adoption of a legal framework and institutional requirements has begun ([UNICEF](#) last accessed 14/11/2023, [UNICEF](#) 11/11/2022).

Furthermore, in 2023 the Government of Ethiopia launched a **new ID system known as Fadya**, which aims to provide a biometric identity document to at least 90 million Ethiopians, with support from the World Bank ([World Bank](#) 13/12/2023). This system is expected to ease individuals' access to essential services, but also access by relief beneficiaries to assistance (including cash). Indeed, IDPs, returnees, and non-displaced affected people will benefit from the new ID, and some humanitarian agencies will collaborate with the authorities to reach these groups, starting pilot interventions at the beginning of 2024 ([IOM](#), 15/11/2023; [Biometricupdate.com](#) 16/10/2023, referring to UNICEF and UNHCR – the latter for refugees).

Due to the lack of official judicial routes for the different threats that the affected population is facing, some have resorted to **traditional justice**. Women and girls have been resorting to traditional justice to address GBV issues such as FGM, child marriage and domestic violence partly due to limited legal services ([RDRMB](#) 31/08/2023). However, there are reported challenges for women and girls when accessing traditional justice mechanisms, with them having to rely on male family

members, and with customary laws and traditional justice structures **often lacking female representation**, hindering their rights and in particular failing to address domestic violence effectively ([GPC - Ethiopia](#) 14/09/2023).

Overall, it is important to note that according to reports EHRC and OHCHR, some IDPs consulted on transitional justice in Ethiopia, suggested the establishment of an independent, impartial, credible, and autonomous national institution to lead the truth-seeking and telling exercise. This is echoed by findings from UN-mandated Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia ([EHRC and OHCHR](#) 19/12/2022, [UN News](#) 13/10/2023).

RESPONSE

PROGRESS MADE ON PROTECTION

Throughout 2023, **111 protection partners** responded to the protection needs of around **2.7 mil people** in need (40% men, 60% women, 38% children (72% Boys and 38% Girls), 1% PWD and 3% elderly). Among the persons reached in 2023, 36% were IDPs in site, 47% host communities, 8% IDPs out of site, and 9% IDP returnees. Activities that reached the biggest numbers of beneficiaries were awareness raising campaigns, including on GBV, child protection, explosive ordnance risk education, and the provision of MHPSS and dignity kits.

Approximately **851,679 people (23% men, 77% women, 20% children, 1% PWD and 4% elderly) were reached in January and February 2024.**

Throughout 2024, Housing, Land and Property activities are expected to grow, with the funding requirements in the HRP increased from USD 4 mil for 2023 to more than USD 16 mil for 2024 and expansion of activities to several regions. Similarly, the Mine Action AoR has expanded its activities, and a further increase is expected to take place once partners are accredited to carry out humanitarian demining activities.

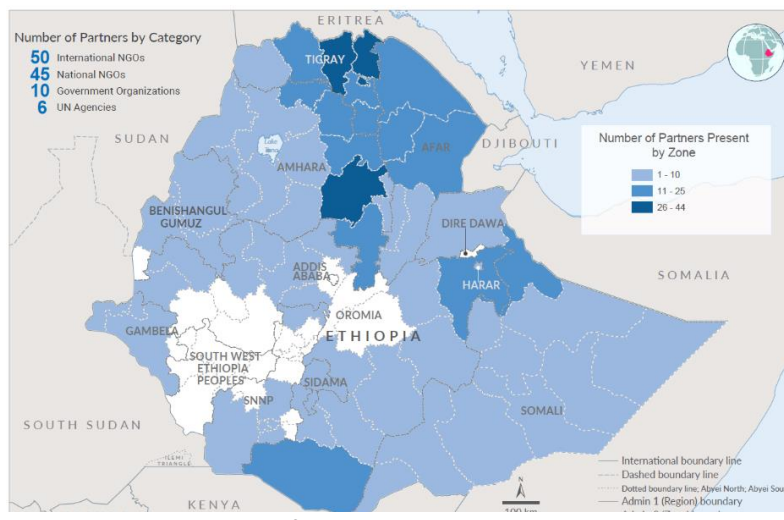


Figure – Number of Protection Partners per zone in 2023

Source: ActivityInfo

CRITICAL GAPS IN FUNDING AND POPULATION REACHED

While protection needs in Ethiopia remain critical, the response in **2023** was funded at less than 50%, and partners managed to **reach 2.7 mil people out of the 4.9 mil people targeted** (around quarter of the 10.4 mil people in need).

For 2024, the Protection Cluster has identified **more than 14 mil people in need (PIN)**, and aims to **target almost 5 mil people**:

- **Child Protection:** 7.5 mil PIN; 2.38 mil people targeted; 908.2 thousand reached
- **Gender-Based Violence:** 7.17 mil PIN; 2.37 mil People targeted;
- **Housing, Land and Property:** 4.38 PIN; around 874.000 people targeted;
- **Mine Action:** 6.72 mil PIN; around 786.000 people targeted
- **Protection:** 6.39 mil PIN; 2.59 people targeted

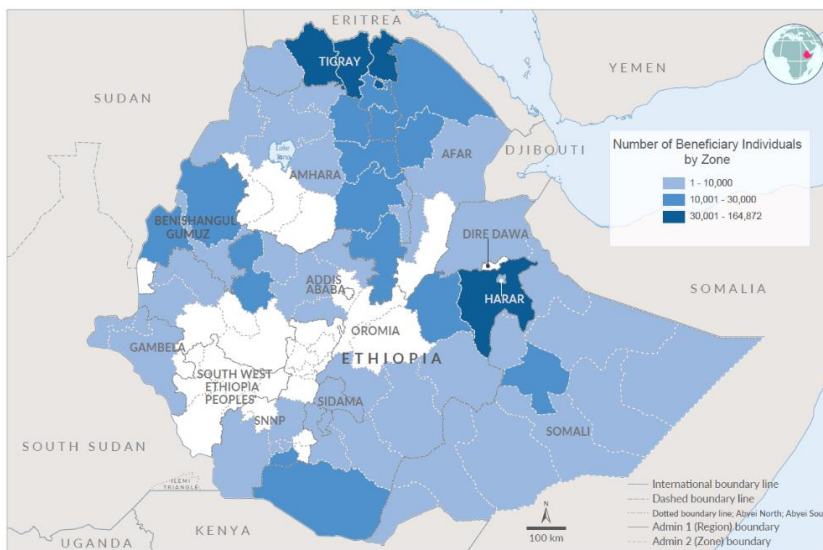


Figure – Number of People reached per zone in 2023

Source: ActivityInfo

Financial requirements to assist these people in need amount to around **USD 311.7 mil**. This represents a decrease compared to the USD 344 mil required in 2023, especially considering that the response plan and the funding requirements for 2024 include also the target population of returning migrants, which was not included in the HRP 2023.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Urgent action is required to reduce people's exposure to the protection risks identified in this analysis, as well as their resort to negative coping strategies. In particular:

RISK 1 Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, attacks on civilian objects

GOVERNMENT AND WEAPON BEARERS

- Cease all attacks and violence against civilians, including attacks against military targets which are expected to cause disproportionate damage to civilians and civilian objects;
- Ensure precautionary measures are taken to prevent as much as possible civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructures, such as medical facilities and schools;
- Preserve the civilian nature of civilian infrastructures and humanitarian facilities, and avoid placing any military assets nearby medical facilities, schools, IDP and refugee camps;
- Implement international instruments to eliminate mines and explosive hazards, such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines;
- Allow humanitarian access for Mine Action operators to assess the contamination threat, mark and remove explosive remnants of war (for authorities: government to provide accreditation to Mine action partners to legally operate in Ethiopia).
- Investigate all suspected abuses, including complaints regarding unlawful killings and GBV committed by armed forces, prosecute those responsible, and provide adequate remedy and support to survivors and their families.

DONORS

- Increase efforts, including through engagement of authorities and funding, to ensure that armed forces comply with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) rules and other applicable law;
- Engage with armed actors and strengthen relationship with those who can positively influence armed actors such as political, community and religious leaders;
- Advocate for increased humanitarian support for Mine Action operators to assess the contamination threat, mark and remove explosive remnants of war.

HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

- Enhance targeted programmes by protection and non-protection actors to support survivors and their families;
- Protection actors to expand protection monitoring activities and protection by presence to mitigate the risk associated with attacks on civilians and civilian objects;
- Engage with armed actors and strengthen relationship with those who can positively influence armed actors such as political, community and religious leaders;
- Offer and support training to armed forces on basic IHL rules and other applicable law;
- Build the capacity of national and regional mine action authorities, ensuring greater expertise in the management of mine action activities;
- Develop and disseminate information among the civilian population, as well as humanitarian and development partners, regarding safety behavior during airstrikes and drone attacks, and risk education related to explosive ordnance contamination; Facilitate access to medical and prolonged physical rehabilitation, psycho-social support, and assistance for the (economic) reintegration of victims of Explosive Ordnance.

RISK 2 Child and forced family separation

GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

- Support and facilitate family tracing and case management, children care arrangements and social services, including by ensuring communication throughout the country, in conflict-affected areas;
- Prioritize family-based care arrangements over long-term residential care of children;

- Ensure the implementation of the Directive on Alternative Childcare and Support (October 2023).

DONORS

- Ensure adequate funding for family tracing activities and other child protection activities in the HRP as well as longer-term funding for sustainability linked to Humanitarian Development & Peace Nexus.

HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

- All humanitarian workers to prioritize humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable children including unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), children engaged in labor, children attached to street;
- Collaborate with child protection actors to ensure safe identification of children in need and provision of services and humanitarian assistance;
- Prioritize multi-year programmes for family tracing activities and support to separated family members, including UASC;
- Support the existing 43 child protection partners, including local/national partners and government, through capacity-building activities, and invite more child protection actors to implement interventions in Ethiopia.

RISK 3

Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access

GOVERNMENT AND WEAPON BEARERS

- Adhere to obligations under international law to facilitate safe and unhindered humanitarian access in all areas affected by conflict and violence, ensuring an enabling environment for the delivery of life-saving assistance;
- Put an immediate stop to all attacks against humanitarian personnel and facilitate the safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance.

GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

- Collaborate with humanitarian actors and other partners to ensure that the distribution of food aid to the populations in need in the country proceeds in accordance with humanitarian principles and standards;
- Work on ensuring that vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and older people, do not face barriers in access to essential services;
- Strengthen the involvement of development actors to find sustainable solutions in drought-affected areas.

DONORS

- Advocate for humanitarian access, ensuring the safety of humanitarian personnel and acceptance and respect of humanitarian principles;
- Allocate resources to respond to the specific needs of vulnerable people and address the barriers they face to access essential services.

HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

- Strengthen civil-military coordination to address any concerns and enable safe and unhindered humanitarian access;
- Collaborate with the Government of Ethiopia and partners to ensure that the distribution of food aid to the populations in need in the country proceeds in accordance with humanitarian principles and standards;
- Maintain and increase access negotiations to enable protection by presence and protection activities which require sustained presence on the ground, including humanitarian mine action interventions;
- Ensure an inclusive humanitarian response by eliminating barriers to access to assistance and services for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities and older people, in accordance with humanitarian standards.

RISK 4

Gender-based violence (GBV)

GOVERNMENT AND WEAPON BEARERS

- Prevent and stop all GBV by armed personnel against civilians, especially women and girls, including by providing the necessary training to their forces, investigate all complaints and take accountability measures against those involved;
- Encourage safe reporting of GBV cases, protect the safety and well-being of survivors and provide them with the necessary support.
- Invest more on implementation of the national road map to end child marriage and FGM

DONORS AND HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

- Continue a multi-sectoral GBV response and actions to increase the capacity of existing structures, prioritizing under-served areas and focusing on core GBV services (health, case management, psychosocial support, legal aid, safety, and security), including the opening of one-stop centers and safe houses;
- Continue working for risk mitigation, reducing exposure for people at risk of GBV and increasing their coping capacity;
- Ensure protection mainstreaming within all sectors, and that all interventions are informed by robust analysis of GBV risks and gender aspects;
- Work with service providers, educators, religious and community leaders, to prevent and stop GBV, promote safe reporting and counter social stigma;
- Support access to justice for GBV survivors;
- Increase the inclusion and empowerment of local women-led organizations, national associations, and community-based actors in the safe delivery of core GBV and protection responses and other forms of humanitarian aid to conflict-affected individuals, groups, and hard-to-reach communities;
- Ensure that all GBV activities are age, culture, disability sensitive.
- Invest in empowerment and livelihood interventions for women and girls to address negative coping mechanisms such as transactional sex, child marriages and to ease re-integration of GBV survivors;
- Ensure adequate funding for GBV in the HRP as well as longer-term funding for sustainability linked to the Humanitarian Development & Peace Nexus.

RISK 5 Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice

GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Prioritize the provision of civil documentation to internally displaced persons (IDPs) to ensure their access to essential services and reduce the risk of arbitrary arrest and detention;
- Establish mechanisms to protect the housing, land, and property (HLP) rights of IDPs and returnees by providing alternative documentation for those who have lost theirs and establishing dispute resolution mechanisms to handle cases of contested ownership;
- Prioritize provision of birth registration for IDPs to ensure their legal identity and access to essential services;
- Ensure the successful provision to IDPs of the newly introduced digital ID, which is expected to ease access to essential services and assistance;
- Continue the ongoing efforts to domesticate the Kampala Convention and finalize the current draft proclamation, which provides a comprehensive legal framework for the protection and assistance of IDPs.

DONORS AND HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

- Advocate for and support government's initiatives to provide civil documentation to IDPs, expand birth registration services, roll out the digital ID system, and domesticate the Kampala Convention, including through funding, partnerships, and the provision of technical support.
- Support programs to prevent and resolve conflicts over HLP issues, which are often a root cause or a consequence of violence and displacement;
- Support the development of legal and institutional frameworks that uphold the HLP rights of displaced and conflict-affected people, and provide them with information, counselling, and legal assistance to claim their rights;
- Ensure adequate funding for HLP rights programming in the HRP as well as longer-term funding for sustainability linked to the Humanitarian Development & Peace Nexus;
- Ensure the inclusion and participation of women and marginalized groups in HLP decision-making and dispute resolution, and address the gender and social inequalities that affect their access to HLP rights;
- Support eviction monitoring, prevention, and response programs.

Endnotes

i Trend analysis based on the monthly protection risks monitoring conducted at subnational level and consolidated in the Ethiopia Protection Cluster Monthly Protection Overview.

ii <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-situation-report-10-jan-2024>

iii While most strikes appear to target armed elements, loss of civilian lives and infrastructure has been recorded, in the last months of 2023 in Oromia and Amhara in particular, due to alleged drone attacks ([Insecurity attacks](#) 07/04/2023, [Addis Standard](#) 26/12/2023, [Addis Standard](#) 18/11/2023, [OHCHR](#) 17/11/2023, [EPO](#) 09/2023).

iv Since April and especially in August 2023, clashes between Government forces and Fano militias have erupted in most zones in Amhara Region (North Wollo, East Gojam, West Gojam, Gondar, North Shewa), with fights reported in Gondar, Bahir Dar, Debre Birhan, Debre Markos, Debre Tabor, Woldiya, Lalibela and Shewa Robit ([Rift Valley Institute](#) 10/2023), with fatal consequences for civilians.

v In North Shewa's Dera Woreda (home to significant number of Amhara population), federal forces fought OLA/OLF-Shane and Fano militias; with both insurgencies operating in area. In the same context, 21 people, including government and ruling party officials, were allegedly killed by Fano militias in two separate incidents in Alem Ber, in South Gondar, and in Jibayt district, in the Awi zone, on 9 and 28 October, respectively ([OHCHR](#) 17/11/2023).

vi Recently, for example, an alleged drone strike on an ambulance in Amhara in November 2023, and the killing of an ambulance driver in Tigray in January 2024 ([Addis Standard](#) 12/01/2024, [Aljazeera](#) 29/12/2023).

vii African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), which Ethiopia ratified in 2020.

Methodology

The analysis has been developed by the National Protection Cluster in consultation with its sub-national protection clusters, Areas of Responsibility (AoR) of Child Protection, GBV and Mine Action, its Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Working Group, members of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and Cluster's partners. It follows the Protection Analytical Framework (PAF) endorsed by the Global Protection Cluster in April 2021. The analysis is based on qualitative and quantitative data gathered by the Cluster from its partners in the field, local and international NGOs and UN agencies, as well as on expert knowledge and collection and qualitative analysis of open-source material thanks to support from the *PAF-DEEP Project: Strengthening Joint Protection Analysis and Processes in Protection Clusters*.

Limitations

The analysis is not intended to be exhaustive. The complexity and scope of various shocks and protection concerns, rapid developments on the ground, access restrictions, insecurity and limited capacity – all hinder the ability of human rights and humanitarian actors to fully identify, monitor and assess all incidents and their related protection risks. This report may therefore not cover all occurrences, but it rather draws attention to key protection concerns and trends as of February 2024.

