



# ETHIOPIA

## Protection Analysis Update

Update on conflict and climate-related protection risks trends.

AUGUST 2024

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

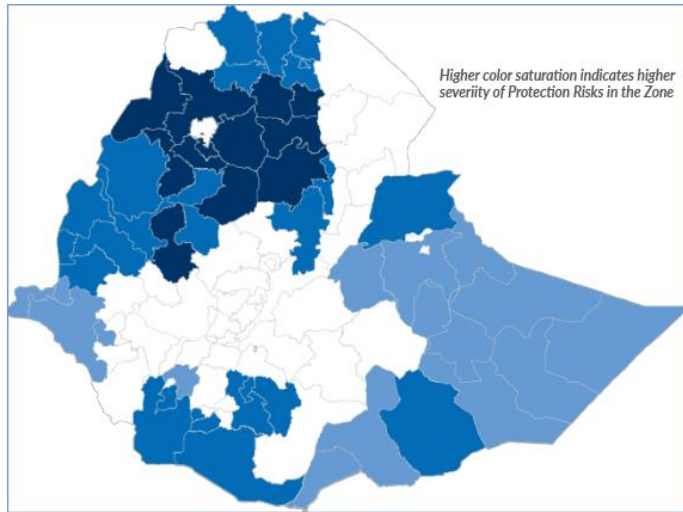


Figure: Severity of Protection Risks  
Source: GPU Risk Rating Tool for Ethiopia

Ethiopia is witnessing **multiple compounded crises**, with conflict, violence, and climate change shocks, such as drought, flooding, landslides, and disease outbreaks, exposing vast segments of 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. **Ethiopia is reported to be the Sub-Saharan country with the fourth highest numbers of internally displaced persons.** It also has the fourth highest number of displacements (Movements) at the end of 2023 (IDMC 04/2024). These movements are a protection risk, increase people’s exposure to additional risks and force them to resort to negative coping mechanisms. While different regions present different dynamics and shocks, the Protection Cluster has identified five protection risks requiring immediate attention. All of them have a significant impact that generates serious humanitarian needs:

1. Violence against civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian infrastructure
2. Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access
3. Gender-based violence (and associated harmful practices such as FGM and child marriage)
4. Trafficking in persons, forced and child labour
5. Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege, and forced displacement

### URGENT ACTIONS NEEDED

Urgent action is needed to decrease people’s exposure to protection risks and the adoption of negative coping strategies:

- Respect and protect civilians and civilian objects, including medical facilities and schools, and allow safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian actors to reach persons in need;
- Ensure access to basic services and humanitarian assistance for vulnerable groups;
- Ensure a multi-sectoral lifesaving response to Gender-Based Violence, Child Labour, and Trafficking in Persons, including through strengthening One Stop Centers and enhancing community-based protection and anti-trafficking systems;
- Ensure that IDP returns/relocations are voluntary, fully informed, in safety and dignity
- Finalize the domestication of the Kampala Convention.

### UPDATE ON TRENDS IN PROTECTION RISKS SEVERITY | – July- August 2024<sup>i</sup>

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**

**493**

Source: ACLED 2024

**CIVILIAN FATALITIES**

**652**

Source: ACLED 2024

**DROUGHT INDUCED IDPs**

**544,002**

Source: IOM DTM Round 36

**CONFLICT INDUCED IDPs**

**2,272,533**

Source: IOM DTM Round 36

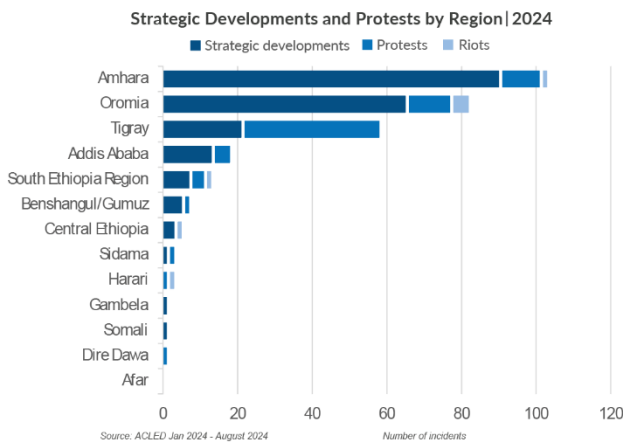
**TOTAL RETURNEES**

**2,584,607**

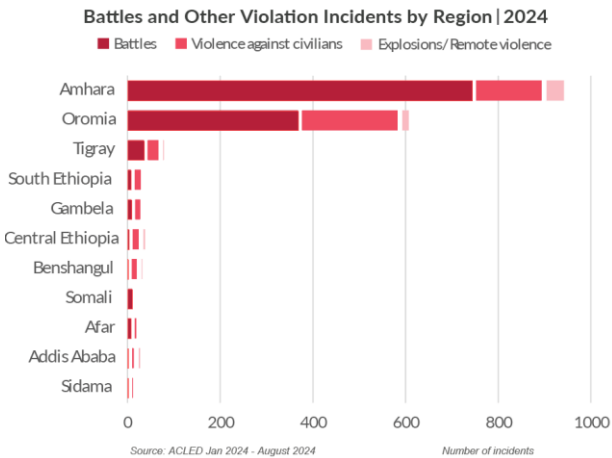
Source: IOM VAS Round 19

### MULTIPLE COMPOUNDED CRISES - CONFLICT DYNAMICS, CLIMATIC SHOCKS, DISEASE OUTBREAKS

The past few months in Ethiopia have continued to witness **multiple shocks** affecting populations throughout the country and preventing them from recovering from past shocks.



The situation in the **contested areas** in the Northern part of the country has seen renewed displacement and plans for returns announced by the authorities. In mid-April, armed **clashes erupted in Alamata town** and surrounding rural towns, resulting in the reported displacement of some 50,000 people to Kobo town (North Wello) and Sekota Town (Wag Hamra), in Amhara. Some of these IDPs returned, but towards the end of April 2024, 16,600 IDPs were still in Kobo and 8,150 IDPs in Sekota ([OCHA 05/2024](#)). On 31 May, the Tigray Interim Administration announced a **plan to return 690,000 IDPs** to their places of origin in contested Northern areas, and returns started at the end of June 2024 ([OCHA 06/2024](#), [Addis Standard 04/07/2024](#), [Addis Standard 23/07/2024](#)).



In **Amhara**, populations affected by the conflict in Northern Ethiopia struggle to recover due to the additional shocks impacting them, including insecurity and armed violence affecting the region after the outbreak of fighting in April 2023. Curfews and measures of control of citizens continue. **Humanitarian access constraints** due to fighting, insecurity, criminality, and intermittent **internet shutdown** remain in the region. **Fighting between Government forces and the UAGs** was reported as decreasing in early May but escalating again at the end of May across different zones (i.e. West Gojjam, North Shewa (A), and North Wello zones), with at least two drone attacks reported in mid-May in North Shewa zone, allegedly leading to civilian casualties ([ACAPS 14/06/2024](#); [ACLED 22/05/2024](#)). According to ACLED, “since the start of the Fano insurgency in April 2023 until June 2024, over 6.1 million people have been exposed to conflict in Amhara region”. There does not seem to be any immediate prospect for peace talks between the Government and the Fano militia at present ([ACLED 05/07/2024](#)).

Unverified figures reported displacement of around 18,000 people in North Shewa Zone in March, related to the **ethnic frictions in Amhara’s Oromiya special zone and North Shewa zone** ([OCHA 06/2024](#), [ACAPS 14/06/2024](#)). These new displacements add to the already existing numbers of IDPs residing in Amhara, including in North Shewa and North Wollo – for a total of approximately 670,000 people ([OCHA 06/2024](#)).

Both in **West and South Oromia**, clashes continued to be reported between armed groups and Ethiopian Governmental forces. Clashes associated with the Government of Ethiopia’s operations against the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)-Shane (**OLA/OLF-Shane**) have been reported since April 2024, continuing at a lower level throughout June, especially in West Wollega, Southwest Shewa, West Shewa, and Guji zones ([ACLED 02/05/2024](#), [ACLED 08/05/2024](#), [ACLED 15/05/2024](#), [ACLED 04/07/2024](#)).

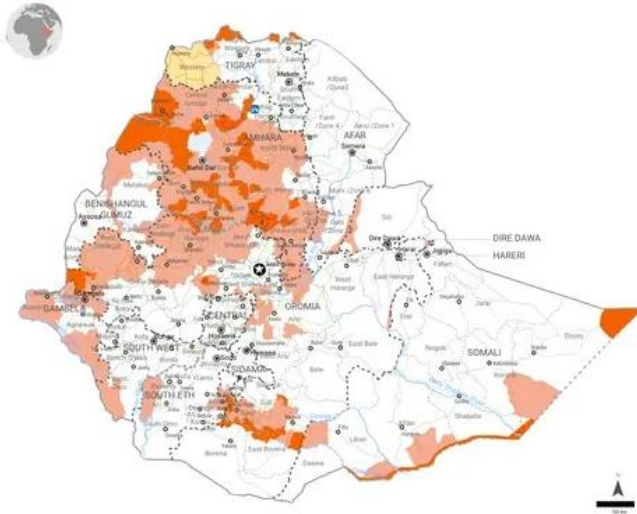


Figure – Snapshot of Ethiopia National Access Map as of 31 July 2024

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

Central Ethiopia Region were also affected ([OCHA 06/2024](#), [OCHA 05/2024](#)).

**Heavy rains, coupled with winds**, posed serious challenges to IDPs in regions such as Amhara and Tigray, with informal shelters destroyed and IDPs becoming even more vulnerable in areas like Jari #2 IDP site in South Wollo Zone, Amhara (178 tents completely damaged, affecting 940 IDPs), and in May Hanse, Hitsats, and Adi Mahameday IDP sites in Asged Woreda of North Western Zone, Tigray (1,600 shelters damaged affecting some 8,000 IDPs across the three sites) ([OCHA 05/2024](#)).

Conflict, climate shocks and disease outbreaks (Cholera, Malaria) are all factors that also contribute to the **increase in the levels of malnutrition**, and mortality in Ethiopia, particularly in zones of Afar, Amhara, Somali, and parts of South Ethiopia Region (SER), with malnutrition rates past high thresholds, and very high in Somali Region. ([OCHA 06/2024](#))

April 2024 also marked the one-year anniversary of the **conflict in the Republic of the Sudan**, with nearly 122,500 persons crossing into Ethiopia through different border towns, mainly Metema (Amhara) and Kurmuk (Benishangul Gumuz). Of these, 47% are Sudanese nationals, 39% Ethiopian returnees, and 14% third country nationals. These arrivals have put limited services and resources under further strain, and newly arrived people have often faced difficult circumstances. ([OCHA 06/2024](#)).

## THE SEARCH FOR DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND ONGOING DISPLACEMENT

The insecurity prevailing in certain areas of Ethiopia often restricts people's access to basic services and humanitarian actors' access to populations in need. This, as well as climatic shocks, are major drivers of increased food insecurity and displacement. The resumption of **food aid** distribution for IDPs and host communities in December 2023 has been a positive development but has been accompanied by new challenges, as **some of the protracted IDPs are no longer prioritized** for food assistance (for example, in East and West Hararghe: [OCHA 03/2024](#)). The ongoing level of **inflation** has further contributed to high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, and to the increase in **negative coping strategies** such as child labour, child begging, gender-based violence (GBV) including child marriage and transactional sex. The situation may worsen following the decision by the central bank to float the currency in late July 2024, with the impact still to be evaluated.

As of June 2024, an estimated **4.5 million people** are **internally displaced in Ethiopia**, mainly in Somali (1.2 million), Oromia (1.1 million) and Tigray (1.1 million), and **mainly due to conflict (76%)**. About 56% of the IDPs have been displaced for more than one year, 23% for two to four years, and 11% for five or more years. ([OCHA 07/2024](#)). Since January 2022, it is estimated that **3.3 million IDPs have returned** to their areas of origin ([OCHA 07/2024](#)). **Efforts are ongoing to return displaced people to their areas of origin**, sometimes in the same regions characterized by insecurity.

About 4,300 IDPs have been returned by the government **from Amhara Region to Oromia Region** (East and West Wellega, and West Shewa zones), in three phases between February and May 2024. The plan of the authorities would be to return

60,000 to 70,000 IDPs from Amhara and Benishangul Gumuz regions to their places of origin in Oromia. Availability of adequate shelter, services, and livelihood opportunities for returnees, as well as security, are a concern in some areas. ([OCHA 06/2024](#))

In **Tigray**, nearly 5,000 IDPs were relocated from the Endabaguna site in Shire district to a site in Maidimu in three phases from 23 April to 1 May 2024, to decrease the overcrowding and improve the living conditions for IDPs. In parallel, the Tigray Interim Administration on 31 May announced its plan to return **690,000 displaced persons to their places of origin in the contested areas**. The return plan is timed for mid-year ahead of the 2024 meher planting season. ([OCHA 06/2024](#)) Movements started on 29 June, with a reported 3,700 IDPs returned to Tselemti until 3 July ([Addis Standard 04/07/2024](#)). Similarly, in the **Somali region**, in the framework of the 'Durable Solutions Strategic Plan for IDPs in the Somali Region (2024-2027)', the regional Government announced its **plans to relocate 59,000 households** – nearly a third of the total IDPs in the region. As a first phase, arrangements are underway to relocate an estimated 6,000 IDPs in protracted situations at the Qoloji site (Fafan Zone) to two locations in Bayahaw (Shabelle Zone) and Gorayocawl (Fafan). ([OCHA 06/2024](#))

While humanitarian actors have been constantly engaging with Regional and Federal authorities on these planned IDP movements and the need to ensure respect for the applicable principles and standards, challenges in this respect have been reported. In particular, returns or relocations of significant numbers of IDPs can pose **challenges in terms of the availability of basic services in the areas of return/relocation, issues related to housing, land and property rights, contamination with explosive ordnance** (especially in the North of the country), and **safety and security concerns in certain areas** of return/relocation or tension with already settled communities over resources (water, farmland, etc.). For affected populations, these challenges and concerns come on top of already existing distress and trauma. Indeed, all the shocks and the ensuing forced displacement and other protection risks have led to reported worrying levels of **mental health and psychosocial needs**.

## PROTECTION RISKS

### RISK 1

### Violence against civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian infrastructure

Targeted killings, destruction of private and public property, armed clashes, the presence of unexploded ordnances (UXOs), and remote attacks, such as reported drone strikes take place in Ethiopia. Reports of kidnappings and abductions in various zones have increased recently, allegedly mostly in the context of criminal activity. Several key drivers lead to this violence:

**Political violence** results in armed clashes that lead to civilian casualties and property damage. Hostilities in the Amhara region involve the Fano militia and security forces ([Al Jazeera 04/04/2024](#)). **Amhara**, along with Oromia, is one of the most affected regions, consistently recording high incidences of political violence and attacks. In the Amhara region, violence has intensified since August 2023, with security incidents prevalent in parts of the region that host IDPs. Armed groups are allegedly implicated in extrajudicial killings destabilizing the region ([ACLED 13/02/2024](#), [Foreign policy, 06/03/2024](#), [ACLED 31/07/2024](#)).<sup>ii</sup>

The situation remains volatile, characterized by clashes and violence in various parts of **Oromia**, including the South Oromia areas bordering SER zone, primarily due to conflicts between unidentified armed groups (UAGs) and security forces. This disrupts access to essential services, including markets and livelihoods. Meanwhile, at least up to the end of February 2024, it was reported that presence and cross-border violations by the Eritrean Defense Force (EDF) into Tigray continued, such as abductions, rape, looting of property, arbitrary arrest, and other violations of physical integrity ([OHCHR 28/02/2024](#)).

Secondly, certain areas are characterized by clashes and violence in relation to the **territorial control** such as areas contested between Amhara and Tigray, with clashes for instance in March-April 2024 ([ACLED 19/03/2024](#), [BBC 20/04/2024](#)).

**Inter-ethnic violence**, often related to control over resources, is a third driver of violence that has been affecting several regions in Ethiopia, including Amhara, Afar, Somali, Oromia, Benishangul Gumuz, and Gambella. It is often sparked by ethnic affiliation, or disputes over resources like farming land, grazing land, access to water and livestock, sometimes involving the use of resources by IDPs. Targeted killings or other incidents often spark wider clashes. For example, in March 2024, attacks were reported in the Oromo special zone of Amhara, allegedly targeting primarily ethnic Oromo residents ([Addis Standard 20/03/2024](#)). In Gambella, inter-ethnic violence in early 2024 resulted in casualties and disrupted transportation, services, and humanitarian services ([Addis Standard 08/02/2024](#), [Addis Standard 27/03/2024](#), [Addis Standard 19/03/2024](#)).

Ongoing intercommunal conflicts in the Somali region are also impacting access to land, which in turn affects the livelihoods of people from Somali region. These conflicts are often driven by access to resources critical for livestock production, such as grazing land and water ([PC, UNHCR 23/01/2024](#), [crisis24 31/01/2024](#), [UNHCR 27/10/2023](#), [UNHCR 20/10/2023](#)). Similarly, the

Somali and Afar regions have experienced intercommunal and cross-border conflicts, particularly along their regional border. These conflicts typically revolve around vital resources and have disrupted peace processes. Mediation efforts often involve community elders, religious leaders, and government officials (UNHCR, PC Jan 2024, [Addis Standard](#) 20/03/2024, [crisis24](#) 31/01/2024, [UNHCR](#) 27/10/2023, [UNHCR, PC](#) 19/06/2023). Clashes in the Siti Zone of the Somali Region have displaced more than 200,000 people since 2018 and erupted again in February 2024, causing new displacement and impacting the ongoing peace talks on disputed land facilitated by the Ethiopian government and the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council ([OCHA SitRep](#) 26/04/2024, [ACLED](#) 30/04/2024). The peace process initiated in Benishangul Gumuz in late 2022 has led to some improvements, yet clashes in 2024 have highlighted ongoing instability, particularly along the borders with Oromia, causing displacement in the Sasiga District of East Wollega ([Dorcas](#) 17/04/2024).

**Disputes between IDPs and host communities** also contribute to the tension, fueled by disagreements over resource allocation. For example, gaps in assistance to IDPs in the Jara IDP camp have led to increased competition over resources like grazing land and water for livestock have led to clashes, increasing security risks for IDPs ([OCHA SitRep](#) 25/03/2024).

**Efforts to curb interethnic violence and foster reconciliation are in place**, for example the abovementioned dialogues between the Afar and Somali regions, coordinated by the government and the Islamic council. The government is also advancing in transitional justice, having launched nationwide public consultations on the transitional justice policy options in Ethiopia in early 2023 ([EHRC](#) 06/03/2023), conducted “some 80 consultations nationwide” over 8 months ([IPI](#), 04/2024), leading to the adoption of the **Transitional Justice policy** by the Council of Ministers on 17 April and its formal launch by the Government on 9 May 2024 ([OHCHR](#) 06/2024). Still, challenges remain in terms of adequate protection of vulnerable groups, support for community-based peacebuilding initiatives, accountability, and the identification of durable solutions, including through the development or use of alternative justice and conflict management mechanisms. The ongoing initiatives of the National Dialogue Commission (NDC) summoning, engaging and holding consultations with diverse stakeholders, could also contribute to the peace process; although some opposition parties have clearly declared their non-participation and lack of trust in the NDC and its approach ([Addis Standard](#) 05/2024).

In February 2024 alone, ACLED documented 168 political violence events and 473 fatalities nationwide, with a significant concentration in the Amhara region. Civilians have been victims of targeted killings and injuries as a result of attacks or armed clashes.<sup>iii</sup> Since the beginning of 2024, ACLED has reported six events classified as “air/drone strikes” in Amhara and Oromia, allegedly leading to a total of more than 50 casualties, reportedly including civilians ([ACLED Dataset](#), consulted 20/05/2024).

Violence has also led to widespread **destruction of both private and public property**, such as homes, schools, and health facilities. **Educational institutions** have suffered damage due to clashes, or have been used by armed actors, preventing students from going to school. As of April 2024, the Education Cluster reported 9,177 damaged schools (out of which, 7,185 due to conflict), 5,371 closed schools (out of which, 4,870 due to conflict), and more than 7.7 million students out of school (out of which, 6.9 million due to conflict) in the country ([Education Cluster](#) Monitoring Dashboard, 04/2024). Similarly, **medical facilities and access to healthcare** for the population have been impacted by insecurity and clashes, in particular in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Western Oromia, Somali, and Tigray ([Ethiopia Health Cluster](#), 02/05/2024; see Risk 2).

In general, because of the escalating violence, communities have faced waves of **displacement**, with protection concerns and the consequences that go with it (see Risk 5). As people flee the conflict, the pressure on scarce humanitarian resources escalates in places of displacement, and the delivery of aid and services is further impeded. Blocked roads and the prevailing insecurity severely restrict humanitarian efforts, with overall **movements in certain areas being restricted**, and little to no humanitarian visits conducted, as has been the case in parts of the Amhara region. **Communication blackouts** further complicate the situation ([crisis24](#) 31/01/2024, [OHCHR](#) 18/09/2023, [Amnesty International](#) 26/02/2024). This pattern of disruption and displacement extends to Tigray, Oromia, Benishangul-Gumuz, and the Somali region.

Other consequences of the violence to which civilians are exposed are an **increase in GBV and child/family separation** in affected areas, as well as widespread **psychosocial consequences**. The situation calls for enhanced GBV response strategies (see Risk 3) and accessible support systems, preventive measures for child separation (i.e., teaching children to memorize phone numbers or using identification bracelets), and efforts to destigmatize mental health issues at the community level.

Areas affected by political violence or conflict continue to face consequences of the **presence of (land)mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO)**. While the full scale and scope of the contamination in the country are not known, UNMAS explosive ordnance assessments confirmed contamination in 26 woredas in Tigray and 8 in Afar, with 1,267 explosive items identified and marked.<sup>iv</sup> Certain woredas, often located in or near ‘passive’ conflict areas such as disputed border territories or areas known to have accommodated military actors or armed groups in previous conflicts, require further attention and follow-up.

In the absence of comprehensive survey and clearance efforts, Explosive Ordnance (EO) continues to have a devastating impact on civilians' lives. While it is assumed that EO casualty figures are widely underreported, verified data collected by MA partners have recorded 1,040 incidents in 2023 alone, causing 1,438 victims (1,133 male and 305 female). Farmers, constituting a large part of the population in Tigray, and children (25%) seem to be mostly impacted by EO. Communities, especially those engaged in agriculture or pastoralist activities, often face the impact of the presence of EO, such as **restricted access to essential resources and agricultural land**, or worse, grave physical and/or psycho-social consequences, including the inability to continue income generating activities. The persistent threat of landmines and other EO not only hampers economic stability and food security but also **prevents IDPs from returning to their homes**, thereby exacerbating pressure on the available land/resources and continued displacement.

This situation is compounded by the **absence of adequate support services to assist victims** of EO, including medical care, rehabilitation, psychological and psycho-social services, assuring a minimal quality of life, access to services, and the provision of information on prevention, promotion and medical care and services. Awareness campaigns on Explosive Hazard awareness Training (EHAT) to recognize and mitigate EO impact are ongoing, however, the small number of partners, persistent risks, underreporting and capacity gaps in Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMA) undermine the efforts.

## RISK 2

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

Protection threats related to the risk of **discrimination, stigmatization, and the denial of resources** are particularly reported in conflict-affected regions such as Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray, often allegedly driven by political motivation or ethnic rivalry, but also affecting vulnerable groups. **Rivalry for resources, bias, prejudice, and social norms** impact vulnerable groups such as women, persons with disabilities, older people, and children. As a result, these groups face exclusion from assistance, services, and access to information. DTM indicates over 50% of IDPs and returning IDPs are not involved in decision-making on humanitarian aid, nor are they aware of mechanisms to provide feedback or make complaints about the quality, quantity and appropriateness of the humanitarian aid they receive ([AAP Snapshot Report](#) 26/12/2023). A significant problem is the lack of disaggregated data to understand how different groups are impacted, taking into account gender norms and roles.

Another factor that limits people's access to essential services and assistance is the **lack of identification documents**, which again is often connected to discrimination related to being an IDP or belonging to a certain group. The Government of Ethiopia, together with humanitarian agencies, has launched an initiative to include refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as IDPs, into the **Ethiopian Digital ID system, called "Fayda."** Ethiopia will receive 350 million USD from the World Bank, which will target "at least 90 million Ethiopians, as well as refugees and migrants living in Ethiopia" ([World Bank](#), 12/2023). Pilots are being conducted for refugees and asylum-seekers by the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) in partnership with the National ID Program (NIDP) and UNHCR ([UNHCR](#) 07/03/2024), and for IDPs and/or returning migrants by the NIDP in collaboration with IOM and UNICEF ([IOM](#), 15/11/2023, [UNICEF](#) 12/10/2023). This is expected to ease individuals' access to essential services such as obtaining a SIM card, healthcare, school enrolment, and humanitarian assistance (including cash). However, the "Fayda" ID will not replace kebele IDs that are issued by the local government (Ethiopia National ID website, [FAQ](#), accessed 01/08/2024).

**Lack of humanitarian access** to some areas due to insecurity, or to some contested areas in the North of the country, has also impacted people's ability to receive assistance, sometimes leading them to move/return to unsafe areas due to the lack of aid. In 2023, OCHA documented 93 incidents affecting aid workers, including kidnapping, robbery, and violence, and by May 2024, six aid workers had already been killed (even if not targeted). Efforts to provide aid are hampered by limited access, **ongoing clashes and insecurity, logistical challenges, communication blackouts, and lack of resources**. The Ethiopian government and humanitarian partners continue to face severe access constraints in providing food and other humanitarian assistance in some parts of the Amhara region due to insecurity as well as shortages of fuel, necessary to transport relief supplies across the region. Benishangul Gumuz Region has been similarly impacted by the lack of fuel, as well as difficulties transporting commercial goods through Amhara due to insecurity ([Addis Standard](#) 15/11/2023, [Addis Zeybe](#) 10/04/2023). Also, the **involvement of various armed actors**, including local militias and allegedly foreign forces, further complicates efforts to access affected populations, for example in some contested areas in the North of the country, as well as some areas bordering Eritrea.

**Internet shutdowns and communication blackouts** have also significantly infringed on civic space and hampered access to essential services, affecting livelihoods, education, and humanitarian operations, as well as rule of law services, like police and courts. Vital communication with NGOs was cut off. Additionally, the WHO highlighted that such shutdowns necessitated the

sharing of epidemiological data via SMS, illustrating the broader challenges these blackouts pose to humanitarian and healthcare services ([Amnesty International](#) 26/02/2024, [WHO](#) 02/02/2024, [borkena](#) 06/10/2023, [Addis Zeybe](#) 10/04/2023).

Incidents of looting, attacks on health facilities and workers have **severely disrupted healthcare** in conflict zones, damaging facilities, reducing staff, and worsening public health outcomes. This has led to increased spreading of disease, mortality, and diminished care quality, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups, and placing a heavy economic burden on healthcare systems. Violent clashes in the Oromo Special Zone and attacks on civilians have made medical treatment inaccessible for the injured. In Tigray, the damaged health facilities contribute to disease outbreaks and high malnutrition rates. ([Ethiopia Health Cluster](#) 30/05/2024, [Addis Standard](#) 15/06/2024, [ICRC](#) 29/05/2024, [OCHA](#) 01/03/2024, [OCHA](#) 13/03/2024, [Ethiopia Health Cluster](#) 02/02/2024, [Addis Standard](#) 21/02/2024, [Addis Standard](#) 12/01/2024, [WHO](#) 24/11/2023).

**Schools and access to education** have also been severely impacted, as already mentioned (see Risk 1). In the Amhara region, OCHA reported that in April 2024 about 4,178 schools were closed and more than 4.1 million students were out of school, with about 89% of the schools in East Gojam, West Gojam, and South Gondar zones closed ([OCHA](#) 26/04/2024).

Communities have their own capacity and resilience mechanisms to address these threats, including **social networks and mutual support systems**, such as community-led initiatives to raise funds for those in need, and religious leaders playing roles in conflict resolution and aid distribution. However, these community structures are not always inclusive and may exhibit nepotism and bias, particularly against vulnerable groups. Additionally, the affected populations' capacity to respond has been significantly hindered by multiple factors, including the compounded effect of violence/conflict and repeated climatic shocks.

It is worth highlighting that access to basic services like food, water, shelter, education, and healthcare is seen as a form of justice for those affected by violence and conflict across Ethiopia. Consultations by the EHRC and OHCHR with IDPs from July 2022 to March 2023 in various regions included an IDP woman's statement that justice equates to equal provision of quality health services and aid ([EHRC, OHCHR](#) 28/12/2023). This underscores the critical link between access to services and justice for displaced communities, a key element to consider also for the success of any peace initiatives.

### RISK 3 Gender Based Violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) in Ethiopia is exacerbated by conflict, climate shocks, displacement, and socio-economic issues. **Conflict involving** killings, forced displacement, and physical injuries, heightens all types of GBV, and conflict related Sexual violence with resultant acute medical complications such as trauma fistula, Pelvic Organs Prolapse (POP), against a pre-conflict culture normalizing GBV and violence against women and girls ([EDHS 2016](#)). Areas affected span from Oromia (Guji, the Wollegas and North and West Shewa, as well as zones affected at the same time by drought-like conditions such as in East Bale, Borena, and East and West Hararge), Amhara (across much of the region), Somali (conflict along the Afar border and among different ethnic groups), Afar (conflict along the border with Somalia and drought), Gambella, and Benishangul-Gumuz (especially along the border with Oromia).

**Drought and flood** lead to displacement and loss of income, increasing the risk of GBV as communities are forced to move. **Displacement** increases the breakdown of support mechanisms and families and living in conditions such as overcrowded shelters, irregular food support and unsafe facilities in IDP sites, and limited-service availability increasing vulnerability to GBV for most community members, particularly women and girls. Additionally, the lack of economic options and aid dependency heighten the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse for displaced women and girls.

The **lack of systematic data collection and analysis** to effectively inform the response hinders the provision of services in Ethiopia. GBV and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) cases are often under-reported due to stigma, fear of retaliation, and lack of trust in authorities. Different organizations may use varying methods and standards for data collection, leading to inconsistencies and gaps in the data. Conflict and instability further hinder access to certain regions, making data collection challenging. Conflict-related sexual violence and rape have severe and lasting impacts on the health, psychosocial, and economic well-being of survivors. The Humanitarian Needs Overviews (HNOs) from the past 3 years indicate that the number of people in need of actions to prevent, mitigate, and respond to GBV has risen from 3.5 million in 2021 to 7.2 million in 2024.

**Community members are among the main perpetrators of GBV**, due to cultural practices contributing sometimes to GBV, placing women in vulnerable positions, and exacerbating the risk of physical and sexual violence. Ethnic differences and the lack of women's empowerment both economically and psychologically also exacerbate GBV. However, it is likely that in areas impacted by conflict **armed actors** are a primary perpetrator. According to one study related to the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, 96% of incidents were attributed to armed actors ([PHR](#) 24/08/2023). **Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)**, as a type



of gender-based violence perpetrated by aid workers, is also largely unreported. In 2023 the PSEA Network, comprising of the humanitarian communities, received only 5 allegations of SEA, despite Network members reporting that over 18,400 affected people had access to reporting channels for SEA and over 1.6 million people were reached with awareness-raising campaigns on SEA ([Ethiopia IASC PSEA indicators](#)). Given that the risk factors for GBV are high in Ethiopia, it follows that the risk of SEA is also high as aid continues to be reduced and negative coping mechanisms arise.

A specific and widespread form of GBV is **child marriage (in some communities' child marriage is accompanied by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM))**, which is often seen as a coping mechanism for economic survival and is influenced by a variety of social, cultural, and economic factors. Traditional gender roles and societal expectations are compounded by limited access to vocational training, safe secondary education, and employment opportunities for girls. Economic incentives like dowries and the preservation of family honour, which is often linked to a young bride's virginity, further promote the practice. Conflicts and environmental crises exacerbate these issues, particularly in rural areas with strong cultural norms and limited educational resources, leading communities to see child marriage as a survival strategy. Ethiopia has some of the highest rates of child, early, and forced marriage, with **4 in 10 girls getting married before turning 18** ([SOS](#) 27/11/2023). The prevalence of child marriage is particularly high in drought-affected regions like Somali, Oromia, and Tigray, but also in Amhara and Afar, where economic challenges drive families to marry off their daughters at young ages. In rural areas, child marriages are more common and typically occur earlier than in urban areas, often between the ages of 12-14 ([BioMed Central](#) 16/05/2023).

In regions like Afar, Somali, and others in the country where early, child and forced marriage cultural practices intertwine with humanitarian crises, requirements around virginity and **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**, as a prerequisite for marriage eligibility, are increasingly emerging. FGM is reported on the increase among ongoing multi-faceted conflict and climate shocks crises, along with an increase in Child Marriage as a negative coping mechanism to address the household, family and individual economy, and rising female- and adolescent-headed households. Families sometimes are unwilling or unable to seek services related to GBV out of fear of stigma and shame of having a daughter who is no longer eligible for marriage.

Child marriage significantly contributes to **gender inequality and cycles of poverty**, while exposing young girls to serious **health and social risks**. These marriages often end educational pursuits or are more likely to occur after girls drop out of school due to reasons such as poor performance/achievements and reduced future job prospects, reinforcing social and gender disparities. Women married before 18 are at higher risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, increased likelihood of early childbirth, obstetric fistula and other reproductive health issues, larger families, and lower chances of delivering in medical facilities with professional assistance. These women also experience higher rates of intimate partner violence, emotional distress, and mental health issues. Economically, child marriage restricts educational attainment and reduces earning potential in adulthood, diminishing women's roles in household decision-making and labor force participation, and lessening their control over household assets ([UNICEF & Center for Evaluation and Development](#) 11/06/2023, [BioMed Central](#) 16/05/2023).

The **capacity of populations to address the issue of child marriage** is significantly hindered by economic hardships, educational deficits, and infrastructure damage, such as destroyed schools that would otherwise help delay marriage through education. While cases of child and forced marriage are often settled through family negotiations, efforts by humanitarian programs and the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs (BoWSA) to tackle this issue face challenges due to BoWSA's absence at the local (kebele) level, complicating the coordination, monitoring, and reporting of interventions ([FEWS NET](#) 06/02/2024, [UNICEF & Center for Evaluation and Development](#) 11/06/2023, [BioMed Central](#) 16/05/2023).

The **consequences of all types of GBV** range from physical injuries and traumas to profound mental health issues, including depression and feelings of inferiority. Survivors, especially from rural communities with strict moral codes, suffer from emotional breakdowns. GBV leads to unwanted pregnancies, exposure to sexually transmitted infections, and even suicide. Social pressures often force survivors into marriages with their perpetrators, further entrenching the cycle of violence. **GBV can also impact the opportunity to return to the area of origin**, as survivors fear for their security or being stigmatized. For example, in Tigray, some women and girls who have children as a result of sexual violence are unable to return to their place of origin due to fear of community stigmatization. Traditional justice mechanisms, while a recourse for some, often exclude women from direct participation, limiting their access to justice and perpetuating underreporting due to fear of stigma, rejection, and retaliation ([OHCHR](#) 03/10/2023, [PHR UNHCR, UNFPA](#) 31/08/2023, 24/08/2023, [BMJ](#) 01/07/2023).

**Local communities have various capacities**, including women's development groups, influential leaders, extended family care, neighborhood watch programs, and religious institutions. These community structures, while helpful, often lack coordination and sufficient leadership capacity, and sometimes exhibit gender inequality. The population's ability to respond to GBV is hampered by the reliance on traditional justice mechanisms, underreporting due to societal stigma, and limited access to essential services. Financial barriers and cultural taboos deter people from seeking legal assistance or reporting incidents.

The humanitarian response is further constrained by **inadequate support services**, as many women are forced to travel long distances to seek help and increasing their exposure to violence. As of March 2024, funding shortfalls mean seven refugee-hosting areas in Ethiopia will lose critical GBV services, and the GBV response capacity in IDP sites has significantly reduced, with 46 partners reporting from 165 districts as of 30 June 2024, down from 76 partners reporting from 383 districts on 31 December 2023,<sup>v</sup> effectively reducing the GBV response capacity from 38% in 2023 to 23% in 2024. ([UNHCR 21/03/2024](#), [PC UNHCR 23/01/2024](#), [BMJ 01/07/2023](#), [HEKS/EPER 12/06/2023](#), [France24 09/02/2023](#), [RDRMB 31/08/2023](#)).

## RISK 4 Trafficking in persons, forced and child labour

Forced displacement and irregular migration is growing, especially among children with increased engagement in forced labor (including the worst forms of child labor) and children living on the street. Poverty, inflation, decreased access to income generating activities due to conflict and drought, high levels of youth unemployment, and the impact of climate change are major drivers. Limited recovery from previous shocks, including loss of livelihood activities, inflation, family separation, insufficient and delayed food assistance, lack of access to education, poor value towards education as well as weak law enforcement mechanisms drove up instances of exploitation and trafficking, including child labor ([RDRMB 31/08/2023](#)). Children face numerous challenges and risks during their journey and upon arrival in destination countries, as well as hardships upon deportation and return, making their reintegration into their communities challenging.

The **Eastern migration route**, which runs from the Horn of Africa through Yemen to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the most widely used corridors. With an average of 23,000 outward cross-border movements per month, Ethiopia is the main country of origin for migrants, most of whom have their origins in the currently conflict affected areas i.e. Amhara, Tigray and Oromia, with data as of November 2023, reporting over 285,000 Eastern Route migrants having departed from Ethiopia in 2023, mostly men (64%), followed by women (28%), boys (5%), and girls (3%). ([IOM 02/2024](#)). In 2024, IOM reported an increase at an alarming rate of the number of children from Ethiopia travelling along the Eastern Route, including UASCs. By June 2024, IOM Somalia's Migration Response Centers (MRCs) registered a **duplication in the number of children compared to the first half of 2023** (100% increase, compared to the 85% increase in the total migrants registered in the first half of 2024 compared to 2023), and **35% of them unaccompanied** by either a parent or guardian. Many of these children reportedly leave home without any information about the journey ahead; most are completely unaware that they will have to cross a sea or pass through conflict zones to reach their intended destinations. ([IOM 2024](#)).

For the **Southern migration route** towards South Africa (via Kenya, Tanzania, and other Southern African countries), while there are no recent statistics, research conducted in 2023 reveals an approximate 85% of persons were Ethiopians. ([IOM 02/2024](#))

The multiple shocks affecting the country have likely resulted in an increase in child labor. According to a MIRA assessment conducted in Amhara in late October 2023 covering 6 zones and 17 woredas, child labour was identified as the second most important child protection risk that has arisen since the shock, and child trafficking was identified as one of the main factors making children stressed (after lack of food, attacks, and inability to go to school (MIRA assessment Amhara October 2023).

Weak law enforcement of the minimum age for light work, set at 15 years old, is a factor that contributes to the continued prevalence of child labor. Research into **girl child domestic workers** conducted in low-income areas in Addis Ababa found that, based on indicators developed by the US Department of State, 52% of girls in the sample were victims of human trafficking (68% of self-identified domestic workers and 35% of those who do not identify as domestic workers). Based on provisions of the Ethiopian Labour law, all girls aged 12 to 14 were considered to be working illegally, while 87% of those aged 15 to 17 were in illegal child labour, largely fueled by excessive working hours and not having any rest days. ([The Freedom Fund 10/2022](#))

According to the Regional Bureau of Women and Social Affairs, as of July 2022 there were around 5,000 children living on the street in Tigray region and 8,000 in Amhara. Approximately 1152 UAS children living on the street in Tigray were supported through a local organization and later 777 (663M, 114F) were reunified with their parents/previous caregivers.

In October 2023, child protection partners identified that 5.6% of the reunited children were subject to secondary separation, and almost all were engaged in income-generating activities and child labor due to poverty and low family income. In Oromia, a rising number of street children has been reported as a result of food insecurity and recurring drought, as families resort to negative coping mechanisms such as child labor, begging, and attachment to the street to adapt to insufficient access to food ([UNHCR, PC 01/03/2024](#), [UNHCR, PC 23/01/2024](#)). Likewise, the suspension of food aid has reportedly led to an increase in child labor and school dropouts in Benishangul Gumuz ([Addis Standard 20/03/2024](#), [OCHA 01/03/2024](#)).

**Protection risks related to child labor and during forced displacement and migration** in transit and destination countries involve death and health concerns, restrictions to access to basic services, disinformation and denial of access to information, psychological and emotional abuse or inflicted distress, arbitrary arrest and detention, sexual violence, forced marriage, child abuse and neglect, torture and cruel inhuman or degrading treatment, trafficking, abduction, extortion, discrimination, forced returns, homelessness and debt bondage. Children are at risk of being kidnapped and separated from their families, and of being forced into child labor.

Among the **major elements of Ethiopia's response to child labour and trafficking** are the following:

1. Ethiopia ratified the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) Convention 1999 (No.182) in 2003, and its provisions were codified into national law as part of the Labour Proclamation No.1156/2019
2. Ethiopia is developing a national protection system which includes the prevention of child trafficking. This initiative starts from the destination countries such as establishing a unified management at a national level and cross-border referral mechanism. It will work to create a regional dialogue, agree on a roadmap, and follow a rights-based approach.
3. Several programmes to combat child labour have been implemented by Ethiopia since 2017 (for details, see [International Cocoa Initiative](#) 03/2023, Table 4 page 14)
4. Community-based protection and anti-trafficking committees exist, even if they are often insufficient to address the scale of the problem, especially in regions where the government's presence is weak or compromised by conflict ([UNHCR, PC](#) 01/03/2024, [UNHCR, PC](#) 23/01/2024). These groups actively address child labor and trafficking by raising awareness, mobilizing resources, and advocating for change. They also focus on reintegrating unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), arranging post-care solutions, and fundraising to help children return to school.

However, **gaps and challenges** remain, including the following:

1. Weak implementation of legal frameworks regarding child labor and trafficking, a shortage of labor inspectors, weak border trafficking control mechanisms, the absence of active referral and feedback mechanisms, and a lack of advocacy through media to raise broader community awareness.
2. The adoption of a law on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No 1178 in 2020, which includes a national task force, has lagged behind in its implementation.
3. Community efforts need better integration with government institutions for more effective implementation and formal reporting mechanisms for communities to provide feedback to the government are needed.

## RISK 5

### Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege, and forced displacement

Most of the **displacement** across Ethiopia is due to conflict, particularly the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, but also in the Oromia region. However, forced displacement is also fueled by climatic reasons i.e., drought, floods, and the lack of resources, resulting in a large number of IDPs, many of whom are in protracted situations. As of June 2024, OCHA reported an estimated 4.5 million IDPs in Ethiopia, displaced primarily by conflict (73%), climate (12%), and other causes (15%). IDPs are mostly in Somali, (1.2 million), Tigray (1.1 million) and Oromia (1.1 million), but there are also 418,000 in Amhara. ([OCHA](#) 04/07/2024) Living conditions for returnees, those who have relocated, and IDPs are dire, and needs remain high (Ethiopia [ESNFI](#) 12/02/2024).

In relation to the **conflict in Northern Ethiopia**, the presence of armed actors and militias in parts of the contested areas has led to ongoing displacement, including up to 50,000 people displaced from contested areas between Amhara and Tigray to Waghamra and North Wollo zones of Amhara in April-May 2024, due to clashes between Amhara forces and Tigray forces for control of the areas ([BBC](#) 20/04/2024, OCHA Flash Updates [#1](#) and [#2](#)). Additionally, displaced Tigrayans report that Amhara and EDF continue to be present in the contested areas in the Northwest of the country ([CFR](#) 19/12/2023). Displacement due to **clashes and intercommunal violence** has been reported in Amhara and Somali-Afar ([ESNFI cluster](#) 16/05/2024).

Displacement also regularly follows **climatic shocks, such as flooding**. After flooding at the end of 2023 affecting more than 1.5 million people, as of April 26, flooding has again significantly impacted or will likely impact multiple regions. For the Kiremt season, authorities estimate more than 1.6 million people are at risk of being affected by flooding throughout the country, and more than 443,000 of being displaced ([Govt and humanitarian partners](#) 06/2024).

In addition to displacement, the conflict in Amhara has comprised recurrent **restrictions on movement** ([VOA](#) 05/08/2023; [Addis Standard](#) 06/04/2024), and in the Oromia region, restrictions of movement have been repeatedly imposed in relation to ongoing conflict and ethnic tensions, impacting civilians' daily activities and freedom but also the free movement of provision of humanitarian services. The alleged perpetrators in the various regions include regional militias, national military forces, and

at times, informal armed groups exerting control over territories through violence and intimidation, leading to widespread fear and instability. The situation in **Oromia and Amhara**, where regions have been affected by violence and assistance and commercial trade cut off at times, has a wider impact on supplies, inflation, and increased tensions.

**Freedom of movement** is challenging in relation to **durable solutions** for displaced populations. This issue is high on the agenda of the government, but full respect for applicable standards (free and informed choice by the IDPs whether to return to the place of origin, relocate or locally integrate; voluntary movement; safety and dignity in the areas of return/relocation) has often been contested. As part of the safety risks preventing return of IDPs to certain places of origin, even where there are no active hostilities anymore, is the presence of explosive ordnance (EO), for example in some areas of Tigray region.

The government has planned to **return** thousands of IDPs from Amhara to their places of origin in Oromia, despite persistent instability and violence in some areas. By late February 2024, about 1,530 individuals had been relocated back to areas in Oromia, with plans to repatriate over 4,100 IDPs ([Addis Standard](#) 21/03/2024). Anecdotal evidence shows that some returned to find extensive losses, including damage to agricultural lands, without any form of compensation. Other families were reportedly relocated to overcrowded and under-equipped temporary shelters, with restricted movement out of the designated areas thus exacerbating their vulnerability and exposure to ongoing threats. Currently, over 66,000 IDPs are housed across 88 sites in the Amhara region, with humanitarian efforts hindered by security challenges and resource constraints ([Addis Standard](#) 21/03/2024). Similarly, the Tigray Interim Administration's announced plan to return 690,000 displaced persons to their places of origin in Southern Northwestern and Western zones ([OCHA](#) 10/06/2024) will involve similar challenges.

The **consequences of these threats** are severe. In regions like Amhara and Tigray, the civilian populations endure **physical displacement and economic stagnation** due to restricted access to markets and services with harsh impact on **vulnerable groups** such as women, children, and the elderly, who face risks of violence and disruption to their social and economic well-being. The restriction on movement compounds existing humanitarian crises, **hindering access to essential services** like healthcare and education, and exacerbating food insecurity due to disrupted agricultural activities ([OCHA](#) 01/03/2024, [OHCHR](#) 03/10/2023, [UNHCR](#) 20/10/2023). Populations in regions neighboring those where restrictions on movement are imposed, are affected because of the impact of these restrictions and/or the situation of insecurity on commercial transportation (the situation in Amhara has impacted on the availability of commercial goods and fuel in Benishangul Gumuz).

In the case of **returns/relocations that are not following basic principles**, especially the voluntary nature of returns, IDPs risk being exposed to further violence and other protection risks, and/or no access to basic services and livelihood opportunities. This in turn might lead to secondary displacements. According to returnees from the Oromia region, they face dire conditions, often finding their homes destroyed and livelihoods such as agriculture and livestock severely impacted. Basic necessities like food, shelter, and medical care are critically limited, with the UN reporting that only 20% of returnees receive intermittent food assistance ([Addis Standard](#) 21/03/2024). IDPs upon return often face occupation of their land and property, and the lack of documentation to prove ownership is a barrier to accessing **Housing, Land and Property rights** and judicial remedies.

Communities have established **dispute resolution mechanisms** facilitated by key influencers and leaders who can resolve conflicts locally. Host communities often share resources with IDPs and returnees, showing capacity for self-distribution and mutual support, even if the mechanisms to mobilize these resources during displacement are often disrupted. **Local solutions** and best practices are sometimes found to improve the situation of IDPs. In Benishangul Gumuz, local authorities have issued temporary ID cards to 2,400 protracted IDPs, displaced since the 1980s, to facilitate their movement outside camps or homes. In areas in Oromia, community leaders have preserved land rights for displaced individuals, preventing disputes upon their return. Local initiatives in Benishangul Gumuz have also aimed to address issues of land restitution. The regional government has formed a forum (Benishangul)– dialogue, peacebuilding – UNHCR/NRC are co-chairs. They facilitate community dialogue within specific zones with many returnees. EU and other actors also support this community dialogue. They focus on land dispute, DRR and natural resources. This means sensitizing government and communities. NRC helped the region to come up with a manual for land restitution, as it was a gap and issues emerged with returns.

The government has also made strides towards the implementation of the **Kampala Convention**, but this needs to be finalized with the adoption of the IDP proclamation, which will provide a needed legal framework. Regional governments have conducted **peacebuilding sessions and dialogues** (i.e., in the framework of the planned returns from Amhara to Oromia), but more needs to be done, as well as in the implementation/improvement of documentation and data management systems.

# RESPONSE

## PROGRESS MADE ON PROTECTION

Between January and August 2024, **81 protection partners** responded to the protection needs of around **1.5 mil people** in need (37% men, 63% women, 28% children (45% Boys and 55% Girls), 2% PWD and 4% elderly). Among the persons reached, 27% were IDPs, 62% host communities, 9% IDP returnees, and 2% returning migrants. 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.

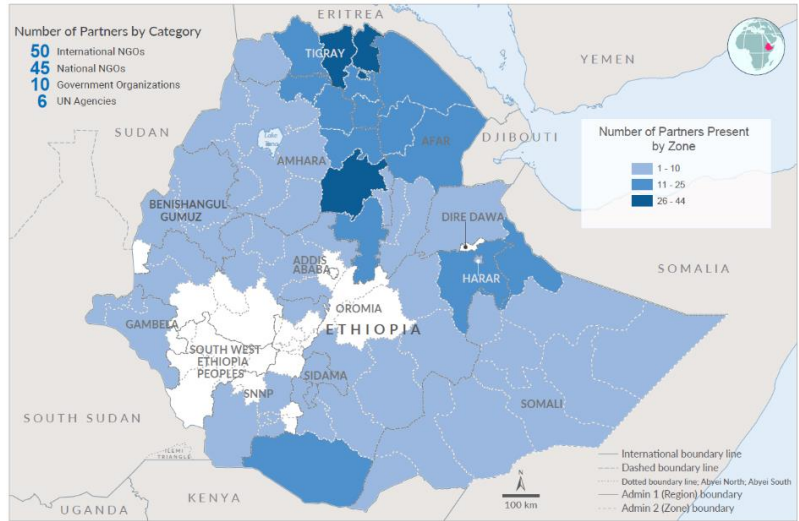


Figure – Number of Protection Partners per zone (reported till August 2024)  
Source: ActivityInfo

## CRITICAL GAPS IN FUNDING AND POPULATION REACHED

While protection needs in Ethiopia remain critical, until the end of August partners managed to reach **1.5 mil people out of the 4.6 mil people targeted** (around 32% of the 15.1 mil people in need). The total financial requirements to assist these targeted people amount to around **USD 311.7 mil**, but the response as of the **end of August 2024** is funded at less than 14%.

Given the very limited funding, for the three months **June-August**, the Protection Cluster has identified the following **priority humanitarian response and critical funding gaps**, for a total of **USD 85.8 mil**, of which USD 5.2 mil to respond to drought, USD 36.2 mil to respond to other critical emergencies, and USD 40.7 mil to respond to potential new displacements:

- **Child Protection:** USD 95 mil, targeting 2.4 people;
- **Gender-Based Violence:** USD 107 mil, targeting 2.3 mil people;
- **Housing, Land and Property:** USD 17 mil, targeting 876 K people;
- **Mine Action:** USD 10 mil, targeting 736K people;
- **Protection:** USD 84 mil, targeting 2.6 mil people.

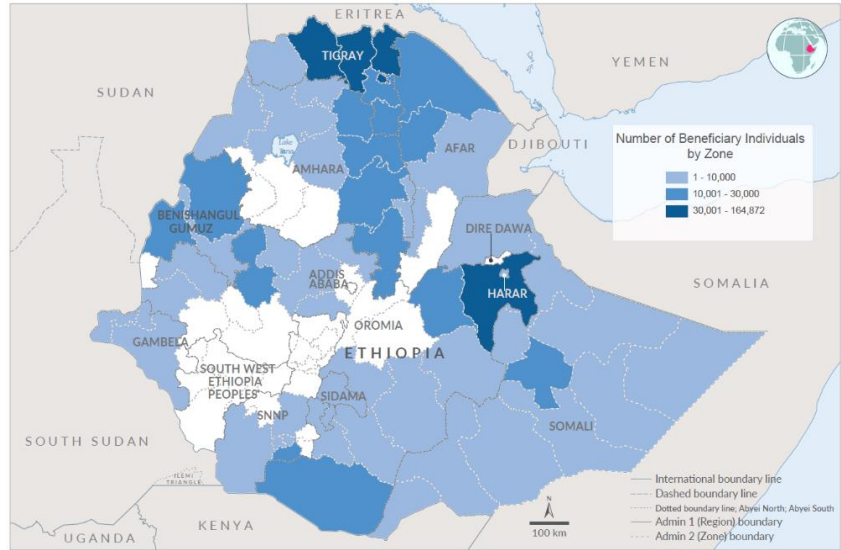


Figure – Number of People reached per zone reported till August 2024)  
Source: ActivityInfo

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### RISK 1

### Violence against civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian infrastructure

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#### ALL WEAPON BEARERS

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- Protect civilians and civilian infrastructure/facilities – take all the necessary precautions.
- In areas affected by violence, avoid placing armed actors/military bases close to civilians and civilian infrastructures.

#### GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

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- Train security forces on the protection of civilians and the applicable legal frameworks, to ensure proportionate use of force, if necessary, and respect for human rights.
- Ensure accountability for acts of violence, human rights violations, and abuses in order to prevent a culture of impunity.
- Ensure the safety of vulnerable groups, including minority groups, refugees and IDPs from attacks.
- Support the development of alternative justice and dispute mechanisms to handle disputes effectively and encourage the operationalization of existing alternative dispute-management mechanisms.
- Continue supporting the establishment of community peacebuilding initiatives and peace committees in areas affected by inter-ethnic violence.
- Facilitate the establishment of a robust national and regional mine action authority while streamlining mine action processes, considering the humanitarian urgency. Address the policy gaps pending the operationalization of the mine action activities following the approval of Four international humanitarian NGOs.

#### DONORS

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- Strengthen initiatives such as joint peace committees that include IDPs and host communities, or the different ethnic groups present in a community, and that focus on preventing tension from escalating – while anticipating any potential violence – and work jointly with the government to implement traditional and alternative justice resolution mechanisms.
- Advocate for protection monitoring and early warning systems by humanitarian, development, and human rights organizations, involving local civil society organizations, in particular in areas affected by inter-ethnic violence.
- Consider the critical and urgent need of mine action service provision, specifically in Tigray and Afar including EO clearance, victim assistance and capacity building of the national mine action authority.

#### HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

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- Ensure, together with the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs (BoWSA) on community structures/systems, the sustainability of information dissemination and referrals/provision of protection.
- Invest in and engage more actively with peacebuilding actors to strengthen community resilience and conflict resolution.
- Strengthen protection monitoring and early-warning systems, especially in areas affected by inter-ethnic violence, to detect and address tensions before they escalate into violence, facilitating preemptive negotiation and intervention.
- Support initiatives to prevent the forced separation of children in conflict areas, such as the use of identification bracelets.
- Promote, such as community-based protection, aimed at destigmatizing mental health issues within communities, enhancing support and reducing the taboo around mental health care.
- Education Cluster, Child Protection and Mine Action AoRs: Include safe behavior training in school curriculums to prepare children for emergencies, teaching appropriate behaviors if caught in attacks or when finding explosive ordnance.
- Mainstream mine action responses across the different humanitarian sectors and advocate for joint interventions.

### RISK 2

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

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#### GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

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- Ensure that policies and programs consider the intersectionality of vulnerable groups, addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by women, people with disabilities, older people, and children.
- Implement widespread awareness-raising campaigns to educate communities on the rights of various groups, promoting inclusion and reducing discrimination.
- Provide training and resources, especially to Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) staff, to effectively deliver services and support to vulnerable populations.
- Ensure the integration of climate action into government planning with the aim of enhancing Resilience and Environmental Sustainability.

## DONORS

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- Adopt principles similar to those in the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF) template, specifically earmarking funding to address discrimination against vulnerable groups (age, gender, and disability marker).
- Mandate regular inclusion audits to evaluate and ensure that humanitarian programs address the needs of all vulnerable groups. These audits will help identify gaps and areas for improvement in program design and implementation.

## HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

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- Ensure that humanitarian programs adopt an integrated approach that addresses multiple vulnerabilities and needs concurrently, ensuring comprehensive support for affected populations.
- Establish and reinforce community-based accountability and compliance mechanisms to ensure that aid distribution and support services are delivered fairly and effectively, with active and representative (age, gender, and other diversities) community participation in monitoring and feedback.
- Ensure that humanitarian programs have well-defined targeting and eligibility criteria, including provision for community participation in the targeting, validation, and grievance resolution processes, to ensure that assistance reaches the most vulnerable and is distributed equitably, in accordance with humanitarian inclusion standards.
- Prioritize and implement community awareness activities to enhance knowledge of the rights and entitlements of affected communities, as well as the humanitarian principles, in local languages and delivered through context-appropriate, protection-sensitive methods and channels.

## RISK 3 Gender Based Violence

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### GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

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- Commit funding for legal and protection actors to investigate cases, funding to facilitate access to justice for survivors, and the necessary resources for adequate accountability mechanisms, and **GBV funding** to support Women-Led and Women Rights Organizations, and Faith-Based partners with presence in inaccessible and underserved areas.
- Enhance preparedness, partner presence and **capacity to respond effectively** in underserved regions like Amhara and Oromia.
- Implement **robust data and information systems** to guide effective responses.
- Increase the number of female police officers dedicated to investigating cases of GBV and ensure all police involved in investigating cases of GBV are trained in trauma-informed investigations and how to refer cases involving humanitarian personnel as perpetrators of SEA.

### DONORS

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- Adopt principles similar to those in the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund (EHF) template, specifically earmarking funding to address discrimination against vulnerable groups such as women and girls. Replicate this approach across donor proposals to ensure focused and consistent funding for reducing discrimination. This can be linked to earmarked funding to promote localization to enhance access to affected areas/communities and contribute to sustainability of response.
- Require all project proposals to include budget lines for PSEA including vetting of staff, training staff and frontline workers, developing appropriate messaging for communities on SEA and accessible reporting mechanisms. Encourage joint reporting mechanisms to ensure sustainability and avoid duplication.
- Ensure flexibility in funding to allow humanitarian organizations to adapt their programs to the changing needs on the ground, particularly in response to emerging GBV issues. Including but not limited to economic empowerment activities.

### HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

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- Increase financial support to respond to GBV in Oromia, Amhara, Tigray, and Afar, strengthening one-stop centers that play a crucial role in responding to GBV following a survivor-based approach. Safe houses, despite high costs, need to be prioritized, as well as women and girls' friendly spaces, which serve as entry points to accessing specialized GBV services including case management.
- Support communities in social norm changes to destigmatize GBV. This involves campaigns and programs aimed at changing attitudes, behaviors and practices that perpetuate GBV, fostering an environment where survivors feel safe to report incidents and seek help.
- Strengthen the capacity of staff attached to protection and health projects to deal with Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse.
- Together with communities, develop age and gender-appropriate messaging on what constitutes SEA and accessible reporting channels, and actively pursue ways to identify and strengthen joint reporting mechanisms.

## RISK 4 Trafficking in persons, forced and child labour

### GOVERNMENT

- Ministry of Labour and Skills: Develop a Hazardous Activities Framework (HAF), detailing a list of tasks prohibited to all children under 18, including specifying the maximum allowed working hours for children of different age groups.
- Ministries of Labour and Skills, of Education, and of Women and Social Affairs: Strengthen the enforcement of child labor laws and the capacity of actors involved in monitoring the implementation of these laws, including through training and resourcing labor inspectors and establishing active referral and feedback mechanisms.
- Allocate budget to enhance monitoring, advocacy, and referral pathways at the local level, especially in conflict-affected areas.
- Develop or revise standards, standard operating procedures (SOPs), and guidelines by the National Committee on trafficking to ensure consistent and effective implementation.
- Follow up on the recommendations out of the three-day regional dialogue workshop to promote effective cross-border case management for the protection, safe return, and sustainable reintegration of Ethiopian migrant children along the eastern route was carried in Feb 2024 with the participation of four countries (Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Yemen)
- Engage in strong political collaboration with neighboring countries to reduce trafficking through joint monitoring and enforcement initiatives.
- Implement state-level safeguarding policies that include mechanisms for children to identify traffickers and for caseworkers to identify out-of-school children. Ensure robust support systems for these children to re-enter education and access necessary services.
- Sign and implement **the Safe Schools Declaration**, ensuring that schools are exclusively used for educational purposes and are protected from any form of exploitation or misuse.

### DONORS

- Allocate funding to enhance community-based protection committees and anti-trafficking committees by the end of 2025, particularly in conflict-affected areas.
- Support Ethiopia in the ongoing efforts to develop a national protection system to prevent TIP.

### HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

- Collaborate with donors and the government to enhance community-based protection and anti-trafficking systems. Focus on building capacity, providing resources, and ensuring these systems are well-integrated with government efforts.
- Provide comprehensive support services for children affected by trafficking and labor, including psychosocial support, educational reintegration programs, and safe spaces.

## RISK 5 Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege, and forced displacement

### GOVERNMENT

- Ensure that IDP returns or relocations are voluntary, fully informed, and carried out in safety and dignity. Obstacles to return, such as insecurity, restricted access to services, and destroyed infrastructure, must be addressed to facilitate safe returns.



- Allocate resources to support the national ID registration program, ensuring that IDPs and returnees, especially in Amhara, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Tigray, Afar, and Somali regions, receive ID cards.
- Strengthen/rebuild systems for HLP rights to prevent conflicts in case of population movements and secondary occupation. Increase the involvement of peace actors in peacebuilding activities. Facilitate community dialogues, sessions, and discussions through the Ministry of Peace and regional peace and security offices, especially in Amhara, Tigray, Benishangul Gumuz, Oromia, Afar, and Somali regions.
- Finalize the domestication of the Kampala Convention and ensure the implementation of the IDP proclamation by the concerned Ministries.
- In the case of restrictions on movement and/or state of emergency imposed for security reasons, ensure that any such measures are justified and necessary.

## DONORS

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- Prioritize development funding in regions where returnees are resettling, particularly focusing on non-volatile areas to ensure stability and sustainable development.
- Fund programs that strengthen local community mechanisms for dispute resolution and resource sharing among IDPs, returnees, and host communities.
- Financial institutions like the African Development Bank, World Bank, and IMF: Support the government in its efforts to enforce good governance institutions, the rule of law, human rights and facilitate multi-stakeholder peacebuilding initiatives.

## HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

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- Engage at all levels with concerned authorities to ensure that returns/relocations of IDPs are conducted in a principled manner, respecting their rights, and ensuring their safety.
- Strengthen early warning systems and protection monitoring to promptly address emerging threats and ensure the well-being of displaced populations.
- Work closely with local governments and communities to support the implementation of peacebuilding activities and to provide technical assistance to improve data management and documentation processes for IDPs.
- Reinforce inter-agency and cluster collaboration, within the various pre-established coordination mechanisms and even bilaterally amongst humanitarian stakeholders.
- Focus on the needs of women and women-headed households for legal assistance in HLP matters.

## COMMUNITIES / COMMUNITY LEADERS

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- Replicate good practices, such as preserving HLP rights for displaced individuals, thus preventing disputes over land or property upon their return.

## Endnotes

- i Trend analysis based on the bi-monthly protection risks severity rating conducted at subnational level.
- ii According to Human Rights Watch: “Under international humanitarian law, or the laws of war, the ongoing hostilities between Ethiopian government forces and Fano militia in Amhara amounts to a non-international armed conflict.” Human Rights Watch 07/2024, page 21.
- iii As an example, in Finote Selam town, West Gojam zone, Amhara region, in April 2024 it was reported that: a grenade was thrown at a preparatory school, wounding at least 27 students; on the same day, an unidentified armed group stopped a car that was transporting wounded students to the hospital and abducted the driver, taking his car and leaving the injured students by the roadside; and, two days later, another grenade was thrown by an unidentified person in Ehel Gebya market, injuring at least 27 civilians, most of them women (EPO Weekly Update 09/04/2024).
- iv <https://ims.unmas.org/portal/apps/dashboards/6614bfb9dff4dbda94557781505ccdf>
- v <https://response.reliefweb.int/ethiopia/gender-based-violence-aor>

### 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 August 2024.



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