OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Afar Region is among the areas most affected by both natural and man-made disasters, resulting in widespread protection risks and concerns within affected communities. Prior to November 2020, the region was already experiencing significant internal displacement due to the longstanding Afar–Issa conflict along the Afar–Somali border. The subsequent expansion of the Tigray conflict into Afar further displaced large numbers of people, particularly pastoralist communities.

While most displacements linked to the northern conflict have since subsided, IDP returnees in Telalak, Hari zone (zone 5) continue to face an array of vulnerabilities.

*The boundaries, names, and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Protection Monitoring Report was produced in partnership with UNHCR's protection partner, **EOTC-DICAC** (Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission), as part of the **EU IM3** Project under the **protection monitoring and solutions** component. It provides a detailed analysis of protection needs in Telalek Woreda of Zone Five (Hari Zone), identifying individuals and groups with specific vulnerabilities, and offering actionable recommendations for humanitarian assistance based on both qualitative and quantitative data.

The data collection was conducted by DICAC from September 3-6, 2025. The assessment combined KI interviews and direct field observation.

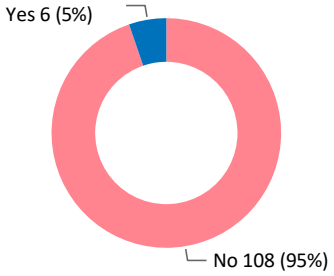
- **114 KIs interviews conducted**: 67 female (59%) and 83 male (41%). Of those interviewed, 45% were humanitarian workers, 27% IDP heads of household, 7% religious leaders, 6% teachers or school administrators, 4% were community volunteers.

Picture: Key informant interview in Telalak Woreda

FINDINGS KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

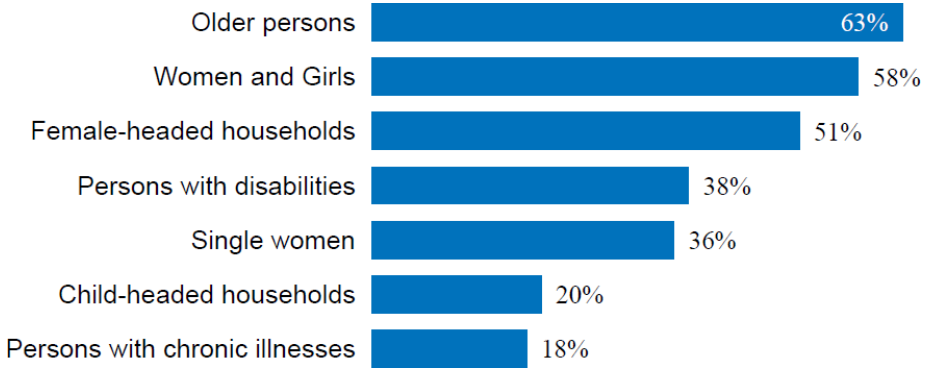
Have you observed signs of distress among the different populations in this location?



Five Percent of key informants reported to have observed signs of distress among different populations in their locations.

Access to Fundamental Rights and Basic Needs

Older persons, women and girls, and persons with disabilities are facing the greatest challenges or particularly disadvantaged in accessing assistance and services.



Obstacles to access basic needs

Sector	Top 3 obstacles *Percentages are out of the total of 183 Key informants*
Food*	▪ Drought (75%) ▪ Drought Inflation (71%) ▪ Lack of food (41%)
Health	▪ Lack of medicine / medical supplies (89%) ▪ Cannot afford medical fees (67%) ▪ Lack of healthcare staff (49%)
Education	▪ Cannot afford scholastic materials (87%) ▪ Not enough learning material (85%) ▪ Lack of safety for children (33%)
WASH	▪ Lack of sanitary pad (42%) ▪ Water contaminated (42%) ▪ **Price increase of soaps (37%)**

Unavailability of learning materials and their high cost at markets have been reported by IDP returnees in Hari zone (Zone-5) as a main obstacle to education of children.

Coping strategies to meet basic needs

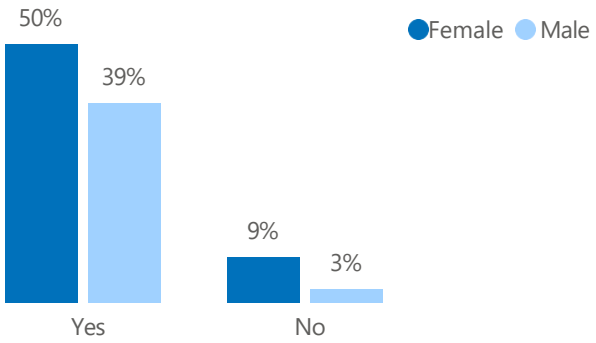
Coping Mechanism	Always	Don't know	Never	Sometimes
Begging	1%		72%	27%
Buying food on credit or through borrowed money from relatives and friends	38%	1%	3%	59%
Changing place of residence and accommodation to reduce expenses		2%	71%	27%
Child labor		2%	86%	12%
Early Marriage for girls			47%	53%
Illegal activities (such as theft)	3%		43%	54%
Selling humanitarian assistance received	2%	4%	20%	75%
Sold house and/or land	1%		57%	42%
Transactional sex		1%	96%	4%
Withdrew children from school		3%	47%	50%

- Buying food on credit (**38** % of respondents reported always, while 59% reported sometimes) and selling humanitarian assistance received (75% reported sometimes) appear as the most common coping strategies (highest rate of 'Always').
- In Hari Zone, buying food on credit and early marriage for girls was reported as "Sometimes" by 59% and 53% of respondents, respectively.

Analysis: The assessment shows that parents are resorting to early marriage for girls to meet the most urgent life-saving needs including food, and cash for paying hospital bills or medicine etc. Direct observation and assessments reveal that people are engaged in different negative coping mechanisms like begging (27%, sometimes), and illegal activities such as theft (54%, sometimes).

Safety and Security

Are women and girls, men and boys always able to move freely in your community



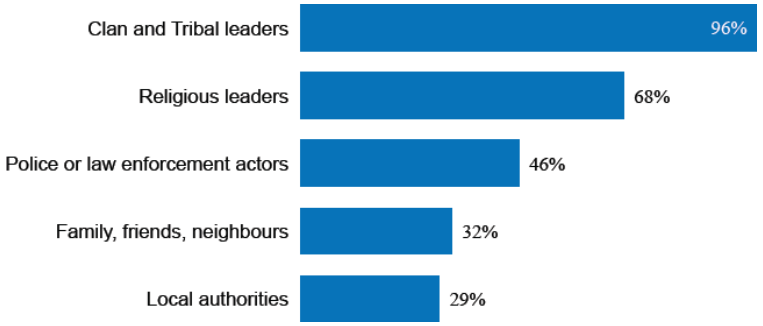
15 (13%) respondents out of 114 reported that men, boys, women, and girls are not able to move freely in their communities.

The main reasons limiting freedom of movement are:

- Fear of kidnapping: reported by 3% of total respondents
- Insecurity in the area: reported by 2% of the respondents
- Family or cultural restrictions: reported by 1% of the respondents

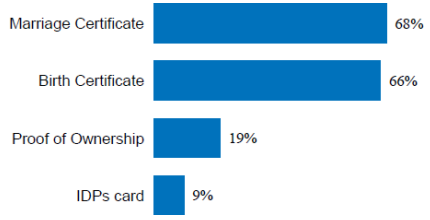
Access to justice and conflict resolution assistance

Who is the most likely person or authority that people would approach with protection concerns, problems, and disputes in your location?



According to respondents, in the Woreda, clan and tribal leaders (96%), religious leaders (68%) and police and law enforcement actors (46%) are the predominant avenues through which community members seek to address protection concerns and resolve disputes.

Documentation



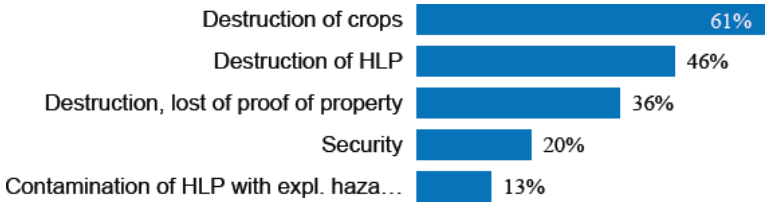
Only 9% of respondents reported access to IDP cards highlighting significant gaps in civil documentation. In Telalek, access to marriage certificates is 68%, birth certificates is 66%, and proof of ownership 19%. in Telalek, the main obstacles are lack of awareness of civil registration offices and unaffordable fees (both 57%), distance to registration offices (24%), and illiteracy (24%).

Top 5 protection risks community members encounter because of lacking documentation

- In Hari Zone (Zone 5), the lack of civil documentation mainly leads to difficulties in accessing humanitarian assistance and basic services such as banking, as well as restrictions on movement and challenges in securing employment.

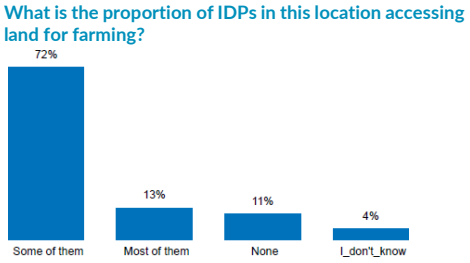
Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

Top 5 issues faced by IDP returnees regarding housing, land and properties



Destruction of crops, housing and property, destructions of proof of properties and contamination of HLP with explosive ordinances have been reported as the four main HLP issues faced by IDP returnees.

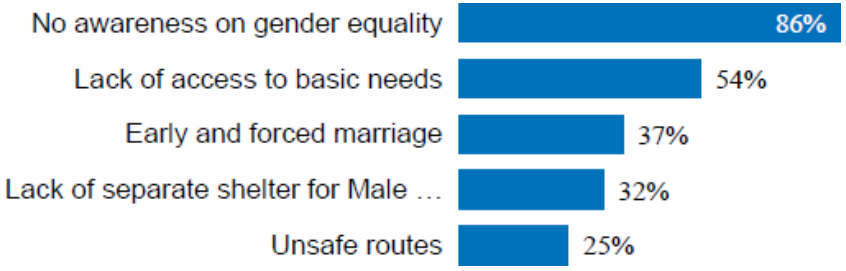
Proportion of IDP returnees in Hari zone accessing land for farming



The majority of respondents said that IDP returnees do not have access to land for farming. Where 72% of respondents reported to know only some IDP returnees having access to farmland.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Top 5 factors currently increasing the risk of GBV and other forms of violence

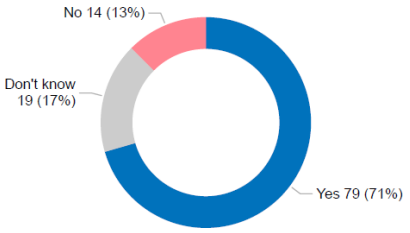


Limited awareness of gender equality, poor access to basic needs, and early and forced marriage were the main factors increasing GBV risks, followed by unsafe routes and women's exclusion from decision-making.

Access to specialized services for GBV survivors

According to the findings, 71% of respondents (79) indicated that GBV survivors currently have access to specialized services in their locations. However, 13% (14) reported that such services are not available, highlighting notable service gaps across several areas. Additionally, 17% (19) of respondents were unsure about the availability of specialized GBV services, indicating gap in community awareness of existing support mechanisms.

Do GBV survivors have currently access to specialized services in your location?

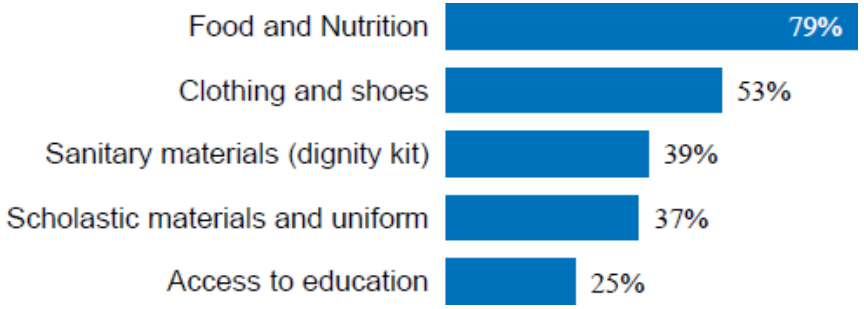


Resources:

The framework and the Questionnaires of key informant interviews with IDP returnees are based on the following global resources on internal displacement: the UN Secretary's General Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and the Interagency Durable Solutions Indicator Library

Child Protection

Top 5 protection issues children (boys and girls) encounter

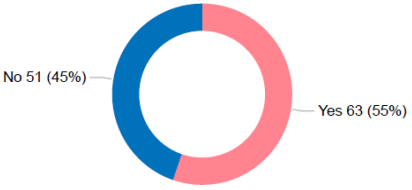


The analysis shows that food and nutrition (79%) and clothing and shoes (53%) are the most pressing protection issues faced by children. Other key challenges include limited access to sanitary materials (39 %), scholastic materials and uniforms (37%), and access to education (30%) highlighting persistent gaps in meeting children's basic needs and wellbeing.

Explosive Ordnance

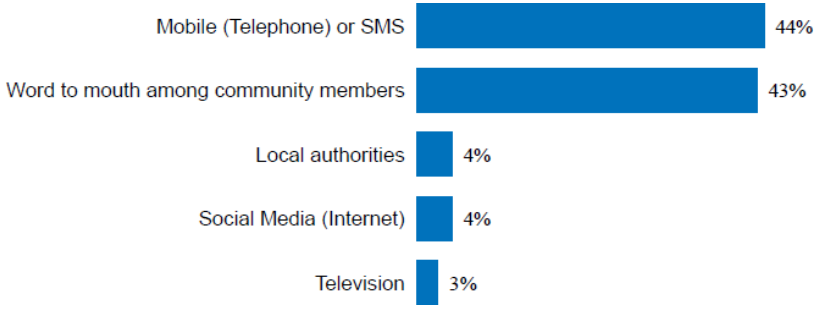
Are you aware of any incidents related to unexploded ordnance/UXO or other explosive remnants of war during the last 3 months?

55% of respondents (63) reported being aware of incidents related to unexploded ordnance (UXO) or other explosive remnants of war in the past three months.



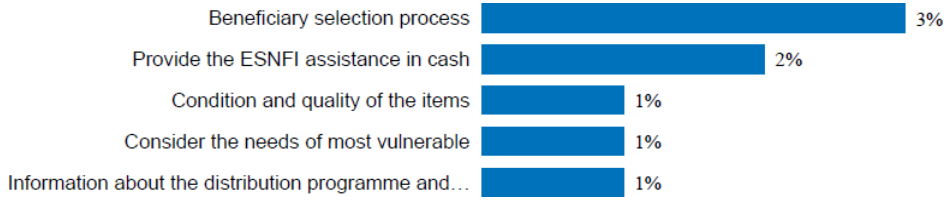
Access to information, community representation and relations

Major communication channels that people receive information



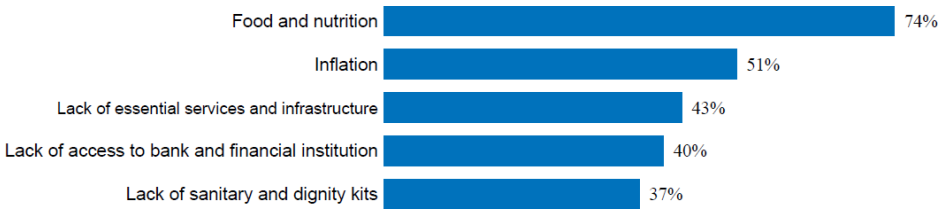
Shelter and NFI

Things to improve during shelter and Non-Food Item assistance



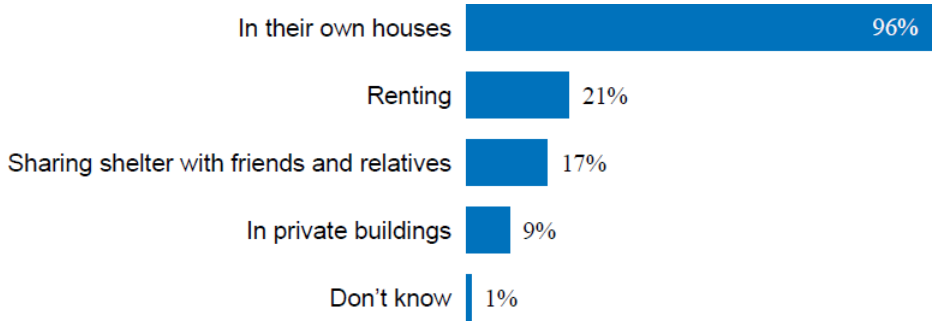
3% of respondents said that beneficiary selection process during NFI assistance needs to be improved, followed by a request of ESNFI assistance to be provided in cash (2%) and better information sharing about distribution programmes (1%). Additional concerns include the quality of items provided (1%) and prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable (1%).

Top 5 protection issues IDP returnees are facing (Multiple selects)

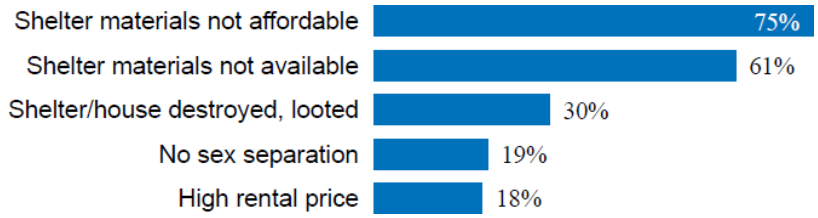


The analysis shows **food and nutrition** as the most pressing concern (74%), followed by inflation (51), lack of essential services and infrastructure (43%), lack of bank and financial institutions (40%) and a lack of sanitary and dignity kits (37%). Other key challenges include **lack of documents**.

Where IDP returnees are currently living



Issues IDP returnees are facing with housing



Partners

CRITICAL NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthen basic services and humanitarian assistance

IDPs and returnees continue to face major gaps in food, water, health, and essential items. Responses should prioritize older persons, persons with disabilities, and female-headed households, with strong AGD-sensitive targeting.

Promote livelihood recovery and self-reliance

Loss of farmland, livestock, and income sources limits self-reliance. Early recovery support, cash-for-work, livestock restocking, and small business grants should be scaled up to reduce negative coping strategies.

Expand civil documentation and legal support

Many IDPs lack essential ID and property documents. Mobile civil registration and legal aid should be increased to enable document replacement, ownership verification, and access to services.

Address GBV and child protection risks

Women and children face risks of early marriage, violence, harassment, and school dropout. Actors should expand safe spaces, dignity kits, psychosocial support, and community awareness on FGM and child marriage

Support housing, land, and property (HLP) recovery

Widespread damage to homes and land requires targeted shelter repair, reconstruction, and support for ownership verification to prevent secondary displacement.

Enhance access to justice and governance

Community disputes are largely handled through customary systems. Strengthening links with formal mechanisms and improving inclusion of women and youth will enhance fairness and access to justice.

Advance explosive ordnance risk education and clearance

UXO/ERW threats persist in grazing, farming, and school areas. Mine-risk education and clearance activities should be expanded, prioritizing high-risk locations.

Improve communication and community participation

Limited information flow reduces access to services. Strengthening two-way communication through SMS, community leaders, and feedback channels will improve awareness and accountability.

Donor support

UNHCR would like to thank the European Union for its support.