OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The South Wollo Zone in Amhara Region continues to host a significant population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) affected by prolonged conflict and insecurity. Displacement in Tehuledere and Ambasel woredas remains largely protracted, with IDPs residing in both collective sites and host communities. This pressure on already limited services and resources has increased humanitarian needs and exacerbated protection risks for displaced and host populations alike.

To better understand the evolving protection situation and service gaps, a protection monitoring and solutions assessment was conducted in August 2025 under the EU IM3 project's Protection Monitoring and Solutions (PMS) component. The assessment focused on core protection risks, access to basic services, coping mechanisms, civil documentation, GBV, child protection, social cohesion and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), with the aim of informing coordinated, area-based responses and durable solutions programming both for EUIM3 partners and other humanitarian actors.

The assessment has been conducted through UNHCR's funded partner the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOTC – DICAC) in partnership with EUIM3 partners and government stakeholders. The assessment covers Ambasel and Tehuledere Woredas.

The report provides a detailed analysis of protection needs and service gaps in South Wollo Zone, Amhara region. The assessment identifies individuals and groups with specific needs and offers actionable recommendations for support based on both qualitative and quantitative data.

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

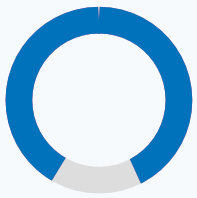
METHODOLOGY & KEY FINDINGS

TOTAL INTERVIEWS

712 191(Ambasel) and Tehuledere) Key Informants (KIs)

94% IDPs | 6% Host

GENDER BREAKDOWN



49% Female

51% Male

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Heads of Households (53%)

Community Reps (14%)

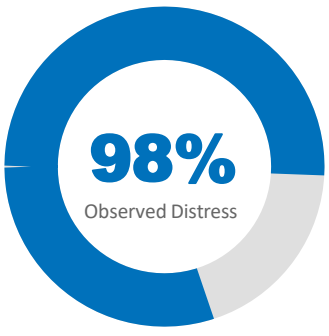
Volunteers (11%)

Religious Leaders (8%)

Disability Reps (5%)

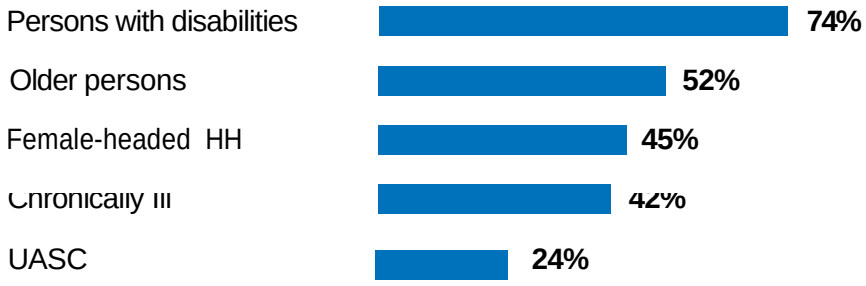
Photo: Key informant interviews in South Wollo

MENTAL HEALTH & PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



Almost all of the key informants (98%) reported to have observed signs of distress among different populations in their locations.

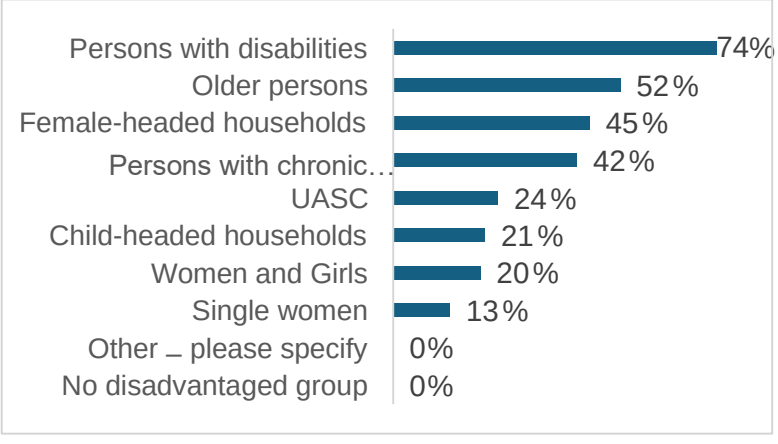
GROUPS FACING GREATEST CHALLENGES



MOST AFFECTED GROUPS:
Women (IDP), older persons (IDP), followed by persons with disabilities (IDP) and girls (IDP) have been reported as the group showing more signs of distress.

ACCESS TO FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND BASIC NEEDS

Persons with disabilities, older persons and female headed households are facing the greatest challenges or particularly disadvantaged in accessing assistance and services.



OBSTACLES TO ACCESS BASIC NEEDS

FOOD:
Lack of food (69%), no cash (60%), irregular supply (50%)

HEALTH:
No medicine (68%), logistics (44%), can't afford fees (43%)

EDUCATION:
Safety (68%), distance (66%), cannot afford scholastic items (64%)

WASH:
Water shortage (41%), contamination (38%), latrine and shower shortage (29%)

EDUCATION BARRIERS:
In South Wollo Zone, access to food, health and education remain top challenges. Children face substantial barriers to accessing education, with safety concerns cited by 68% of respondents, long distances to school (66%) and the inability to afford scholastic materials (64%).

COPING STRATEGIES

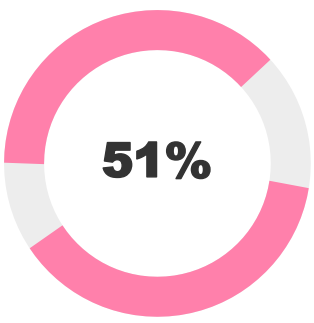
	Sometimes	Always
Buying food on credit	78%	12%
Begging	69%	9%
Withdrawing children	67%	7%
Child Labor	55%	13%

Selling humanitarian assistance (17% of respondents) and child labor (13%) appear as the most common coping strategies (highest rate of Always).

In South Wollo, reliance on harmful coping strategies is severe, with 69% begging, 78% borrowing food or money, and 67% withdrawing children from school at least sometimes. Notably, several practices are used frequently, including child labour (13% always; 55% sometimes) and selling humanitarian assistance (17% always; 71% some-times). These trends highlight the urgent need for stronger protection services and livelihood support to reduce reliance on negative coping strategies.

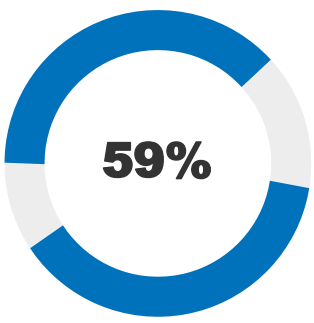
SAFETY AND SECURITY: FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Women & Girls



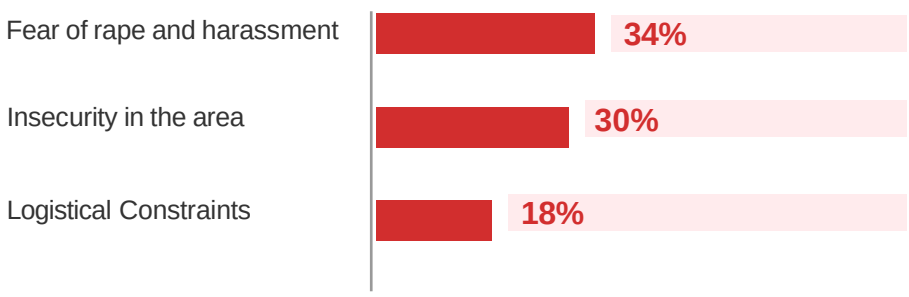
49% Restricted

Men & Boys



41% Restricted

Reasons Limiting Movement (Women & Girls)



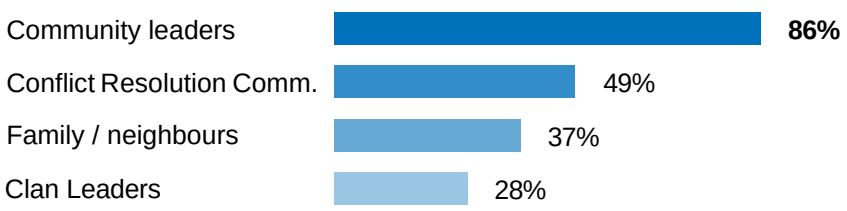
49% of respondents reported that women and girls have mobility restrictions, while 41% reported that men and boys are not always able to move freely. Although 51% of women and girls and 59% of men and boys can move freely, the gap highlights ongoing protection concerns, particularly for women and girls.

The main reasons limiting freedom of movement for women and girls are:

- Fear of rape and harassment: reported by 34% of total respondents
- Insecurity in the area: reported by 30% of the respondents.
- Logistical constraints: reported by 18% of the respondents.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE & RESOLUTION

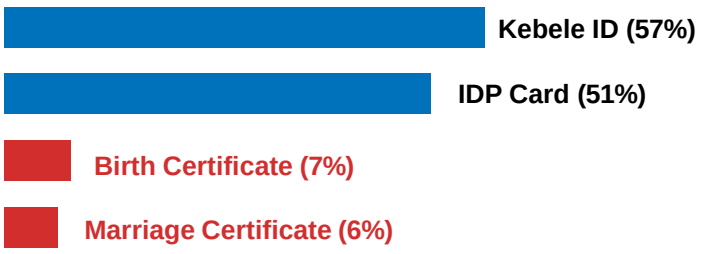
Who is the most likely person or authority that people would approach with protection concerns problems and disputes in your location?



The analysis shows, in South Wollo, most IDPs rely on community structures and leaders (86%) as the primary avenue for addressing protection concerns and resolving disputes. Conflict resolution committees (49%), family and neighbors (37%), and clan or religious leaders (28% and 24% resp.) also play important roles. The data indicates heavy reliance and trust on informal justice systems for dispute resolution than the formal systems.

DOCUMENTATION

Documents accessed by IDPs:



The assessment shows access to civil documentation among IDPs in South Wollo is largely limited to basic forms of identification, with 57% able to obtain a Kebele ID and 51% an IDP card. Access to key legal documents such as birth (7%) and marriage certificates (6%) and other forms of documentation remains very low, indicating the need to strengthen civil documentation services.

RISKS DUE TO LACK OF DOCUMENTATION

Top 5 protection risks community members encounter because. of lacking documentation.

Lack of documentation in South Wollo significantly restricts IDPs' mobility and access to services, with 77% reporting difficulty moving and 70% unable to open bank accounts or secure employment further exacerbating their vulnerability.

Additionally, 69% face challenges accessing humanitarian assistance and 60% struggle to obtain medical services, compounding protection and livelihood risks.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) RISKS

Top factors increasing the risk of GBV and other forms of violence:

Gender-based violence risks in South Wollo are driven primarily by lack of access to basic needs (54%), followed by overcrowded collective centres (43%) and unsafe routes (34%). Additional factors such as lack of separate shelters (28%) and low awareness of gender equality (19%) further heighten protection risks for women and girls.

HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY (HLP)

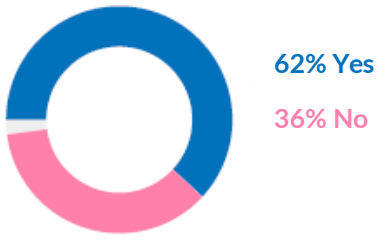
Status of Returnee Houses:

49%
Most Fully Destroyed

43%
Most Partially Destroyed

Housing damage among returnees in South Wollo is extensive, with 49% reporting that most houses are fully destroyed and 19% that some are fully destroyed, while 22% reported no destruction. Partial damage is also widespread, with 43% indicating most houses and 30% some houses are partially destroyed, underscoring major shelter needs.

Access to Specialized GBV Services:



Access to specialized services for GBV survivors in South Wollo remains uneven, with 62% reporting that services are available. However, 36% indicated no access and 3% were unsure, highlighting persistent service gaps and the need to strengthen coverage and awareness.

Access to Agricultural Land:

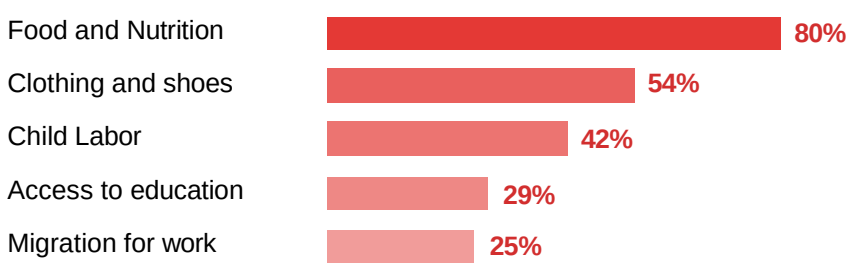
Access to agricultural land for IDPs in South Wollo is very limited, with 85% reporting no access to land for farming. Only a small minority reported partial or full access (3% and 4%), underscoring major livelihood constraints.

RESOURCES & METHODOLOGY

The framework and the questionnaires of key informant interviews (KIIs) with IDPs and 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

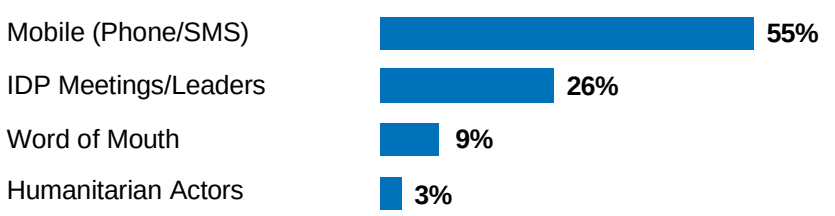
Top 5 protection issues children (boys and girls) encounter:



Children in South Wollo face severe protection challenges, with food and nutrition insecurity affecting 80% of communities. Significant proportion also reported lack of clothing and shoes (54%), child labor (42%), barriers to access to education (29%) and migration for work (25%) reflecting deep economic and social vulnerability.

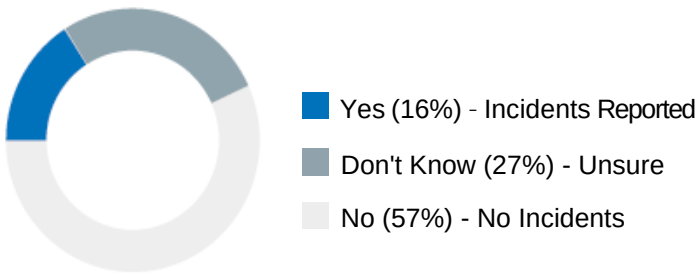
ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Major communication channels:



Access to information in South Wollo is primarily driven by mobile phones or SMS (55%), highlighting the importance of digital communication channels. Community-based mechanisms such as IDP meetings or leaders (26%) remain key sources, while reliance on humanitarian actors, social media, and television is limited, indicating gaps in diversified information access.

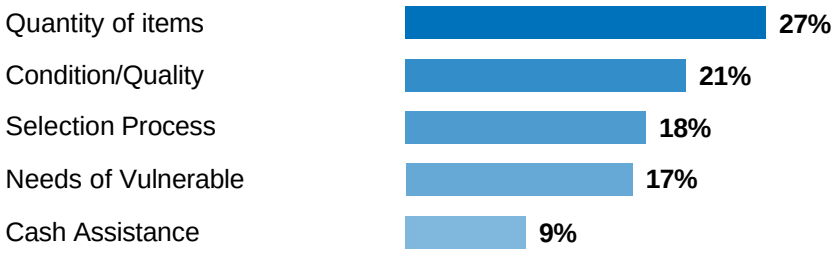
EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE



Awareness of landmines or unexploded ordnance in South Wollo is mixed, with 16% reporting the presence of explosive hazards in their location. While 57% indicated no awareness, the 27% who were unsure highlights the need for continued risk education and monitoring.

SHELTER & NFI

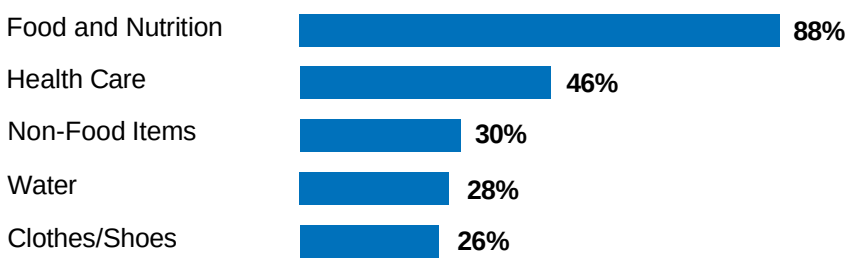
Things to improve during assistance:



IDPs in South Wollo highlighted the need to improve the quantity of shelter and NFI items (27%), followed by better condition and quality of items (21%). Strengthening the beneficiary selection process (18%) and better considering the needs of the most vulnerable (17%) were also key priorities. Provision of cash assistance was also mentioned as one area to be strengthened (9%).

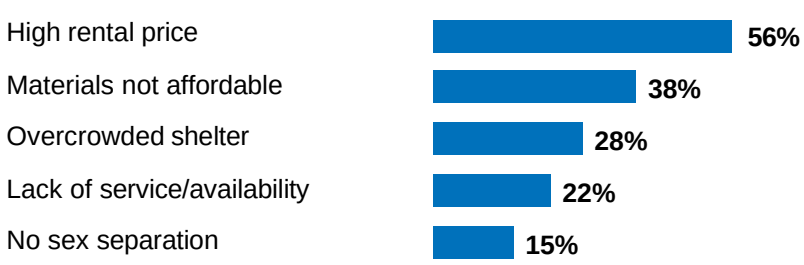
KEY RETURN CONTEXT & NEEDS

Top 5 Protection Issues (IDP Returnees)



The community's top concerns center on food security (88%), healthcare and medicine (46%), non-food items (30%), alongside water (28%). Additional needs, such as clothes and shoes (26%), reflect ongoing vulnerability across multiple sectors.

Issues with Housing (Returnees)



IDP returnees in South Wollo face serious housing challenges, with 56% affected by high rental prices and 38% unable to afford shelter materials. Overcrowding (28%) and limited shelter services (22%) further under-mine safe and dignified housing.

Most Urgent Shelter & NFI Needs (Returnees)

PRIORITIZED SECTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS

BASIC NEEDS, MHPSS & EDUCATION

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Limited access to food, healthcare and water
- Priority needs: food, dignity kits, employment, child protection

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Expand food and cash assistance
- Support education and MHPSS services

LIVELIHOOD & COPING

CRITICAL NEEDS
- High reliance on harmful coping mechanisms: begging, child labour, school withdrawal and selling assistance
- Very limited access to agricultural land

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Scale up livelihood and cash-for-work interventions
- Target women, youth, and persons with disabilities

JUSTICE & DOCUMENTATION

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Limited access to civil documentation beyond Kebele ID and IDP cards
- Documentation gaps restricting movement

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Provide mobile civil registration
- Strengthen legal aid information outreach

SHELTER, HLP & NFIs

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Extensive shelter damage among returnees
- Limited access to land and shelter support

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Strengthen HLP services
- Expand awareness campaigns

GBV PREVENTION

CRITICAL NEEDS
- GBV risks driven by lack of basic needs, overcrowding, unsafe routes
- Uneven access to specialized GBV services

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Establish and strengthen safe spaces
- Improve access to GBV case management and referrals

CHILD PROTECTION & EORE

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Severe food insecurity, child labour, school dropout, emotional distress
- Presence or uncertainty around explosive hazards

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Support child protection and school retention
- Conduct explosive ordnance risk education and awareness

Partner

Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC)

Donor support

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European Union