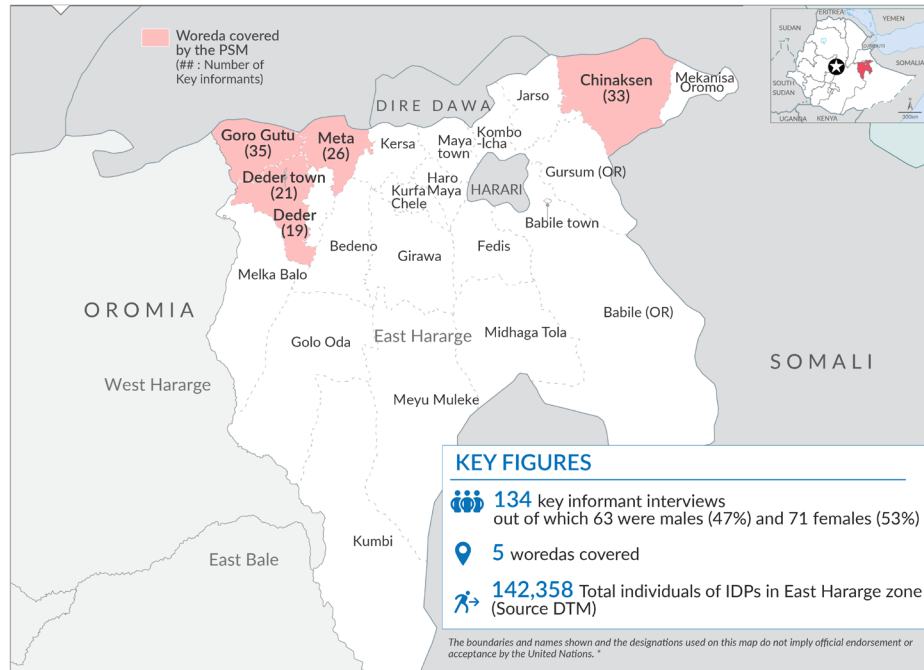


**OVERVIEW**



This Protection Monitoring Report reflects the views of key informants across East Hararghe Zone, an effort that was achieved with the commitment of UNHCR and its partners to hear the voices of displaced communities. East Hararghe zone is one of the areas hosting 149,200 IDPs and 201,553 IDP returnees and drought affected communities within Oromia region. These IDPs have been displaced since the conflict between the Somali and Oromo communities in September 2017, and have been reliant on humanitarian aid. Over time, the humanitarian support for the response has reduced.

**Summary of the key findings**

- The major protection concerns of IDPs include food insecurity, limited access to basic services, the risk of eviction, barriers to access health and education services, inadequate wash facilities, and various negative coping mechanisms utilized by the community.

- Vulnerabilities experienced by female-headed households, older persons, and persons with disabilities, necessitate tailored assistance and community support.
- Gender Based Violence (GBV) is identified as a key protection risk for the IDPs, exacerbated by overcrowded shelters and lack of access to basic services.
- The need for child protection services has been stressed by the community given the negative coping mechanisms including child labour and school dropout.
- Lack of documentation among IDPs, limits access to essential services and protection.
- The prevalence of psychological distress among the community, especially among women, underscores the urgent need for psychosocial support and holistic interventions to address the multifaceted needs of IDPs.
- The IDPs have been in a protracted displacement for more than seven years living under difficult conditions with various protection concerns. In the absence of livelihood opportunities, they continued to rely on the dwindling humanitarian aid putting them in a precarious situation. Durable solutions is critical to enable them to live a dignified life, exercise their full rights and attain self-reliance.**





**KEY FINDINGS**

**Access to Fundamental Rights and Basic Needs**

**Female headed households and elderly persons face the greatest challenges or are particularly disadvantaged in accessing assistance and services.**

The top three categories of persons with specific needs facing the greatest challenges by location are female headed households 69%, older persons 54% and persons with disability 52%. The vulnerability arises from assistance not tailored to their needs and being marginalized in the community. 36% of key informants in Deder woreda identified inability to work to support themselves as a key factor for vulnerability. For these reasons, the abovementioned groups need special attention in the locations where their needs are overlooked.

## Obstacles to access basic needs

Sector	Top 3 obstacles <i>Percentages are out of the total Key informant</i>	Woreda variations
<b>Food</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of food (54%)</li> <li>Irregular supply of food (44%)</li> <li>Drought (38%)</li> </ul>	Drought is major barrier identified in Chinaksen Woreda
<b>Health</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of medicine (63%)</li> <li>Unable to afford medical fees (60%)</li> <li>Armed elements in the way (14%)</li> </ul>	The expiry of health insurance has made it difficult for IDPs to afford medical fees in Goro Gutu and Meta woredas. Ongoing conflict is a major obstacle in Chinaksen.
<b>Education</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to afford scholastic materials (92%)</li> <li>Insufficient learning materials (41%)</li> <li>Long distance to school (22%)</li> </ul>	Distance from school is a major obstacle in Deder and Goro Gutu. Language barrier is a major challenge in Chinaksen.
<b>WASH</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bathing facilities do not have lighting (44%)</li> <li>Insufficient potable water (34%)</li> <li>Insufficient water storage capacity (32%)</li> </ul>	For Chinaksen and Deder woredas, insufficient water supply was a major concern.

The IDPs reported various obstacles in accessing basic services including lack of food assistance for several months. This ranges from 3 months in Meta woreda to one year and a half in Deder Woreda. The unaffordability of medical fees in Goro Gutu and Meta Woredas was identified as the main barrier for accessing health services. In Chinaksen Woreda, the ongoing conflict is reported as a major concern. In Meta and Goro Gutu woredas, the community-based health insurance scheme has expired and IDPs reported they were not able to pay the required renewal fee thereby limiting their access to health services. In Chinaksen Woreda, 48% reported language barrier to access education. In all woredas lack of food and school feeding was another gap identified.

## Coping strategies to meet basic needs.

Harmful coping strategies impacting children (**begging, child labour and withdrawal of children from school**) appear as the most common coping strategies.

Begging, child labour and withdrawing children from school were reported as most prevalent coping mechanism by respondents in East Hararghe Zone. The harmful coping mechanisms varies from woreda to woreda. 46% IDPs in Meta use early marriage as a coping mechanism sometimes. 52% respondents in Goro Gutu always use child labour as a coping mechanism. Majority of respondents sometimes use child labour as a coping mechanism. In Meta, Deder and Goro Gutu most of the respondents use begging as a coping mechanism.

IDPs have been in displacement for over six years and the most vulnerable families are finding it difficult to access enough food to meet their needs. The IDPs are not able to afford scholastic materials and uniforms. The IDP families send their boys to do farming and girls to work as domestic workers, and they send money back to support their families. IDP children face heightened risk of GBV as well as exploitative practices as they work long hours away from their homes.

Buying food on credit or through borrowed money from relatives and friends was highlighted by respondents, which is 68% in Deder, 66% in Goro Gutu, 66% in Meta. The respondents who reported to have never bought food on credit or borrowed money was because the host community refuse to loan them due to inability to pay back the loans. In all woredas except Chinaksen, most of the respondents sell the humanitarian support they get to buy what they need mostly food.

Coping mechanism	Always	Sometimes	Never	Don't know
Begging	39%	43%	18%	
Child labor	36%	43%	22%	
Buying food on credit or through borrowed money from relatives and friends	31%	30%	40%	
Selling humanitarian assistance received	31%	25%	43%	1%
Withdrew children from school	29%	60%	10%	1%
Changing place of residence and accommodation to reduce expenses	18%	13%	59%	10%
Sold house and/or land	10%	16%	68%	7%
Early Marriage for girls	8%	28%	62%	2%
Illegal activities (such as theft)	1%	19%	74%	6%
Transactional sex	1%	13%	78%	8%

## Safety and Security

Majority of the IDPs have no impediment for movement. Of those who faced impediment for movement, men reported more impediment for movement. 21% men and boys and 11% women and girls reported some impediments. For the men, the major concerns are fear of arrest, insecurity, and lack of documentation to travel in the area. For the women, the major concern is insecurity in the area particularly in Chinaksen Woreda. 40% of the respondents stated that there is a possibility of eviction from their current living space.

## Documentation

Majority of the IDPs have IDP identification cards and Kebele ID cards. 78 % of respondents have kebele IDs and 43% have IDP cards. Less than 15 % have birth certificate and marriage certificate. The major barriers for access to documentation include knowledge gap among local authorities (33%), unaffordability of fees (26 %), lack of knowledge about civil registration (22%), and unavailability of civil registration offices (22%). For women, unaffordability of fees is the major barrier to access documentation 32%.

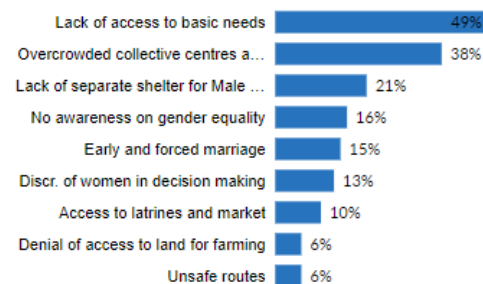
33% of men and 28% of women reported that they have not faced risks due to lack of documentation. Top three risks IDPs encounter as a result of lacking

documentation are difficulty accessing medical services, risk of detention, and limited freedom of movement. The major risk identified by women is risk of detention.

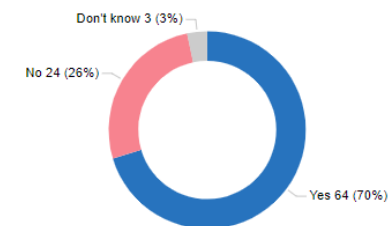
## Housing, Land and Property (HLP)

55% of respondents reported that none of the IDPs have access to farmland. This is due to the fact that they are not able to go back to their place of origin and access their land. 26% of respondents reported IDPs have some access to farmland. In Goro Gutu and Meta, most IDPs do not have access to farmland.

## Gender-Based Violence



Factors increasing the risk of GBV



Do GBV survivors have currently access to specialized services?

The factors that increase women and girls' susceptibility to GBV according to 49% of the respondents is lack of access to basic services. Overcrowded collective shelters (30%) and lack of separate shelter for men and women (21%) were the other risk factors. For Goro Gutu, overcrowded shelters were the primary risk factor for GBV. This is because the shelters are collective sites, most of which government facilities, constructed not for housing purposes. IDPs shelters constructed with plastic sheet are damaged by the wind and heavy rain. Therefore, most shelters do not provide safety and protection.

70% of the key informants in Goro Gutu Woreda noted that survivors have access to GBV special services. Over 70% of the respondents with the exception of Meta reported GBV as a major protection concern for them.

#### Protection risks by location

- Overcrowding in the collective center: reported by 51% of respondents in Goro Gutu woreda and 48% respondents in Deder Woreda.
- Early marriage: reported by 27% of respondents in Chinaksen Woreda.
- Lack of separate shelter for male and female: raised by 33% of respondents in Chinaksen Woreda.
- Access to public places such as latrines and market: raised by 25% of respondents in Deder Woreda.
- Discrimination of women in decision making: reported by 29% respondent in Goro Gutu Woreda.

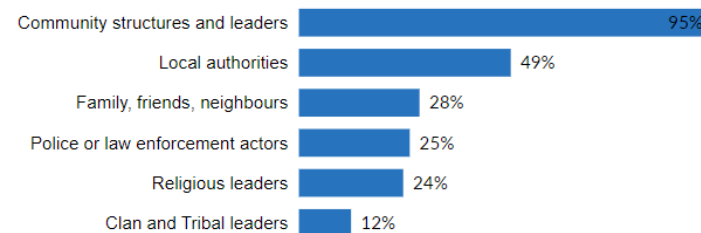
### Child Protection

The top 5 most significant problems children face identified by key informants are lack of food (73%), child labour (50%), clothing and shoes (45%), lack of child friendly space (42%) and lack of scholastic material and uniform (36%). In Deder Woreda, the major child protection concern is child labour according to 70% of the respondents. In Chinaksen, 70% of the respondents raised lack of clothing and 42% absence of Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) as top child protection concerns. In Goro Gutu and Meta, lack of scholastic materials are the other concerns raised.

48% respondent indicated the presence of unaccompanied and separated children (UA/SC) among the IDPs. Some of the children were separated from their parents because their parents were deceased while others were left behind by parents looking for a job. These children are being taken care of by relatives. In Deder Woreda, UA/SC live alone and work to support themselves.

### Access to justice and conflict resolution assistance

**Most likely person or authority that people would approach with protection concerns, problems, and disputes.**



95% of the respondents reported to have resorted to community structures and leaders to resolve protection concerns and conflicts among themselves while 49% reported to have approached the local authority. In Chinaksen Woreda, the respondents reported to have mainly relied on clan leaders and family after the IDP representatives to solve conflict and address protection concerns.

### Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

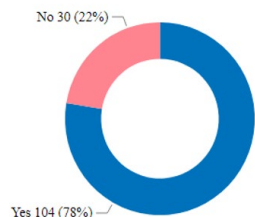
The top three reported obstacles to access shelter and housing for the community are lack of shelter (76%), overcrowded shelter (67%) and lack of shelter material (33%). In Deder and Goro Gutu, overcrowded shelter is the main concern.

Most urgent shelter and NFI needs are blankets, mattress, and shoes and clothing. In Chinaksen Woreda, plastic sheets were identified as an urgent need as the shelters constructed with plastic sheets are damaged by the strong wind.

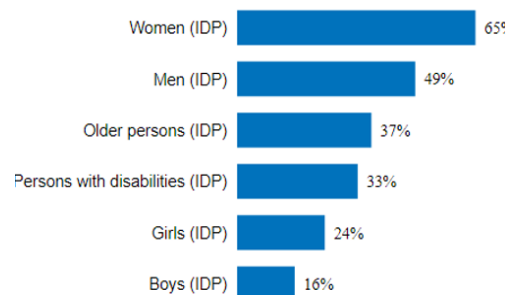
61% of the respondents reported that they have not received shelter and NFI items. Out of the ones who received NFIs in the last 6 months, 76 % said children, women and persons with specific needs were prioritized.

## **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)**

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



Which persons/groups within the IDP community show more signs of distress (multiple choices)

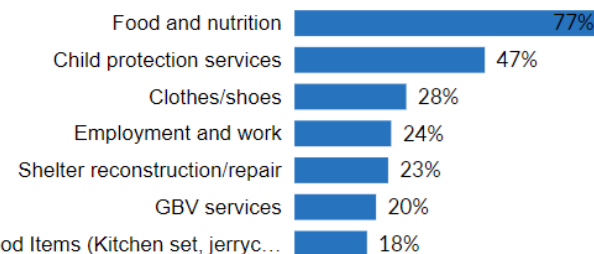


78% of respondents reported that they have observed signs of distress among the IDP community. Over 80% of respondents in Meta and Goro Gutu reported stress.

All parts of the community including children have shown signs of psychological distress. Among the community, women are the most stressed (65%). In Chinaksen, older persons (50%) and persons with disabilities (46%) have shown signs of psychological distress. The response is split nearly half regarding the availability of psychosocial support among the community. Lack of psychosocial support within the community exacerbated the psychological distress experienced by the IDPs.

### **Priority needs of the IDPs**

Food and nutrition (77%), child protection services (47%) and employment (28%) are reported to be the top three priority needs. Among the priority needs, relocation to another site with a better service was reported as key for Goro Gutu for 12 % of respondents.



## **Social Cohesion**

60% of respondents expressed positive relations with the host community, 27 % neutral relations, and 26% negative relations. Deder and Goro Gutu woredas expressed more negative relations. The cause of this negative relations is increasing cost of living, job competition, humanitarian assistance not targeting the host community, and competition for access to natural resources.

## **CRITICAL NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Access to food:** In all sites of the four woredas of East Hararghe, shortage of food provision was the critical gap that IDPs in collective, relocation site and in host community reported. IDPs have not received food assistance for several months. Even when food assistance is provided it is irregular. Meanwhile, the IDPs have resorted to negative coping mechanisms such as child labour, withdrawing children from school, begging, and selling of humanitarian aid to sustain their families. These coping mechanisms adversely affect the educational performance of IDP children as well as their physical and mental wellbeing. Additionally, in analysing the needs of the family, food takes priority, and the unaffordability of scholastic materials and uniform prevents children from attending school.

**Access to basic services:** Lack of WASH facilities and limited access to clean water is concerning considering the current cholera outbreak in these woredas. Lack of lighting at latrines is a risk factor for exposure to GBV. IDPs are finding health services unaffordable and medication unavailable. Advocacy should be

enhanced to ensure IDPs, being vulnerable groups, have access to the community-based health insurance scheme for free.

**GBV prevention, risk-mitigation, and response:** GBV is a concern for majority of the respondents. Lack of access to basic services as well as overcrowded and congested collective sites in the four woredas are the main factors that increase women and girls' exposure to GBV. The sites they are occupying for more than six years are government structures such as the agriculture and water offices, and facilities including food store, which are not conducive for living. IDPs are living in these sites with an increasing population growth. Most of the respondents reported signs of mental distress among the IDP population, particularly women. Furthermore, engaging the community on women/girls' empowerment programmes is crucial to address early marriage & increase the role of women in decision making.

**Child protection:** IDP children have limited access to education, and most are engaged in daily labour away from their family. Children are at risk of exploitation and abuse while working to support their families. Design programs or initiatives to engage the caregivers, parents into sustained livelihood/income generating activities to mitigate the risk of children living under their care from being exposed to exploitation in order to fulfil their basic needs. Enhancing the availability of education and job opportunities for child-headed families and single parents can help decrease child labour and other risks to children's well-being. Provision of scholastic materials and school uniforms will lessen the burden on IDP families and encourage school retention.

**Shelter and NFI:** Due to heavy rain and wind, the IDPs shelters have been damaged. IDPs sell the NFIs they receive leading to reduced quality of life and exposure to diseases. Additionally, the IDPs need NFIs such as blankets, sleeping mat and cloths. The IDPs reported selling items such as underwear, sanitary pad, blankets and sleeping mats to buy food.

**Durable solutions:** The IDPs are living in protracted displacement for nearly seven years. They are not able to return to their place of origin nor are they able to locally integrate in the host community. The IDPs do not feel it is safe to go back to their place of origin. They fear for their safety. The root cause of the conflict that caused their displacement has not been addressed. The IDPs have

lost their means of livelihood, their shelters were destroyed, and their property looted.

In some woredas, risk of eviction has been reported by key informants. They do not have access to farmland and livelihood opportunities, hence are forced to rely on humanitarian aid for their sustenance. This has resulted in uncertainty about the future for the IDPs as well as psychological stress. Durable solutions are needed to address the protection concerns of the IDPs and enable them to live in dignity.

**Peacebuilding and peaceful coexistence:** Negative attitude towards the IDPs from the host community was reported in some woredas. Promotion of community dialogue is needed to ensure good relations between the IDPs and host community including with religious leaders and community representatives of both IDPs and host communities with the goal of informing IDPs to respect the norms and values of host communities and for host communities to respect the rights and protection needs of IDPs. This will boost peaceful co-existence between IDPs and host communities.

## METHODOLOGY

This protection monitoring report is based on the harmonized Protection and Solutions Monitoring and (PSM) Tools. UNHCR and its protection cluster partners IRC, IOM and IMC collected the data in March 20-30, 2024.

The report covers mostly collective IDP sites in four woredas namely Meta, Deder, Goro Gutu and Chinaksen in East Hararghe Zone. The assessment covered 17 IDP sites in four woredas. These include Chelenko Food store and new extension sites in **Meta woreda**; Karamile, Ali Sheko, Agricultural Office, and Ganda Wagayehu sites in **Goro Gutu Woreda**; EDDC, Woreda Water Bureau, New Golmasa, Golmasa, Youth center, and Fadiso site in **Deder Woreda**; and Merer site, Tiro Gudo site, Biyo Gababtu site, Karaloga site and Orda 02 site in **Chinaksen Woreda**.

Data and information for this report were collected through **134 Key Informant interviews (KIIs)** out of which 63 were males (47%) and 71 females (53%).

Of those interviewed, 60% of the key informants were representatives of the internally displaced persons (IDP) community, while 20% were local authorities from organizations like the Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO), Women and Children Affairs Bureau, Education Bureau, and other relevant sector offices.

## Partners



## Donor support

UNHCR would like to thank the following donors for their support:

