OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

The North Wollo Zone of Amhara region faces serious challenges caused by economic hardship, environmental changes, and conflict, which have increased the vulnerability of local communities. To better understand these issues, the EU-IM3 project conducted a Joint Protection Monitoring and Solutions Assessment from August 19–23, 2025, in Woldiya Town and Habru Woreda.

These areas were chosen to represent both urban and rural settings. Using the Kobo Tool for data collection, the assessment surveyed 610 individuals to identify protection concerns and service gaps affecting displaced people and host communities. The findings aim to guide EU IM3 partners to consider protection at the core of their sectoral responses, and inform humanitarian actors in designing effective, coordinated responses with local and international partners.

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

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This Protection Monitoring and Solutions (PMS) 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 and service gaps in North 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.

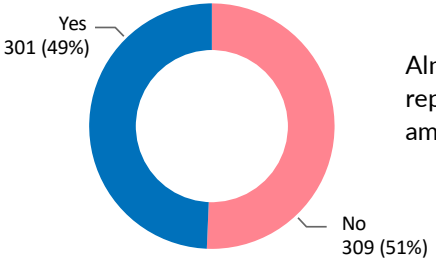
- **610 Key Informants Interviews (KIs) were conducted:** 324 female (53%) and 286 male (47%). Of those interviewed, 50% were IDPs, 45% host community/affected population, and 3% IDP returnees.
- The assessment covered **2 Woredas**: Habru and Woldiya town in North Wollo Zone, conducted from August 19-23, 2025.
- Most respondents were Heads of households (68.5%), **community volunteers** (18.4%) and with smaller shares from **community representatives** (5%), **religious leaders** (3%), representative of associations for persons with disabilities (2%), and **local authorities (1%)**.

Picture: Key informant interview in North Wollo

FINDINGS OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

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

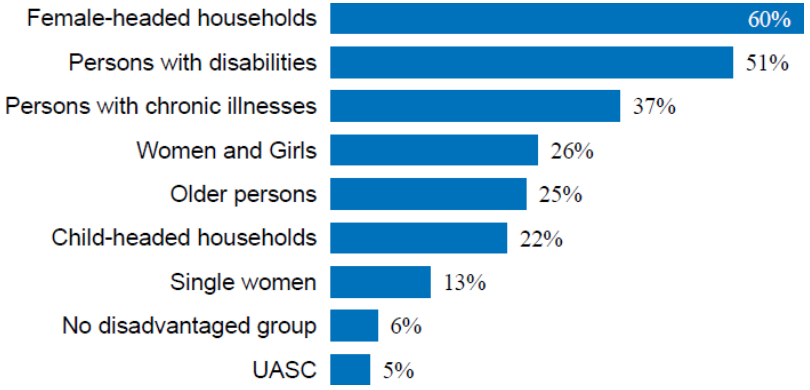


Almost half of the key informants (49%) reported to have observed signs of distress among different populations in their locations.

Women (IDPs), persons with disabilities (IDPs), followed by girls (IDPs) and older persons (IDPs) have been reported as the group showing more signs of distress

Access to Fundamental Rights and Basic Needs

Female-headed households 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*	▪ Inflation /can't afford to buy food (79%) ▪ Lack of food (43%) ▪ Ongoing conflict and insecurity (35%)
Health	▪ Can't afford medical fees (66%) ▪ Lack of medicine / medical supplies (**53%**) ▪ Ongoing conflict (**39%**)
Education	▪ Can't afford scholastic materials (60%) ▪ Not enough learning material (50%) ▪ Long distance to school (22%)
WASH	▪ Insufficient water storage capacity (33%) ▪ Lack of sanitary pad (30%) ▪ Price increase of soaps (29%)

Access to food, health and education remain top challenges. Education access in North Wollo is largely constrained by cost and lack of learning materials (60% and 50%), with distance, discrimination, and safety concerns (15% and 22%) further limiting access.

Coping strategies to meet basic needs

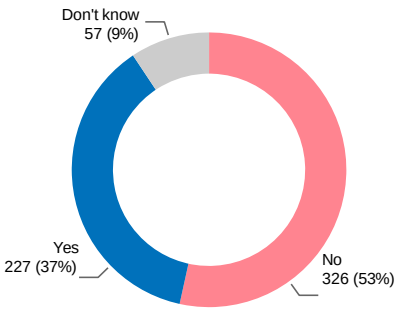
Coping Mechanism	Always	Don't know	Never	Sometimes
Begging	26%	3%	7%	63%
Buying food on credit or through borrowed money from relatives and friends	15%	5%	6%	74%
Changing place of residence and accommodation to reduce expenses	16%	7%	13%	64%
Child labor	16%	7%	8%	70%
Early Marriage for girls	12%	13%	17%	59%
Illegal activities (such as theft)	11%	3%	11%	75%
Selling humanitarian assistance received	16%	5%	15%	63%
Sold house and/or land	9%	11%	21%	59%
Transactional sex	14%	22%	14%	51%
Withdrew children from school	20%	1%	7%	71%

- Begging (26 % of respondents) and withdrew children from school (20%) appear as the most common coping strategies (highest rate of Always).

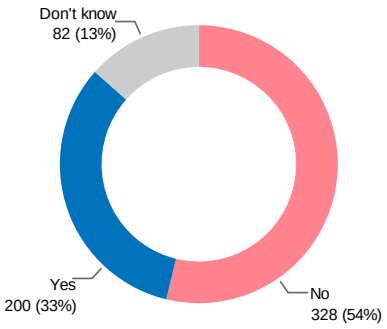
Families are increasingly resorting to harmful coping mechanisms, heightening protection risks for women and children. Child labour (16% always; 70% sometimes) and early marriage (12% always; 59% sometimes) reflect deep economic distress. School withdrawal (20% always; 71% sometimes) further exposes children to exploitation. Adults also engage in theft (11% always; 75% sometimes) and transactional sex (14% always; 51% sometimes), signalling severe financial strain. These trends highlight the urgent need for stronger protection services and livelihood support to reduce reliance on negative coping strategies.

Safety and Security

Are women and girls always able to move freely in your community?



Are men and boys always able to move freely in your community?



Women/girls and men/boys report similar mobility restrictions (53% and 54%) saying they are not always able to move freely. Only 33% of women/girls and 37% of men/boys report full freedom of movement, while 9& and 13% respectively remain unsure, reflecting varying awareness across households.

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

- Fear of rape and harassment: reported by 35% of total respondents
- Insecurity in the area: reported by 27% of the respondents
- Fear of kidnapping: reported by 20% of the respondents

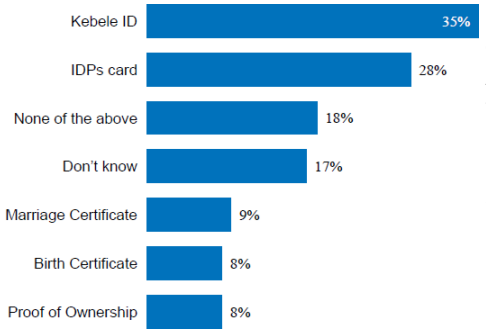
Access to justice and conflict resolution assistance

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

The analysis shows the primary actors community members turn to when facing protection concerns or disputes are police or law-enforcement actors (40%), highlighting their perceived authority and accessibility. Local authorities follow closely at 35%, reflecting continued reliance on administrative structures. Clan and tribal leaders, along with community structures, each account for 29%, demonstrating the importance of traditional and community-based mechanisms. Conflict resolution committees (27%) also play a significant role, indicating a diverse mix of formal and informal systems that people trust for support.

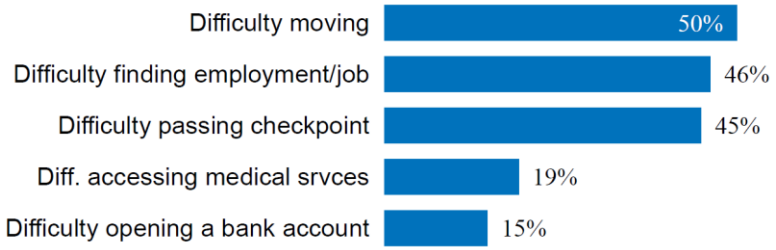
Documentation

Which of the following documents can IDPs obtain in your community?



The assessment indicates **Kebele IDs** are the most accessible (35%), followed by **IDP cards** (28%), showing limited but essential access to basic identification. A notable proportion report being unable to obtain any documents (18%) or are unsure of what is available (17%), indicating significant information and access gaps. Access to key documents such as marriage certificates (9%), birth certificates (8%), and proof of ownership (8%) remains very low, underscoring the need for strengthened civil documentation services.

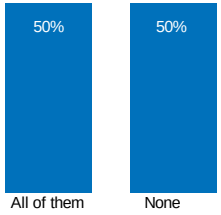
Top 5 protection risks community members encounter because of lacking documentation



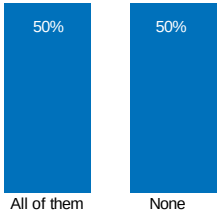
In North Wollo, limited access to documentation contributes to significant movement restrictions (50%) and barriers in securing employment (46). Many individuals also face challenges passing checkpoints (45%) and accessing essential services such as medical care and banking (19%), further heightening their vulnerability.

Housing Land and Property (HLP)

What is the proportion of people returned to this location and have their houses fully destroyed? (Select one)



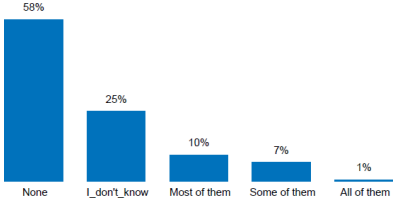
What is the proportion of people returned to this location and have their houses partially destroyed? (Select one)



In North Wollo, communities report an equal split regarding the condition of returnees' shelters, with 50% indicating that all houses are fully destroyed and 50% reporting none. A similar pattern is seen for partially destroyed shelters, highlighting inconsistent recovery conditions across locations.

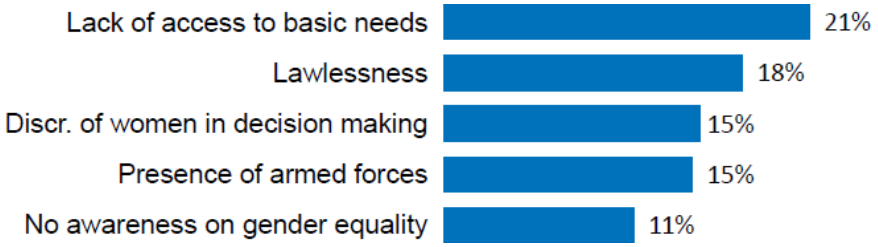
Proportion of IDPs and returnees in North Wollo accessing land for farming

The majority of IDPs (58%) have no access to land for farming, while only a very small proportion report partial (7%) or full access (10%).



Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

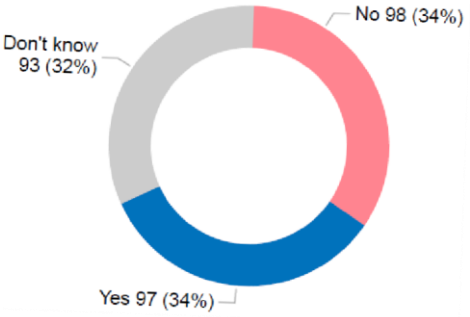
Top 5 factors currently increasing the risk of GBV and other forms of violence



In North Wollo, limited access to basic needs (21%) and rising lawlessness (18%) are the leading drivers of GBV and other protection risks. Discrimination against women in decision-making and the presence of armed forces (both 15%) further heighten vulnerabilities. Low awareness of gender equality (11%) continues to undermine community protection and safety.

Access to specialized services for GBV survivors

In North Wollo, access to specialized GBV services remains limited and unclear, with respondents almost evenly split between those reporting availability (34%) and those indicating no access (34%). A significant 32% do not know whether such services exist, highlighting major information gaps. This uncertainty suggests the need for improved service visibility and community awareness.

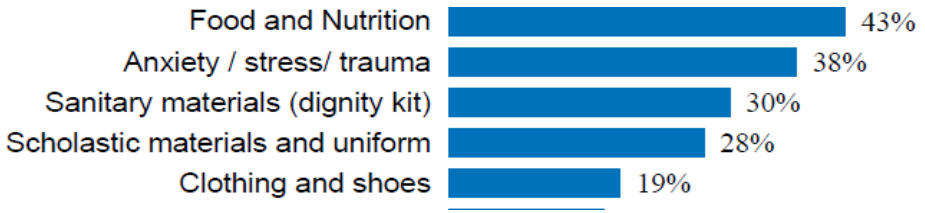


Resources

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

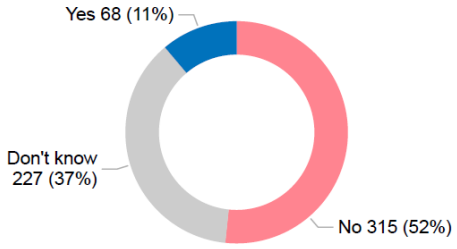
Top 5 protection issues children (boys and girls) encounter



Children in North Wollo face significant unmet needs, with food and nutrition emerging as the most pressing challenge (43%). High levels of anxiety, stress, and trauma (38%) further highlight the impact of prolonged instability. Limited access to sanitary materials, school supplies, and clothing also contributes to children's vulnerability.

Explosive Ordnance

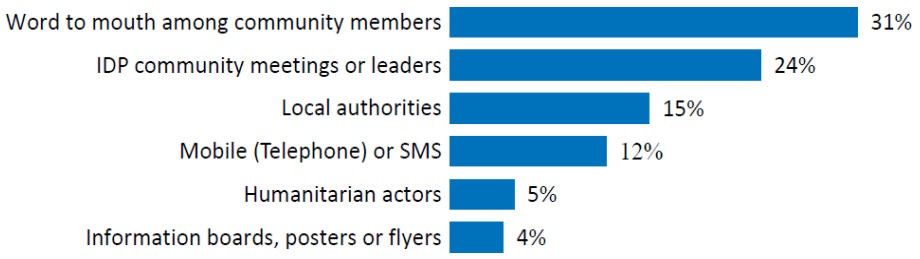
Are you aware of any incidents related to unexploded ordnance UXO or other ex plosive remnants of war during the last 3 months?



Most respondents in North Wollo reported no known presence of landmines or unexploded ordnance (52%), while 37% were unsure. Only 11% confirmed awareness of such hazards, highlighting the need for continued risk education and monitoring.

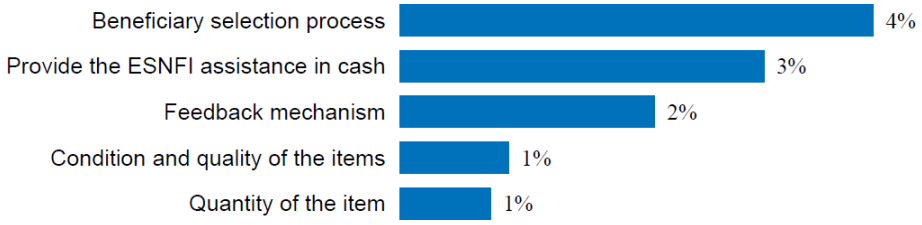
Access to information community representation and relations

Major communication channels that people receive information



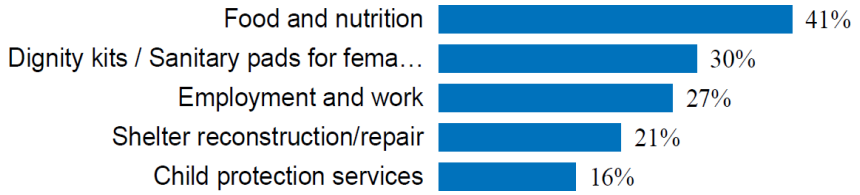
Shelter and NFI

Things to improve during shelter and Non-Food Item assistance



Respondents highlighted the need to strengthen the **beneficiary selection process (4%)** and increase flexibility through **cash-based ESNFI assistance (3%)**. **Improvements in feedback mechanisms (2%), item quality, and quantity** were also noted, though at lower levels (both at 1%).

Top 5 protection issues IDP Returnees are facing



*The community's top concerns center on **food security (41%)** and **dignity items for women and girls (30%)**, alongside **limited livelihood opportunities (27%)**. Additional needs, such as **shelter repair (21%)** and **child protection (16%)**, reflect ongoing vulnerability across multiple sectors.*

Issues IDP returnees are facing with housing

What do you think are your community's most urgent shelter and NFI needs?

CRITICAL NEEDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BASIC NEEDS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

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

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Expand food, cash and in-kind assistance.
- Support education, healthcare and MHPSS.

LIVELIHOOD RECOVERY AND REDUCTION OF NEGATIVE COPING MECHANISMS

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Increased child labour, school withdrawal, and transactional sex

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Enhance livelihood support.
- Provide MPCA
- Establish safe mobility pathways.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE, CIVIL DOCUMENTATION AND LEGAL PROTECTION

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Limited access to identification
- Lack of legal service support

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Provide mobile civil registration
- Enhance community security patrols.
- Strengthen legal aid services.

SHELTER, HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY (HLP)

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Lack of service to agricultural land & shelter support for returnees

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Strengthen HLP services.
- Expand awareness campaigns.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Lack of service & protection risks

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Establishing safe spaces
- Improve GBV prevention and case management programs.
- Enhance community security.

CHILD PROTECTION

CRITICAL NEEDS
- Food shortages & emotional distress
- School dropout, and child labour

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Advocate for school feeding programs
- MHPSS and CFS services

Partners

Donor support

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

European Union