

Durable Solution Working Group (Somali Regional State)

“Go-and-See” Mission Report to Fafan and Sitti Zones, Return Areas

May 2019

I. Executive Summary

The “Go-and-See mission” team visited three woredas of Tuliguled with five (5) return kebeles (Dhobowayne, Dhuhulalay, Feedha’ad Galbeed, Jidhile and Walgo kebeles) with total returnee households of **800**, Babili with three (3) villages (Jira, Dalema, Ajo, Jira, and Subxanalah) villages with a total of **1000** returnee households), and Erer woreda with Goljano village under Bille kebele with **180** returnee households. There is a total of 1,960 families that returned in these seven (7) kebeles inside Somali region. Other Somali ethnic returnees returned to Babile town (**1.733 HHs**) and Erer-Weyn (**1.200 HHs**) kebeles which is **under Oromia region** administration.

The inter-community conflict has affected the essential services, shelter, and livelihood assets in the return areas. According to the returnee and based on the team’s observation, there are 1,310 private houses, four (4) schools, three (3) health posts, and three (3) schools that have been destroyed in the visited three (3) woredas. Of the total damage and loss, returnees in Tuliguled woreda were the most affected. People are living in a desperate situation and have no access to essential services, including Shelter and NFIs, health, WASH, education, food/nutrition, and protection.

Due to the lack of essential services and loss/damage from conflict, returnees are exposed to severe conditions. The returnee communities are using coping mechanisms such as the use of unsafe water, selling off the few remaining livestock’s in their position in exchange for food and sending their children to work in the towns and in some cases to beg on the streets.

As a priority, the returnee reported that sustained peace/security as well as food and shelter, are the most urgent priorities. Provision of safe water, sanitation facilities and hygiene kits, rehabilitation of damaged health facilities and schools, and personnel to make these facilities functional are the immediate humanitarian needs of the assessed sites.

The protracted inter-ethnic conflict has affected the capacity of these communities to re-establish its livelihood means namely farming. So, provision of technical, machinery and in inputs such as seeds, will help these returnees to regain their livelihood. Returnee communities underlined the importance of sustaining peace and stability through the strengthening of reconciliation activities between communities.

II. Background

The ethnic conflicts that occurred in the different part of the country have caused a wide range of social, economic, political upheaval, and in many incidents, tragically caused loss of lives. In the Somali region, conflicts between communities caused forced displacement of 604,253 individuals in six (6) zones of the region. Most of these displaced are pastoralists and semi-pastoralist, with few traders who use to be engaged in small scale businesses. The majority of the Somali IDPs were displaced from Oromia, Afar, and border areas between Oromia and Somali Regions. These IDPs reside in IDP sites in six (6) different zones of the Somali region; Afder, Dawa, Erer, Faafan, Liban, and Siti.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Peace (MoP), in collaboration with the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), has prepared a national plan for relocation and return of conflict-induced IDPs. The Somali regional cabinet adopted this MoP's policy. To achieve MoP's stated goal of eliminating forced conflict-induced displacement, a Regional Steering Committee (RSC), was established in the Somali region. The vice-regional President was appointed as the chairperson of the regional RSC, while the Somali Region Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau (DPPB) function as the RSC's secretariat. The regional Education, Water, Health, Livestock, Agriculture, and Security & Justice bureaus are members of the RSC. To decentralize the RSC, several Command Posts (CP) were established at the Zonal and Woreda levels. Teams from the regional bureaus visited 60 IDP sites in the above mentioned six (6) Zones. It is worth noting that before the formation of these regional and zonal structures, few Woredas at the Oromia-Somali border areas has already established partnerships and launched peace agreements, e.g., Babile Woreda of Faafan Zone and Mayu Muluqo Woreda of Erer Zone respectively.

Mission Objectives and Rational

The proposed "Go-and-See" visits are taking place in the aftermath of the return of the IDPs to their areas of origins. The mission objectives are:

- To obtain an understanding and insight into the returnees' living conditions in the return areas, while looking into the safety and security, housing/shelter, and livelihoods opportunities.
- To understand what needs to be done concerning relevant durable solutions for the returnees, and come up with recommendations for the authorities, humanitarian and development partners, and donors.

Methodology

The Somali Region's DPPB led this "Go-and-See" visit initiative. The joint teams visited return villages in the earlier mentioned zones and woredas to assess the situation through:

- Meeting with local authorities and community
- Observation, discussions, interview with IDPs and key informants
- Focus group discussion (FGD)

Tools

- Checklist from the respective sector to capture the required data in their area of expertise
- Village/Site assessments tool (available at IOM)

- Any other assessment tools of respective sectors if possible

III. Mission Findings

1. Mobility

It is reported that the first IDPs returnees HHs were seen arriving at most of Tuliguled, some kebeles in Babile, and one (1) village in Erer woreda between February to April 2019, the last group of the IDPs returnees HHs have reportedly arrived in these areas on May 06 to 09, 2019 and the new returnees are still ongoing daily.

2. Safety and security condition

Currently, there is no ongoing communal conflict. Most of the returnee started to return to their areas of origins by themselves. However, full integration between the returnee community and the community living at the other side of the border is yet to be complete. This continues to cause some tensions and scepticism towards returnee households. Returnee informed us that this is one of the reasons behind full return of IDP HH. They underlined the **importance of continues peacebuilding and reconciliation**. Sporadic animal theft is also reported; however, communities often resolve these kinds of issues through communications and engagement of community elders; it is worth noting that livestock theft is an ancient occurrence.

Even though most of the returnees have lost their properties and continue to have some reservations the general safety and security, almost, all of them said that they were glad for being back to their areas of origins. Few visited communities informed the team that they were not able to move freely to access different services such as Education, Water, Health, etc. nevertheless, they were glad to be back to their areas of origin. We were informed by some communities that they conduct patrol in their areas and during the nights. We were also informed that few sporadic attacks continue to occur.

Consent/willingness of IDPs to return: The returnee highlighted to the team that they have returned voluntarily citing the improved security condition as the main reason for their decision to return. IDPs continue to return from different locations, including neighbouring woredas of Awbare, Harorays, and Jigjiga.

3. Housing and Shelter/Non-Food Items (NFI)

In almost all the visited kebeles we observed burned/destroyed houses/structures. Returnee has inadequate or/and no physical protection from the rains and winds, particularly children and the elder. Returnees in all the visited areas received little or no shelter or/and NFI support. Returnee HHs often share one poorly erected local house (Somali Tukul), mainly children and women get to sleep inside while men sleep out in the open. Returnee HHs have started collecting local materials to construct temporary shelters. However, plastic sheets and other shelter items are critically needed.

4. Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WaSH)

Access to safe drinking water is a life-threatening challenge for the returnees. In usual times, the common sources of water were Boreholes, Birka, and natural ponds. Most of those sources are vandalized or destroyed. Currently, in Tuli, the main sources of water for the returnees are some depleted Birkas and natural open ponds with contaminated water. There are no household water treatment chemicals accessible for returned IDPs. The earlier existing communal latrines have been destroyed. So, there are no single latrines in the villages. Open defecation is widely practiced, which result in cross-contamination of the few available drinking water sources. There is a high risk of diarrheal diseases in the community.

Regional DPPB has provided some WASH NFIs including Jerry-cans and soaps, to Tuliguled woreda returnees.

There is one (1) bore hall understudy assessment by ICRC for Darimi site of Tuliguled woreda

5. Living conditions in the return area

The impact of the conflict for many returnee households is hard as most of displaced HHs completely lost their homes and livelihoods. The main IDPs household's productive assets such as farms and livestock (cattle, shoats) as well as food stocks were looted or destroyed during the peak of the conflict, making many of returnees coming back to their area of origin empty-handed. The returnee reported that all their stored crops were burned or looted, seeds for the next two seasons were also looted during the peak of the conflict. This has worsened the living condition of the returned IDPs.

Since their return, they have received only one round of food distribution, which was low in quantity. The few households with some livestock, either sale their animal or milk from their cows to obtain mains for their livelihood. People are in a desperate situation and need urgent food distribution. Most returnee households are currently using some harmful or destructive coping strategies to overcome the current severe food shortages. These include increased selling off their livestock, sending under aged children for labour.

6. Food and Nutrition

Except for a few remote agropastoral cropping areas with predominant livestock of shoat and cattle (Jira, Dalema, Ajo, Jira Subxanalah of Babile woreda), the main livelihoods for Tuliguled and Erer woredas are sedentary farming where people dependent on crop production notably, wheat, barley, and Chat. In addition to the ubiquitous maize and sorghum. Cultivation depends on both tractors (rented in most cases) and animal traction, and production is entirely depended on rainfall, making this area highly vulnerable to the vagaries of the rains.

The conflict and displacement have also disrupted vulnerable households' access to food and livelihood activities, worsening food security and nutrition conditions of the vulnerable groups within the returnees. Although the team did not undertake systematic testing of malnutrition, however, the nutrition status of the vulnerable groups, especially children and the elder, will likely deteriorate if appropriate interventions are not taken soon.

In most visited sites, humanitarian assistance was limited and inadequate. In early last year, in Tuliguled woreda, a joint Regional Government-WFP rapid verification assessment on possible safe food delivery was undertaken. Five (5) safe food assistance delivery points were identified; these include Gabagabo, Male, Dudajirimo, Tulit town, and Darimi sites. Since the start of the displacement from these areas, only three (3) rounds (R5 and R6) of food distribution took place in the whole Tuliguled woreda. Some 2262.266 Mt of assorted emergency food assistance was distributed in the five (5) IDPs sites between September 2018 to February- April 2019. However, many IDPs who fled to remote areas, e.g., Awbare, Dambal, and Harorays areas had no access to food assistance.

Besides, Mercy Crop distributed some nutritional supplies in only two sites in Tulit town and Gabagabo from January 2019. However, the project reportedly faced out in early of March 2019. In February 2019 and kore kebele of Babile, 500 quintals of rice and 40 cartons of nutritional supplies were distributed to 1500 IDPs by regional DPPB.

7. Health

In all the visited villages, returnee has no access to health facilities. The health facilities of the areas visited were burned/destroyed during the communal armed conflict. Although no significant disease outbreak is reported yet, the returnee complains of many health problems such as dermatological disease and pneumonia. The nearest health facilities to the visited sites are in Tuliguled. Returnee must travel long distances and use cash they often don't have to obtain health care, so they often chose to neglect their health.

8. Education

Access to educational services is limited. Of the visited seven (7) villages, five (5) of them had their schools damaged (burned) during the conflict. Teachers were also affected by the conflict and were among the displaced households and yet to return. Currently, schools are not functional in all the return areas. All school-aged children in all the return areas have no access to education service.

9. Livelihood

The armed communal conflict destroyed means of livelihood. Earlier, the returnee predominantly depended on the farming of crops such as wheat, barley, maize, cash crops combined with small animal herding practices. Currently, the community relies on selling some of its animals and milk. This provides them with the opportunity to have a one-time food serving a day. For those who have no animals, they often travel to towns like Jigjiga for daily labour. We have information that people have resorted to extreme coping mechanisms such as street begging and child labour.

ICRC is conducting Livelihood recovery program in Tuliguleed woreda sites of Sariir, Masle, Tuli and Darimi and planned to distribute wheat seed. In Gabogabo and Kontamo vegetable seed have been distributed for 600 HH.

10. Major protection concerns across all Returnee Sites

Persons with a specific need

All most in all returnee sites, there is no mechanism that follows up with the most vulnerable groups (PWDs, Elders who left without caregivers and single headed families). In all returnee sites, we noted that there is no inclusive and tailored support for peoples with a disability, elders without caregivers, and support for people with a mental health problem. As a result, they all rely on assistance provided from the communities since the provision of services is either lacking or absent.

Child protection

Generally, the assessment team identified that separated, unaccompanied, and orphan children are very few, usually relatives, and clan members would fostering/take care of children without their biological parents. However, and due to the lack of basic services, many families said that they use their children to obtain a livelihood, many said that they would engage children in collecting firewood for sale and would send them to towns for work.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Early marriage and forced marriage, particularly as an economic coping mechanism, have been reported as a practice in the community. The most critical issues they raised is lack of privacy and dignity as most of them currently share the shelter. There is no privacy for women and girls.

11. Prioritized Needs of Returnees:

1. Adequate provision of quality culturally sensitive food, and with diversified nutritional values.
2. Appropriate semi-permanent shelter (transitional/Durable Shelters).
3. Livelihood opportunities (access to job opportunities, education, farming tools etc.).

12. Recommendations

Following the humanitarian imperative, concerned government entities and their humanitarian partners should immediately stand for their responsibilities and address the acute needs of these returnees. The team recommend;

- Government to continue improving the safety and security of the returnee areas, particularly in the border areas of neighboring regions through the engagement with community leaders and elders.
- Provision of Food and ESNFI's as immediate assistance and livelihood programs to improve the community asset, self-esteem and reduce vulnerability to negative coping mechanisms.
- Reconstruction/rebuilding of governmental institutions while innovatively looking into ways of providing essential services.
- The government with its humanitarian partners to undertake immediate lifesaving coordinated responses.
- Provision of urgently needed water and the rehabilitation of water infrastructure.
- Livelihood support- Restocking, creating income-generating activities.
- Support to persons with specific needs (children, pregnant and lactating women, elderly, persons with disabilities and ensure their needs are addressed.

IV. Annexes

Returnee Villages/Settlements Details										
S.N	Return Village	Kabale	Woreda	#of returned HHs	Previous IDP si	Kabale	Woreda	First arrival	Last arrival	Loss and Damage
1	Dhobowayne 1	Jidiile	Tuliguled	70	Jacjacle	Jacjacle	Awbare?			1. All the houses of the community was burned 2. The health facility and the school were also burned 3. water source such as Birkas were
2	Dhuhulalay	Jidiile	Tuliguled	60	Dunduma'ad	Dunduma'ad	Tuliguled			1. All the houses of the returnees were destroyed, 2. School and health post were destroyed by burning, 3. More than 420 animals (goats and cattle) were looted 4. water source such as Birkas were damaged during the conflict
3	Jidhiile	Jidiile	Tuliguled	120	Xero geel, Jaare	Xero geel, Jaare	Awbare, Harorays, Jigjiga	Two and halve months ago	9th of May	1. 220 Houses was burned 2. The health post and the school was were burned 3. Stored food were destroyed
4	Dhobowayne 2	Jidiile	Tuliguled	70	Gorayo cawl	Gorayo cawl	Harorays	Two and halve months ago	April 24th,	1. 300 Houses were totally burned 2. School was burned 3. Stored food staffs were destroyed
5	Feedhacad Galbeed	Feedhacad	Tuliguled	230	Masle	masle	Tuliguled?	Two months ago	First of May	1. 350 Houses were burned, 2. water sources such as birkas were damaged 3. Health facility was also burned
6	Walgo	Geelboob	Tuliguled	250	Koraydhalay, Gunburka, Qabu uralay	Koraydhalay, Gunburka, Qabu uralay	Awbare and Haroorays woredas	21st of April		1. 330 house (all the houses in the village) was burned 2. One privately owned borehole that was used during the drought times were burned 3. The health post and the school of the village were also burned 4. all the food storage was destroyed
7	Jiira, daleemo, Ajo and Subhanallah Villag	Kora	Babili	1000	Kora	Kora	Babili			1. One primary school burned, 2. Number of private house destroyed 3. food toacks and livestock were looted,
8	Goljano Village	Biile (Somali region), Nadi taysu, Farmatusaba (Oromia region)			Biile (Somali region), Nadi taysu, Farmatusaba (Oromia region)	Biile, Nadi taysu, Farmatusaba (Oromia region)	Erer woreda, Guraguta, Meta woreda	March 24-2019	May 9-2019	1. the only two irrigation cannels were seriously damaged 2. farms faced critical water shortage since the conflict up to now. 3. one primary school was destroyed 4. Total of 40 iron sheeted housed were totally destroyed and 70 houses were seriously damaged 5. All foods stocks were looted 6. cash crops including oranges dried up due lack of water