*For immediate release*

**Health care crisis looms for more than 800,000 displaced people in southern Ethiopia, World Vision warns**

Disease outbreaks and skyrocketing malnutrition rates are predicted for thousands of displaced Ethiopian children, World Vision is warning.

More than 40,000 people fled violence that spiked in Gedeo and West Guji in June 2018 alone and have sought safety in schools, churches or with relatives in nearby villages.

“Children who have run from the violence are struggling. There is not enough food or clean water for displaced people. Children are going hungry and without adequate nutrition or clean water, they are much more likely to contract a potentially fatal illness,” says Edward Brown, World Vision Ethiopia’s national director.

In total, more than 818,000 people in Gedeo and West Guji have fled their homes due to violence and are in desperate need of assistance.

“Survivors have witnessed their homes burnt and looted, ruining their means of earning an income. What that means is that even when security returns, people will struggle to provide food for their families for months after, continuing to jeopardize children’s health,” says Getahun Mara, Emergency Nutrition Coordinator with World Vision Ethiopia.

Health clinics in areas where people have fled to are reportedly overburdened and in urgent need of medicine and trained staff.

Twelve-year-old Semira is among the thousands who fled Jigiga because of ethnic conflict. She too has witnessed the limitations of the health care system.

"I was sick with a stomach ache and admitted to this clinic, but the medications was expired and there was no medical person there for us," Semira says.

World Vision Ethiopia has secured $260,000 USD to respond to the crisis and is providing health and nutrition assistance, clean water and hygiene, emergency shelter kits, education support and other critical relief items, but the need is great.

“We are working closely with other humanitarian actors and government to respond to the needs, but are limited due to a lack of funding,” Brown said. “Children’s lives are hanging in the balance, we urgently need to act.”

To expand it’s programming and respond to the needs, World Vision has requested $16 million USD to assist 411,940 displaced people.

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**About World Vision:**

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

**For more information, please contact:**

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