

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

RAPID ASSESSMENT REPORT OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION

19-DECEMBER-2022



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Photo: Lumusa, Western Highlands Province. © IOM/ Peter Murorera

Cover Photo: Election-related violence resulted in the burning down of several homes and properties in the Highlands region. © IOM/ David Kuna

INTRODUCTION

Since July 2022, Papua New Guinea's Highlands region has been witnessing multiple incidents of election-related violence, causing a slew of negative consequences, including loss of human lives, destruction of property and population displacement.

In this context, women and girls have become more vulnerable to Gender-based Violence (GBV), and a number of communities have reported incidents of GBV following the displacement.

Co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the National Disaster Centre (NDC), the Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Shelter and Non-Food Items cluster deployed the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) rapid assessment tool (October–November 2022) with the support of local authorities and partners and collected data on the situation of persons displaced by election-related violence in Hela, Southern Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces.¹

Data on the population displaced by election-related violence in Enga province was collected from selected sites pending the deployment of the DTM rapid assessment.

To better understand the displacement situation in the Highlands region, including informing evidence-based responses and recovery planning that target the internally displaced persons (IDPs), the DTM rapid assessment tool was deployed also to identify and assist communities displaced by other hazards, such as tribal violence.

Conflict continues and the situation remains tense in the Highlands region. Therefore, the IDP population

reported in this document is not exhaustive and covers only those sites reached through displacement tracking at the onset of the crisis.²

The DTM has identified a total of 31,481 IDPs (6,054 IDP households) across 29 sites in Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces. Therefore, the IDP population has increased by 56.59% since 22 August 2022.³

It is estimated that the IDP population is however higher and very dynamic. IOM is working on improving the tracking and updating of its reporting of the continuous localized displacements and more information will therefore be shared as it becomes available.

Of the 29 displacement sites identified, the DTM rapid assessment tool has so far collected multi-sectoral data from 20 sites that are hosting 18,651 IDPs in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces.

The remaining 12,830 IDPs living in nine sites in Hela, Southern Highlands and Enga provinces, are yet to be assessed through the DTM rapid assessment tool. Therefore, the sectoral findings from IDPs in these nine sites are not fully represented in this report. IOM will nevertheless work to overcome this gap and improve the detail of sectoral findings in its next report.

Though fighting has ceased in several sites, including Mendi town in Southern Highlands, the displaced population reported that they do not feel safe returning to their homes.

The assessment team comprising of IOM and local authorities found that selected communities in Hela, Southern Highlands and Western Highlands provinces continue to experience violence, and it is expected that

¹The assessment collected data from identified key informants including school teachers, ward councilors, community leaders, religious leaders, village court magistrates, youth representatives, women's representatives, and healthcare workers.

²See Annex 1: Displacement locations and IDP population.

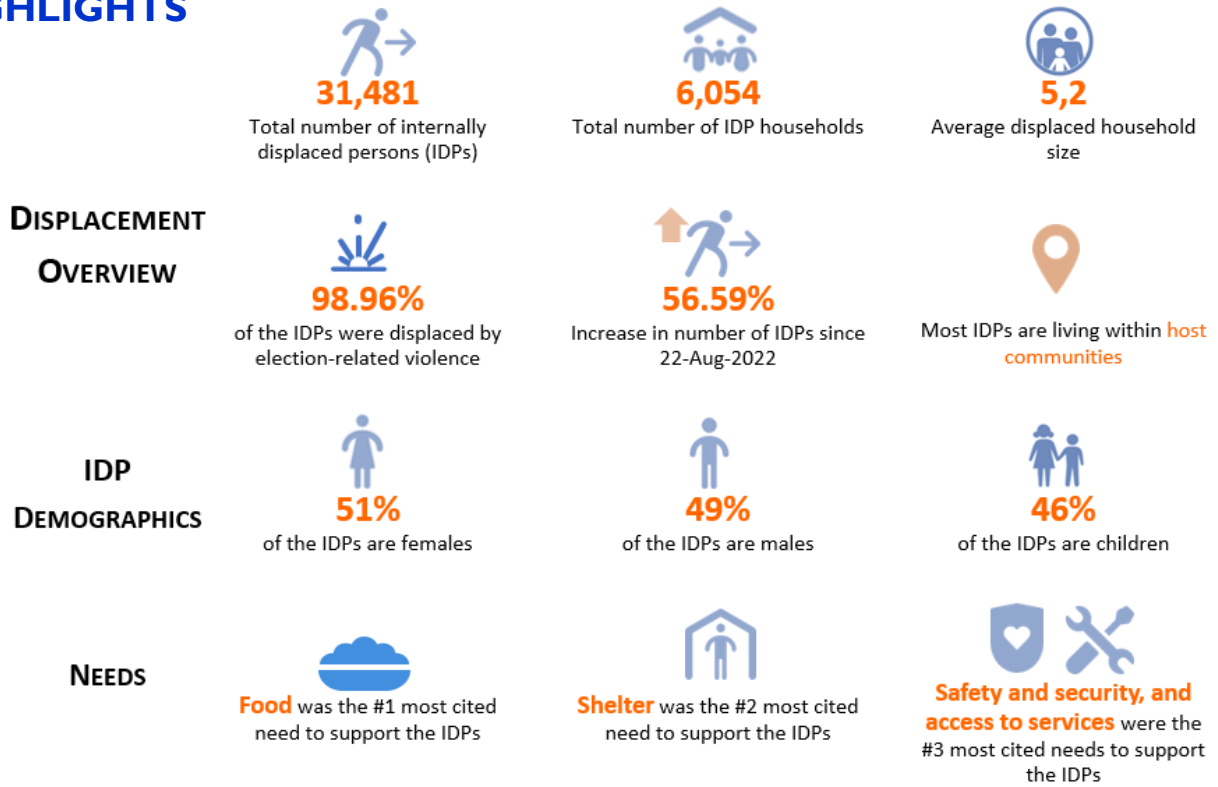
³See, [Papua New Guinea — Displacement in Hela, Southern Highlands and Enga Province #1 \(13-18 August 2022\) | Displacement \(iom.int\)](https://www.iom.int/papua-new-guinea-displacement-in-hela-southern-highlands-and-enga-province-#1-13-18-august-2022)

more people will be displaced.

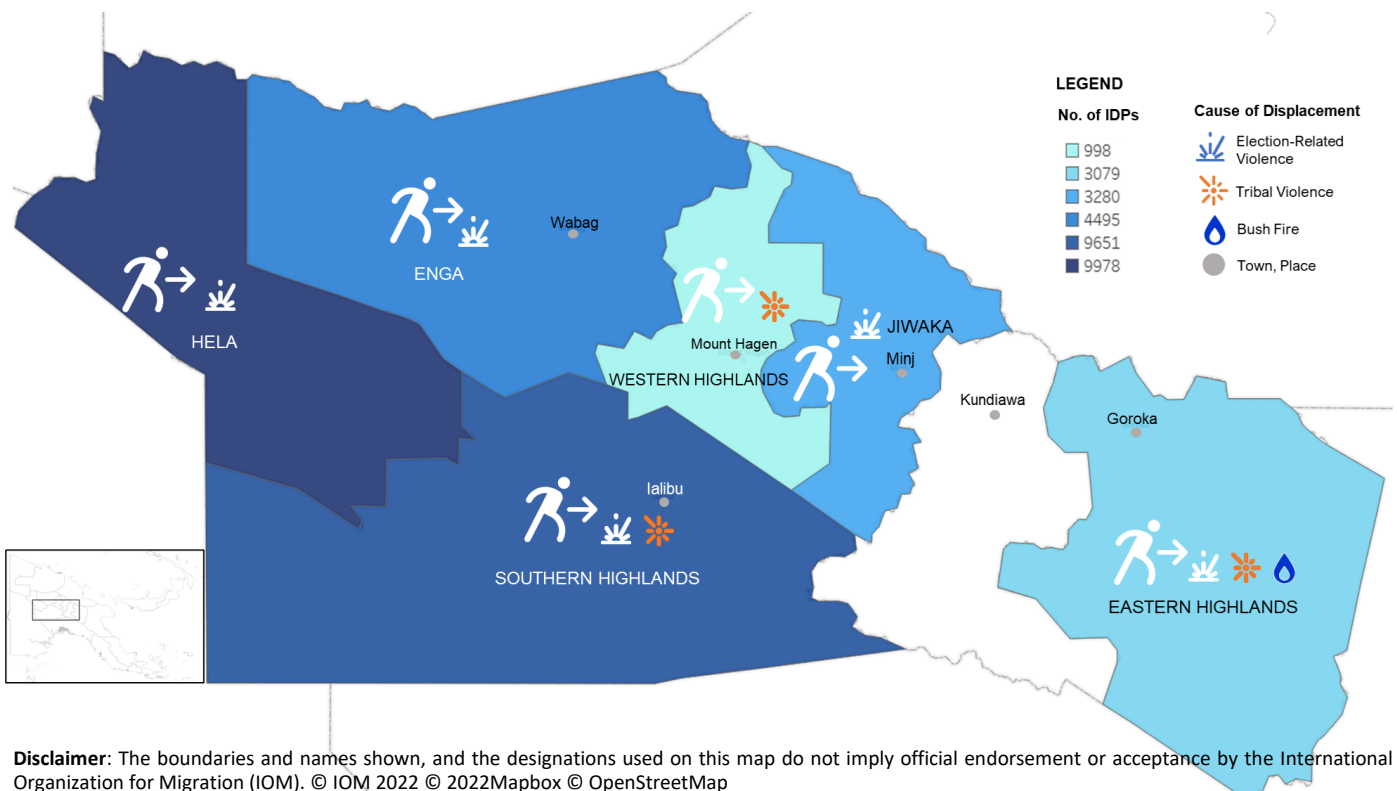
Key informants and local community members contacted in the selected sites reported that they had

been displaced for over two months, and many of them are living within host communities, while others are living in the mountains and bushes, feeling unsafe about returning to their homes.

HIGHLIGHTS



DISPLACEMENT MAP



Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown, and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). © IOM 2022 © 2022Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Area Details

Data on population demographics was collected from the IDP sites in Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces.

The displacement tracking found out that Hela province recorded the largest number of IDPs (9,978 individuals), all of them were displaced by election-related violence.

Southern Highlands province recorded the second largest IDP population (9,651 individuals) most of them displaced by election-related violence (98.96%) while a few remaining IDPs were displaced due to tribal violence (1.04%).

In Enga and Jiwaka provinces, election-related violence displaced 4,495 and 3,280 individuals respectively. However, the total number of IDPs in Enga province is estimated to be higher because not all IDP sites have been assessed because of security reasons.

Election-related violence was the factor behind most of the displacement (2,921 individuals) in Eastern Highlands province while tribal violence and a bush fire were the cause for the displacement of the remaining 158 individuals who forcibly moved in this province.

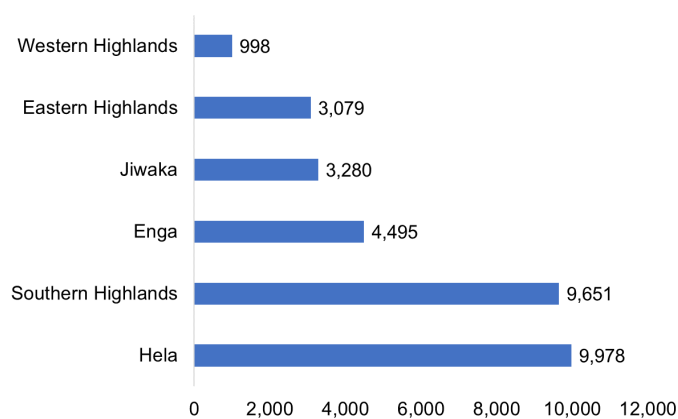


Figure 1: Number of IDPs by province (n= 20 sites)

A total of 998 individuals were displaced because of tribal violence in one of the two IDP sites in Lumusa, Baiyer district of the Western Highlands province. The assessment team could not assess the second IDP site in Lumusa because of the ongoing fighting. The poor mobile phone network coverage in the area makes it difficult to deploy remote data collection through identified key informants.

Overall, election-related violence accounted for the majority of the IDPs (99.18%) while tribal violence as well as bush fire displaced 0.64 per cent and 0.18 per cent of the IDPs, respectively across the sites assessed in Hela, Southern Highlands, Enga, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces.

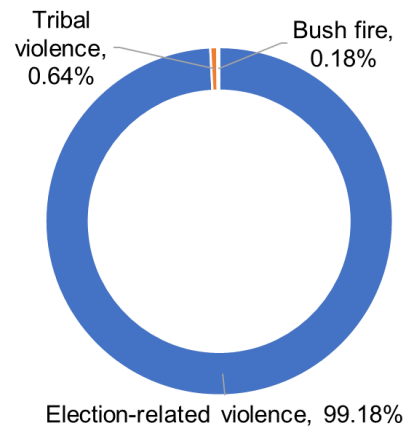


Figure 2: % IDPs by cause of displacement (n= 20 sites)

Most displaced persons are living in host communities, and only two IDP groups are staying at church owned transitional centres in Eastern Highlands province.

Key informants contacted in Jiwaka province reported that there are 730 IDPs currently living in the mountains and bushes around Galeboka area in Jimi district’s Tabibuga local level government and do not feel safe to return to their homes.

Registration of the displaced persons was reported in five of the sites.⁴ Only one site, Old Compound in Mendi Munhiu district of the Southern Highlands province reported the availability of a service provider contact list.

⁴ The DTM rapid assessment tool has so far collected data from 20 IDP sites in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces.

Concerning accessibility and phone coverage, all IDP sites assessed through the DTM rapid assessment are accessible by vehicle and have phone network coverage, though the connection is unstable in several of them.

The DTM rapid assessment tool has collected sectoral data in 20 IDP sites in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces. The findings from these sites are as follows:

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

The main source of drinking water is located within 20 minutes walking distance in 25 per cent of the sites. In 75 per cent of the sites, the IDPs walk more than 20 minutes (one way) to collect drinking water.

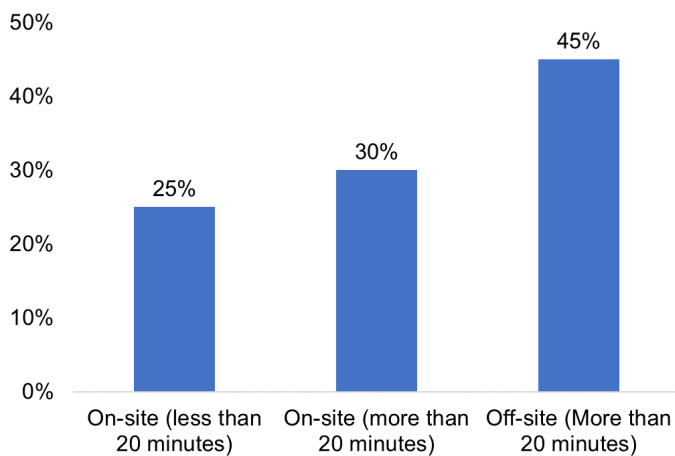


Figure 3: Walking distance to drinking source by % of the sites (n= 20 sites)

Walking long distances to collect drinking water poses a risk of abuse, especially to women and girls, who are the mostly involved in collecting water for supplying to the household.

Assessment data shows that most IDPs collect drinking water from unsafe sources such as creeks and rivers, this is reported in 85 per cent and 40 per cent of the sites respectively. The collection of drinking water from an unprotected well was reported by persons displaced to Arufa in Unggai Bena district in Eastern Highlands province.

Though most IDPs collect drinking water from unsafe sources, none of the sites reported treating the water before drinking.



“Our water tanks were destroyed during the fighting. We are in desperate need of drinking water, and I would like to request for water tanks assistance.”

– Women’s representative, Southern Highlands province.

Collecting drinking water from a borehole with pump and rain-fed tank was reported in five per cent and 15 per cent of the sites respectively while collecting drinking water from a public tap was reported in 10 per cent of the sites.

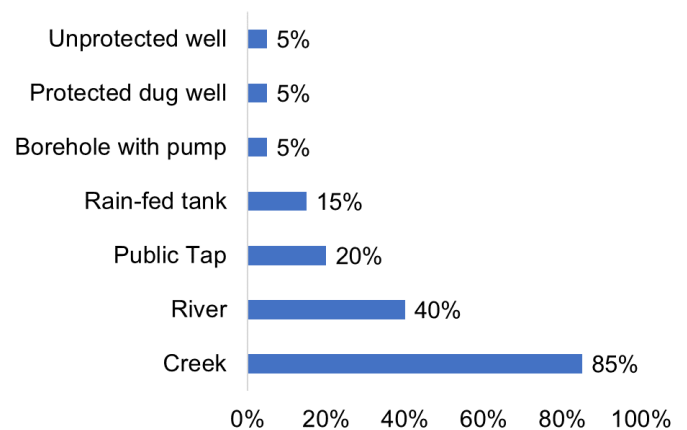


Figure 4: Source of drinking water by % of the IDP sites (n= 20 sites)

Collecting drinking water from a public tap was reported only in 20 per cent of the sites in Eastern Highlands province. Some of the IDPs accessing rain-fed tanks (belonging to host communities) reported that they resort to collecting drinking water from the rivers and creeks when the rain-fed tanks run dry.

Several households that owned rain-fed water tanks prior to the displacement reported that these tanks were destroyed during the fighting. Therefore, assistance related to potable water is also needed when the displaced population return to their homes.

Regarding sanitation, most displaced persons use pit latrines in the host communities, this is reported in 85 per cent of the sites. Similarly, to the need for clean and safe drinking water assistance upon return, displaced communities will also require sanitation related assistance because their latrines were also destroyed during the fighting.

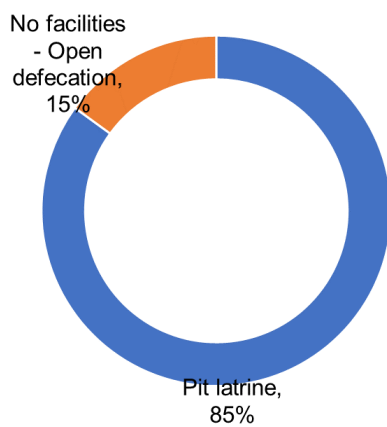
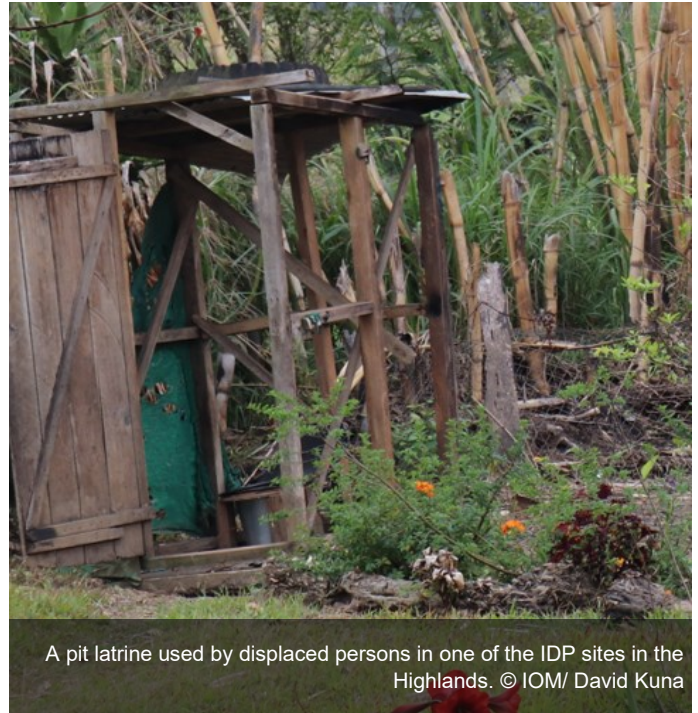


Figure 5: Type of sanitation by % of the IDP sites (n= 20 sites)

The unavailability of sanitation facilities was reported in 15 per cent of the sites, in Jiwaka (10%) and Eastern Highlands (5%) provinces. As consequence of this lack of facilities, the IDPs in these sites resort to open defecation.

Only five per cent of the sites, Old Compound in Mendi Munhu district in Southern Highlands province

reported availability of gender-segregated latrines and handwashing washing facilities.



A combination of drinking water from unsafe sources, lack of appropriate sanitation and poor hygiene practices can be linked to concerns of diarrhea that were reported in a number of the sites in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western Highlands, Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands provinces.

Food and Nutrition

Agriculture dominates the rural economy of Papua New Guinea and 80 per cent of the population earns a living from subsistence agriculture and selling crops in domestic and international markets.⁵

The election-related violence that struck the Highlands region resulted in the destruction of food gardens owned by the local communities.

Reliance on food gardens as a main source of food was reported in 20 per cent of the sites and the displaced population in 15 per cent of the sites rely on food aid as a main source of food.

⁵See, <https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/food-and-agriculture-papua-new-guinea>

“Our food gardens were destroyed during the conflict, leaving many families with little, or no resources to fend for themselves.”

- Key informant, Southern Highlands province.



Food assistance has been received on an irregular basis, from different stakeholders including the churches, host communities, humanitarian organizations, and relatives or friends of the displaced.⁶

The availability of supplementary feeding for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children was reported in 10 per cent of the sites.⁷

Health

Key informants contacted during the assessment reported that most of the individuals who got injured during the incidents of violence have received treatment from the healthcare facilities.

The IDPs in 60 per cent of the sites access healthcare facilities within a walking distance of 5km. The

healthcare facilities are located at distances of 6-10km and more than 10km in five per cent and 30 per cent of the sites respectively.

Table 1: Distance to healthcare facilities (n= 20 sites)

Distance	% of the IDP sites
Less than 1 km	5
1-5km	55
6-10km	5
More than 10km	30
Unknown	5

Diarrhoea was the prevalent health issue reported by the IDPs. Also, fever and malaria were reported as health concerns, in selected locations while scabies was reported in one site, as a health concern in Almanda/Towan in Nipa-Kutubu district, Southern Highlands province.

Education

Access to education services for children from displaced households was reported in 20 per cent of the sites.

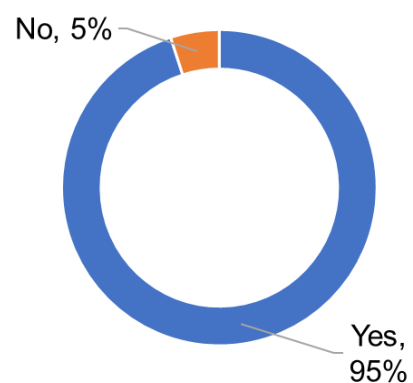


Figure 6: Response to question, “Are there any children of the school going age that are currently not attending school?” by % of the IDP sites (n= 20 sites)

⁶A total of 250 IDP households (1,350 individuals) in Mendi Munhiu district in Southern Highlands province received a two-month supply of food rations. <https://www.thenational.com.pg/un-agency-brings-food-and-materials-to-communities/>

⁷The nutrition supplements were supplied to displaced persons at two IDP locations in Southern Highlands and Eastern

Highlands provinces. The supplies were made available through the support of UNICEF in partnership with the National Department of Health and the respective provincial health authorities.



Makeshift shelters in one of the communities affected by election-related violence in the Highlands.
© IOM/ David Kuna

In 95 per cent of the IDP sites, children of school age were not attending school, the main reasons given for this were the following:

- Schools are shut down or burnt down.
- Children live in fear and feel unsafe to go to school.
- The roads to the school are blocked and this forced the school to close.
- Limited or no availability of teachers because many of them feel unsafe and leave the area due to safety concerns.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

Election-related violence caused the destruction and looting of numerous homes.

The assessment found out that 1,040 individuals have no shelter and are living in the open in two of the sites: one in the Southern Highlands (Almanda/Towan in Nipa Kutubu district) and another in Jiwaka (Kumbal in North Waghi district).

Most IDPs live with host families and a total of 2,662 individuals (512 households) live in makeshift shelters across 85 per cent of the sites.

Displaced persons in selected sites such as Mendi-Munihu and Nipa-Kutubu in Southern Highlands province have received Shelter and Non-Food Items (S/NFIs). The S/NFIs have also been distributed to IDPs in selected locations of the Southern Highlands and Enga provinces, supplied by World Vision, CARE, Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, and the Baptist Union Church in Papua New Guinea. The most vulnerable IDP households in Enga, Hela and Southern Highlands are being targeted by IOM with S/NFIs assistance.⁸

Protection

The Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (Police) have been conducting patrols in a number of sites to help addressing the tribal violence that has seen an increase in the number of displaced persons as reported by the key informants contacted during the assessment.

⁸The S/NFIs materials delivered and planned for distribution in the identified sites Hela, Southern Highlands and Enga province are funded by the United States Agency for International

Development's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/ BHA), and the Australian Government.

Security incidents were reported in 20 per cent of the sites, and the availability of referral mechanisms for survivors of GBV was reported in 15 per cent of the sites. Eighty-five per cent of the sites reported not having known GBV referral mechanisms.

“There are incidents of Gender-based Violence happening in Galeboka in Jiwaka, but they often do not get reported.”

Key informant, Jiwaka province.



IOM and local authorities conducting the DTM rapid assessment in the Highlands. © IOM/ Peter Murorera

The IDPs in selected locations do not feel safe to move around and restrictions of movement was reported in 30 per cent of the sites.

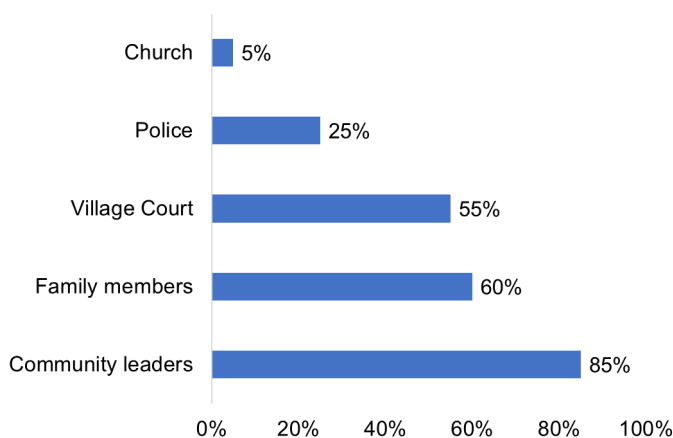


Figure 7: Referral mechanisms used to settle disputes by % of the IDP sites (n= 20 sites)

Referral mechanisms used by IDPs to settle disputes include community leaders, family members, village court, police, and the church.

Lighting is a major challenge and 70 per cent of the sites do not have lighting in most communal points. The lack of lighting makes it unsafe especially for women and girls when accessing the latrines at night.

Tupiri IDP site in Mendi, Southern Highlands province reported that there is lighting in most communal points, but it is inadequate. Aiyura, and Nagamiufa 1 IDP sites in Eastern Highlands have lighting in most communal points and it is adequate.

Intentions

The majority of IDPs plan to return to their homes highlighting that they wish to do so when the security situation improves. Only the IDPs at Kumbal located in Jiwaka’s North Waghi district highlighted no immediate movement intentions.

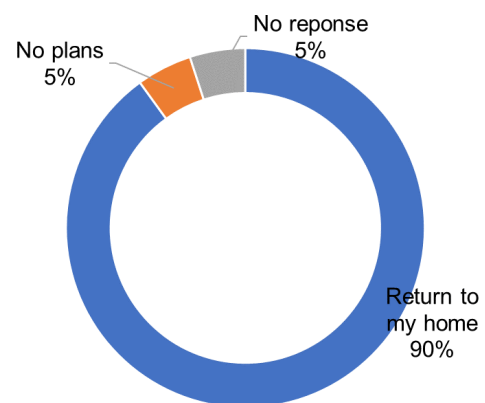


Figure 8: Movement intentions reported by % of the IDP sites (n= 20 sites)

Though there has not been any recent fighting in most displacement sites, the situation remains tense as reported by many of the IDPs. This tension was also echoed by the local authority representative in Mendi town, Southern Highlands province. (See, <https://www.thenational.com.pg/mendi-still-tense-not-yet-safe-to-move-freely-mayor/>)

Communications

The main topic about which the IDPs wish to obtain information is food assistance, this is reported by 95 per cent of the sites.

Shelter was the second main need highlighted by IDPs as requiring additional information, this was reported by 90 per cent of the sites.⁹ Information on safety and security, and access to services were also important to the IDPs and were reported by 50 per cent of the sites.

Also, the IDPs were concerned about the situation at areas of origin (25 per cent of the sites), distribution (five per cent of the sites), and peace negotiations (five per cent of the sites).

The top two preferred means of communication for the IDPs are mobile phone and pamphlets/posters as reported in 80 per cent and 40 per cent of the sites respectively.

Communication in Tok Pisin (Pidgin) language was highlighted as preference across all IDP sites while English language was mentioned in 30 per cent of the sites. Selected sites also mentioned a preference for communication in local dialects, namely Huli (Hela province), Gadsup, and Gahuku dialects (Eastern Highlands province).

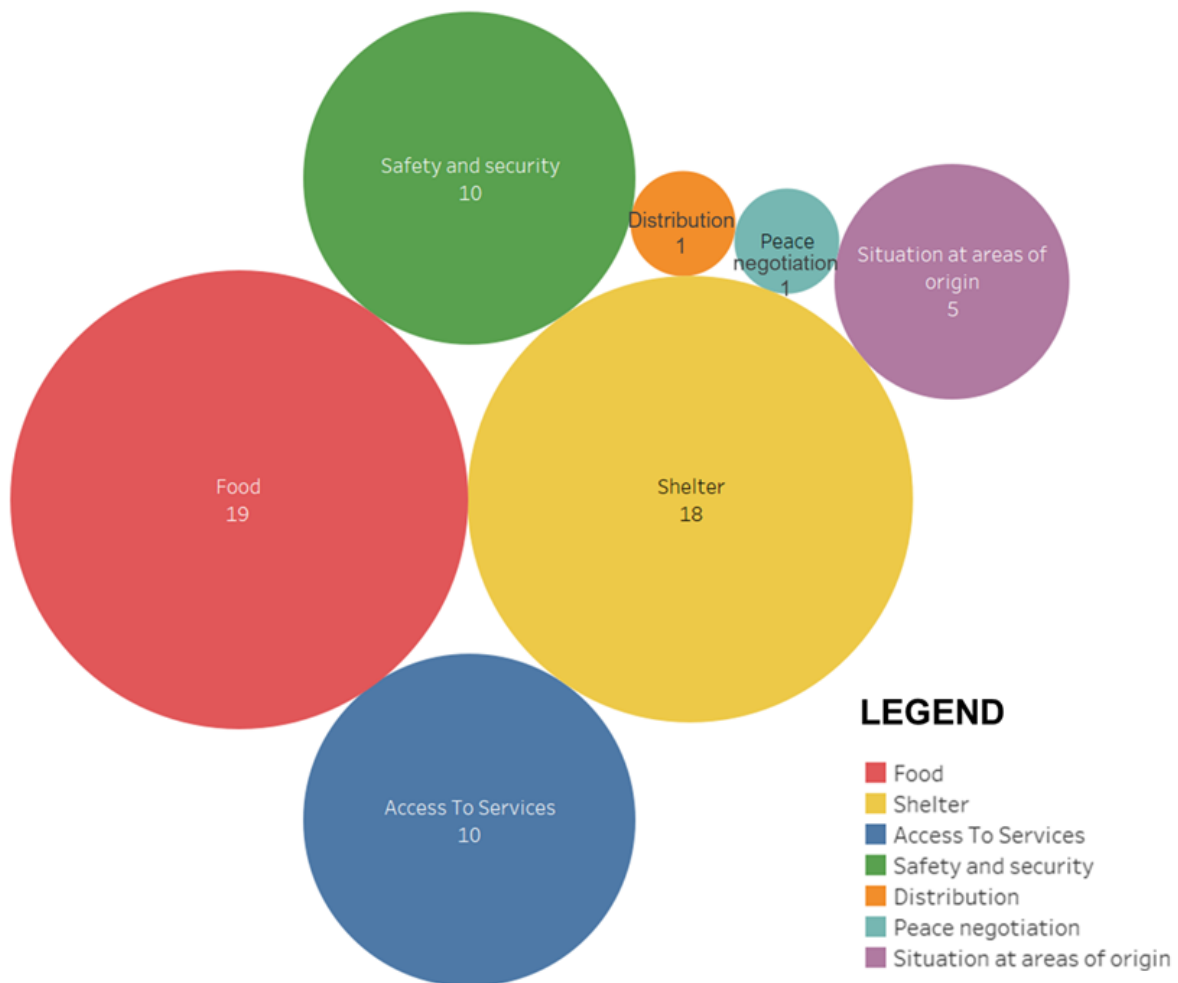


Figure 9: Topic which the IDPs are requesting information on by number of sites (n= 20 sites)

⁹The A total of 615 households (3,921 individuals) in Mendi-Munhiu and Nipa districts in Southern Highlands province had

received S/NFI assistance prior to deploying the DTM rapid assessment.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Election-related violence has now become the major driver of displacement across the identified IDP sites in Papua New Guinea. In such context, displacement tracking is of paramount importance as it can effectively improve the availability and quality of information on IDPs through a collaborative process.

The sectoral needs identified through the assessment call for a collaborative effort among state and non-state actors to ensure that those affected by displacement can quickly recover, return to their normal life, and have their needs for displacement-related assistance or protection met in order to enjoy their human rights without discrimination.

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report are general, and it is to be noted that each site has slightly different needs and priorities. Based on findings from the assessment, this report recommends the provision of below listed supplies or assistance:

Immediate:

- Food rations.
- Nutrient supplements for pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and children below 5 years old.

- Shelter kits.
- Non-Food Items (Blankets, mattresses, kitchen utensils, solar lights etc.)
- Hygiene kits and support to survivors of GBV.
- Water and sanitation related assistance (potable water supply, water containers or jerrycans, gender-segregated latrines, soap, and handwashing facilities. The provision of such assistance will help reduce the potential health risks in the displacement-affected locations.
- Safety and security, and peace negotiations.

Short-term:

- Seeds for crops and farming tools.
- Explore measures to ensure sustainable food security to meet household food requirements.
- Training on participatory awareness in safe shelter construction (build-back safer).
- Classrooms and accommodation of teachers in selected locations.

Long-term:

- Peacebuilding programmes such as the peace for development planning and implementation.
- Sawmills (Recommended for provision or allocation to the provincial disaster centres or local authorities to help promote recovery in shelter construction).



Election-related violence resulted in the burning down of several homes in the Highlands region. © IOM/ David Kuna

ANNEX I: DISPLACEMENT LOCATIONS AND IDP POPULATION

Province	District	Local Level Government	Site	No. of IDPs	No. of IDP Households
Southern Highlands	Mendi Munhiu	Lai Valley	Kuiyanda	2,249	419
	Nipa Kutubu	Nipa Rural	Pesi 2	2,046	393
	Mendi Munhiu	Mendi Urban	Old Compound	1,454	274
	Nipa Kutubu	Upper Nipa	Almanda/ Towan	1,300	250
	Nipa Kutubu	Nipa Rural	Pesi 1	1,370	220
	Imbonggu	Mendi Urban	Tupiri/ Tubiri	700	150
	Nipa Kutubu	Nipa Rural	Ukaim	432	83
	Nipa Kutubu	Poroma	Kar Mission Station	100	20
Western Highlands	Lumusa Baiyer	Lumusa Rural	Sininga Manda	998	240
Hela	Lower Wage	Margarima	Yambraka	1,845	410
	Komo-Margarima	Lower Wage	Posera	1,787	344
	Lower Wage	Margarima	Hiri	1,878	300
	Komo-Margarima	Lower Wage	Ombal	1,520	292
	Komo-Margarima	Lower Wage	Wabulaka	1,400	269
	Komo-Margarima	Lower Wage	Olaim	1,150	221
	Koroba Kopiago	Lake Kopiago	Ayakuni	398	105
Enga	Kompam	---	Multiple locations	3,647	701
	Kompam	Ambum Rural	Meriamanda	522	99
	Kompam	Kompam Rural	Lepres/Leperes	326	63
Eastern Highlands	Goroka	Gahuku	Nagamiufa 1	2,000	380
	Obura Wonenara	Gadsup-Tairora	Aiyura	300	56
	Unggai Bena	Lower Bena	Arufa	300	48
	Goroka	Gahuku Rural	Elavatoka village	200	40
	Daulo	Watabum	Komongu	100	25
	Henganofi	Kafenfima	Hoga village	58	15
	Goroka	Gahuku	Narsatoga	121	25
Jiwaka	Anglimp-South Waghi	Kudjip	Tombil 1 & 2	1,550	320
	North Waghi	Nondgul	Kumbal	1,000	181
	Jimi	Tabibuga	Galeboka	730	110
Total				31,481	6,054



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