

Flight from Amuyurare Legehida, Somali Regional State

It was an evening just like any other with the usual sounds of clicking pots while preparing supper for the children, but that particular night around Ramadan last year, that grinding routine was abruptly interrupted when shots rang out. Awa Abdulahi was living with her eight children in Amuyurare kebele in Legehida in the Somali Regional State where she was born, grew up and raising her family as a single mother. Her husband was killed in an earlier Oromo-Somali ethnic strife a couple of decades ago.

Awa, is an ethnic Oromo but has always called the Somali Regional State her home. But that night, it felt like she was reliving that dreadful night when her husband was killed once again when she heard people in her neighborhood shouting and dispersing in all directions.

In a quick reflex, Awa dropped everything, grabbed her children, let out a few animals and began to follow the crowd without exactly knowing where they were heading. They walked, terrified, without stopping for two nights and a day when they reached Wada, a kebele in neighboring district of Seweyna on the Oromia side of the border. Luckily, she and her children made it to Wada OK. However she lost much of her animals.

Awa practiced mixed farming in Amuyurare but drew much of her livelihoods from keeping animals. She had 30 camels, 100 goats and 20 cows. Only a few goats survived the raid and the trek to the south west.

Awa and her family are now internally displaced and living in the Wada site for the internally displaced people (IDP) where LWF is providing WASH and Shelter NFIs, conducting hygiene and sanitation activities, building latrines and constructing a pond. However as services are few and far between her family has split up and part of her family is in Burkadare IDP site.

Awa feels secure in Wada but she worries about her future. Her dream is to return to Amuyurare but does not want to return just yet. For the foreseeable future, Awa would like to stay here in Wada and rebuild her shattered life, reunite with some of her adult children now living in Burkadare.



Left to right - Awa Abdulahi and Hawa Adem Chiriksa who fled with her from Amuyurare, Legehida - ©LWF/2019



Awa Abdulahi recounting her flight from Amuyurare to the LWF Representative Sophie Gebreyes, Wada IDP site, Seweyna ©LWF/2019

Awa says that she is very grateful for the shelter and WASH NFIs, access to sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion although with water being so scarce she has not been able to practice what she's learned as well as she would have liked. Water is her top immediate priority and is very much looking forward to the completion of the pond and the anticipated rains. Midterm though, what Awa really wishes is to earn her living from keeping animals and bring some level of normalcy back to her existence. She is grateful to the Lutheran World Federation and its funding partners, OCHA and IOM for the life-saving support, however is eager to receive early recovery and livelihood support to get some dignity back into her life and no longer be a passive recipient of humanitarian assistance.

Sophie Gebreyes, VIII/III/MMXIX

