



Protection Trends South Sudan

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South Sudan Protection Cluster
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Map of South Sudan



ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AUPSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
BeG	Bahr el Ghazal
COHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
CSB	County Support Base (UNMISS)
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
EU	European Union
FTR	Family Tracing and Reunification
GBV	Gender-based violence
GBV IMS	Gender-based Violence Information Management System
GPAA	Greater Pibor Administrative Area (South Sudan)
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IRNA	Interagency Rapid Needs Assessment
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NLA	National Legislative Assembly (South Sudan)
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organization
POC	Protection of Civilians
PSS	Psycho-social Support Services
ROSS	Relief Organisation for South Sudan
SAF	Sudan Air Force
SOFA	Status-of-Forces Agreement
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Army-in Opposition
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SSDA	South Sudan Democratic Army
SSNPS	South Sudan National Police Service
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UN-OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN-OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 15 December 2013, fighting erupted in Juba among members of the Presidential Guard, and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) subsequently split between forces loyal to the Government and those loyal to former Vice-President Riek Machar. In the days that followed, the conflict spread to the states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile after local SPLA forces disintegrated, often along ethnic lines. Since then, the conflict has created a major protection crisis and forced more than 2.2 million people from their homes.

This report is the fifth in a series of Protection Trends papers prepared by the South Sudan Protection Cluster in close collaboration with the three sub-clusters and other protection actors.¹ Recognizing that protection issues in South Sudan are numerous and complex, this paper focuses on a selection of key issues reported during the second quarter of 2015, between 1 April and early July.

This period was marked by a significant escalation of fighting in the three states of Greater Upper Nile, as the parties to the conflict attempted to make gains on the battle field during the last weeks of the dry season and ahead of the resumption of Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace talks. In Unity State, the SPLA and its associated armed groups launched a major offensive through southern counties in April and May before attacking the strategic town of Panakuach in the north in late May; additional attacks again took place again in the south in June. This offensive was accompanied by massive human rights violations, including the killing of civilians, sexual abuse and rapes, abductions, torture and cruel treatment and forcible recruitment, as well as arson, looting and the destruction of civilian and humanitarian assets.²

In Upper Nile State, the situation took a dramatic turn after Major-General Johnson Olony's Shilluk militia split from pro-Government forces in late April, and both the SPLA and the SPLA-in Opposition (SPLA-IO) repeatedly took over and lost Malakal town. Clashes were also reported in Melut, Baliet, Akoka and Manyo counties. In Jonglei State, clashes between the SPLA and the SPLA-IO continued in the northwest, notably in New Fangak, Ayod, Duk and Uror counties. This fighting constituted both the backdrop and the cause of the protection threats discussed in this report.

The escalation of fighting led to internal displacement as well as refugee outflows. During this quarter, internal displacement (+5% net) again increased at a smaller rate than refugee outflows (+15%). Still, the net increase in both displacement and outflows during the second quarter was higher than the rates observed in the first quarter (January-March). Internal displacement grew by +5 per cent (compared to +2% in the first quarter), and refugee flows grew by +15 per cent (compared to +7% in the first quarter). Civilians in Unity and Upper Nile States were most affected. The fact that fighting prevented people from tending their crops further increased alarming levels of food insecurity. Although Sudan did not host the largest number of refugees in absolute terms, it did experience the highest growth in refugee arrivals this quarter (+47%), with over 38,000 arriving in June alone. Families continued to be separated, with only steady child reunification rates and a sharp decline in registration rates, due to insecurity.

¹ See the papers published in January 2014, May 2014, October 2014 and May 2015. The sub-clusters are Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence and Mine Action.

² UNMISS Human Rights Division, *Flash Human Rights Report on the Escalation of Fighting in Greater Upper Nile, April/May 2015*, 29 June 2015, <http://bit.ly/1RPbe2z>.

Widespread sexual violence remained a deplorable feature of the conflict, with evidence of deliberate ethnic targeting of and reprisals against women and girls. Women continued to be exposed to physical and sexual assault, rape, emotional abuse and forced marriage. Reflecting the conflict's wider dynamics, a higher percentage of survivors identified the alleged perpetrators of this abuse as members of the armed forces and groups. In southern Unity, dozens of women and girls were abducted and subjected to sexual violence, with many more reporting killings, rapes and the burning of *tukuls*.

Grave violations of children's rights also continued, despite commitments by both the Government and the Opposition. More than twice as many reports of such incidents were reported to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) during the second quarter compared to the first (279 vs. 124). Again reflecting the conflict's escalation, most of these were killing (31%) and rape and grave sexual violence (14%). Recruitment and use of children continued, with more than 13,000 children affected by all sides and no formal releases made in the second quarter. Children were abducted, recruited and used in central and southern Unity during the offensive by the SPLA and Government-allied armed groups, and in Upper Nile State by forces associated with Major-General Olony.

The escalation of hostilities also compelled civilians to flee to UNMISS Protection of Civilians (POC) sites, which hosted a record number of individuals by the end of June. Dramatic increases in Melut (+126% compared to early April), Bentiu (+47%) and Malakal (+14%) only heightened the severity of pre-existing protection challenges. This quarter also highlighted the direct link between the hostilities and security in the POC sites, as inter- and intra-communal violence was the main source of the largest and most violent incidents. Further, the threat posed by the POC sites' proximity to the front lines was illustrated not only by the number of IDPs injured by stray bullets but also by the deliberate incursions into and shots fired at the sites by armed soldiers, both in Malakal and Bentiu. IDPs continued to report being shot at, abducted and harassed when leaving the sites, with concerning reports that at least 60 women were ambushed and abducted in Malakal over the course of May and June. Action by SPLA soldiers to deliberately restrict the movement of IDPs trying to reach the Bentiu POC site from the south was also concerning.

Insecurity and violence continued to impact areas that previously had been less directly affected by the conflict. Western Equatoria State was perhaps the most dramatic case, as thousands of people were displaced in Mundri West and Maridi counties after violent attacks by Dinka SPLA soldiers against the local community in the former and conflicts between Dinka and Mundari migrant cattle-keepers and the local community in the latter. The security situation continued to deteriorate in the Greater Bahr el Ghazals due to bombings by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), tensions between political authorities and youths, and a number of clashes between SPLA forces and unknown armed groups. Inter-communal fighting continued in Lakes States despite various peace initiatives, notably between sub-sections of the Dinka-Agar in Rumbek Centre County.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continued to threaten hundreds of communities and endanger the safety of humanitarian workers, peacekeeping forces and development actors. Three landmine accidents were reported in Unity State in May and June, while teams repeatedly surveyed and cleared airfields in Malakal town, Rubkona and Tharjath following clashes or the reported presence of projectiles. Teams also acted directly inside POC sites, notably to conduct searches, destroy weapons, and remove unexploded mortars that had landed in the sites. The number of

recorded accidents and victims increased in the first six months of 2015 compared to the same period in 2014, with 51 victims (+63%) and 16 accidents recorded.

The escalation of fighting had an obvious effect on humanitarian access, which was further constrained. Many organizations withdrew their staff from southern Unity in April and May, and from Malakal and Melut in May. Lack of access to southern Unity was particularly concerning given that an estimated 300,000 civilians continued to be subjected to targeted attacks and deprived of life-saving assistance. NGOs continued to report that their staff were being robbed, harassed, hijacked/ambushed, and subjected to acts of violence and forced recruitment, both in Government- and Opposition-controlled territory. From the beginning of the conflict in December 2013 to early July 2015, at least 27 humanitarian workers had been killed, and at least 61 were missing.

This report concludes by proposing a number of recommendations for the Government, armed forces and groups, UNMISS, humanitarian actors and the international community on measures that could improve the protection environment and mitigate the effects of ongoing protection threats. As the conflict enters its 20th month, there are signs that the resilience of both displaced civilians and the host communities that support them is beginning to wane. This could further expand the size of vulnerable populations in South Sudan and multiply the types of protection threats it faces.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report is the fifth in a series of Protection Trends papers prepared by the South Sudan Protection Cluster in close collaboration with the three sub-clusters and other protection actors.³ After providing an overview of the main security, political and economic developments, the paper discusses selected key issues reported and observed between 1 April and early July 2015: forced displacement, gender-based violence, grave violations of children's rights, protection threats at UNMISS Protection of Civilians (POC) sites, the protection situation outside the Greater Upper Nile region, landmines and explosive remnants of war, and issues around humanitarian space. The report concludes with recommendations for key actors regarding measures that could improve the protection environment and mitigate the effects of ongoing protection threats. The analysis is based on information received from multiple credible sources, including direct witness testimonies, reports by protection actors, and information from the media and other public sources.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

The collapse of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace talks on 6 March 2015 and the operational context provided by the last weeks of the dry season created the perfect storm for both parties to the conflict to attempt to make gains on the battle field. As a result, this second quarter was characterised by a significant escalation in fighting in the three states of Greater Upper Nile, i.e., Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei. In a concerning development, insecurity and violence spread to areas that had been previously less directly affected by the conflict, as discussed in this report's section titled 'Beyond Greater Upper Nile'.

In Unity State, the SPLA and its associated armed groups launched a major offensive through the central and southern counties in April and May, pushing south from Bentiu as well as northeast from Lakes State before attacking Panakuach in the north in late May.⁴ This offensive was accompanied by massive human rights violations including the killing of civilians (including children), sexual abuse and rapes, abductions, torture and forcible recruitment, as well as arson, looting and the destruction of civilian and humanitarian assets.⁵ Additional attacks were reported in late June in Guit, Koch, Leer and Mayendit, notably as SPLA forces and Bul-Nuer militias aligned with the Government, which stole cattle and continued to systematically attack and target civilians.

In Upper Nile State, the situation took a dramatic turn on 1 April when James Bwongo, the deputy of Major-General Johnson Olony, was killed. Olony had been leading a pro-Government Shilluk militia since the beginning of the conflict, but the killing was attributed to Government-backed Dinka armed youths. About 4,550 Shilluk civilians sought protection at the POC site in Malakal between 1 and 6 April, fearing attacks. Fighting between the SPLA and Olony's militia began in Malakal town on 21 April, forcing 1,600 Dinka civilians to the POC site. After weeks of insecurity, Olony/SPLA-in Opposition (SPLA-IO) forces took Malakal on 15-16 May. The town was then repeatedly taken over, either after heavy fighting or tactical withdrawals: the SPLA on 24-25 May, Olony/SPLA-IO forces on 27 June, and

³ See the papers published in January 2014, May 2014, October 2014 and May 2015. The sub-clusters are Child Protection, Gender-based Violence and Mine Action.

⁴ Small Arms Survey Human Security Baseline Assessment for Sudan and South Sudan (HSBA), *The Conflict in Unity State*, 1 July 2015, www.smallarmssurvey.org/facts-figures/south-sudan/conflict-of-2013-14/the-conflict-in-unity.html.

⁵ UNMISS Human Rights Division, *Flash Human Rights Report on the Escalation of Fighting in Greater Upper Nile, April/May 2015*, 29 June 2015, <http://bit.ly/1RPbe2z>.

the SPLA on 6 July. On 28 June, an SPLA-IO spokesperson reported that Olony had officially declared his allegiance to the Opposition, indicating a major fractioning of Government forces along Dinka-Shilluk lines.

After the SPLA-Olony split in Malakal, Olony/SPLA-IO forces launched an offensive in other areas of Upper Nile. Heavy artillery started in Melut town and County on 19 May, forcing hundreds of civilians into the UNMISS County Support Base (CSB) and humanitarians to evacuate. Clashes were also reported in Baliet and Akoka counties in May, and Manyo County in June. Additional sources of insecurity were clashes between the Mabanese Defence Forces and SPLA-IO forces in mid-May around Beneshowa, south of Bunj. Nassir was the site of regular heavy artillery fire throughout April.

In Jonglei State, the situation was calmer overall but clashes between the SPLA and SPLA-IO occurred in the northwest, displacing thousands of civilians.⁶ For example, fighting was reported in New Fangak in late March, in Ayod in early April, and in Duk and Uror Counties in mid-May. Age-set fighting between the Lango and other Murle age-sets in Likuangole County added another layer of insecurity, notably due to the associated build-up of forces in the area. Jonglei was also the region where political fractionalization was most evident, as the Opposition appointed new governors in late May after dividing the State into four new federal states.

In this context, discussions continued on the peace process. In the IGAD-led talks, disagreements persisted about the desirability of non-African participation in an IGAD-Plus modality.⁷ After months of inertia, formal consultations held in Addis Ababa on 8-10 June resulted in a draft peace agreement that was criticized by all the parties, except the G10, the group of formerly detained political leaders.⁸ Civil society organizations and opposition political parties also deplored that they had been excluded. After this apparent failure, informal discussions continued. President Kiir and Riek Machar held consultative meetings in Nairobi under the auspices of Kenyan President Kenyatta in late June and early July, and Alpha Oumar Konaré, the African Union High Representative for South Sudan, visited Juba on 3-5 July. At the time of writing, the IGAD talks were set to resume in late July.

Significantly more progress was made on the Arusha Agreement on the Reunification of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which was signed by the SPLM, the SPLA-IO and the G10 on 21 January 2015. On 15 April, the SPLM announced that all criminal charges against the G10 had been dropped in order to facilitate their return to Juba, as per the Arusha Agreement. Following talks in Kenya, the G10 arrived in Juba on 1 June for a landmark visit. President Kiir then announced that he was revoking his decree dismissing party cadres, including Riek Machar and Taban Deng Gai, the Opposition's Chief Negotiator. The G10 again returned to Juba on 21 June, this time led by Pagan Amum, the former Secretary General of the SPLM and an influential Shilluk politician. On 23 June, the SPLM's National Liberation Council decided to reinstate Amum to his position, a major step toward the implementation of the Arusha Agreement.

⁶ UNMISS Human Rights Division, *Flash Human Rights Report on the Escalation of Fighting in Greater Upper Nile, April/May 2015*, 29 June 2015, <http://bit.ly/1RPbe2z>.

⁷ Under the IGAD-Plus format, the following actors would participate, either as observers or mediators: IGAD countries, the Troika (Norway, U.K. and U.S.), the African Union (AU) High Level Ad Hoc Committee members (Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa), China, the European Union (EU), the AU and the UN.

⁸ The G10 or group of formerly-detained political leaders, are ten senior SPLM party figures arrested by the Government in December 2013 for coup-plotting. Later acquitted, they constitute a third block of negotiators in the peace process.

The international community continued to respond to the situation in South Sudan. On 16 June, USD 275 million were pledged on a total appeal of USD 1.6 billion during a conference in Geneva to raise funds for the humanitarian response. After months of threats, action was taken on the sanctions framework established by UN Security Council Resolution 2206 of 3 March 2015. On 1 July, the Security Council imposed sanctions in the form of global travel bans and asset freezes on six senior military commanders for fuelling the conflict and contributing to the humanitarian crisis.⁹ Then, on 2 July, the UN Human Rights Council passed a resolution to send a fact-finding mission to investigate alleged violations and abuses of human rights in South Sudan.¹⁰ Similar concerns for accountability likewise informed U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's announcement on 4 May pledging USD 5 million to create a court to hold accountable perpetrators of violence.¹¹

Such actions did little to improve the relationship of the international community with the Government, which criticized it for threatening sanctions and failing to provide adequate support. This frustration with the international community culminated on 29 May, when the Council of Ministers decided to expel Toby Lanzer, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UN Humanitarian Coordinator.¹²

In terms of domestic dynamics, fewer incidents against civil society organizations were reported than in previous months. However, this was largely a consequence of self-censorship following earlier waves of repression against journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders who spoke out critically or raised issues considered inappropriate or a threat to national security. Some political actors were also subjected to more direct forms of intimidation. In one notable case, the house of Lam Akol – Chairman of the SPLM-Democratic Change faction and leader of the National Alliance of opposition political parties – was surrounded by security forces from 23 to 26 April. The National Alliance later claimed that the Government had also clamped down on the rights of its other members, for example by not allowing them to travel.

Moreover, legislative action continued to narrow the operating space for NGOs. On 12 May, the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) passed the *Non-Governmental Organizations Bill 2015*, which aims to establish a regulatory framework for the registration, coordination and monitoring of national and international NGOs. The bill raised a number of concerns, amongst others that it would allow Government-appointed officials to control the management of NGOs.¹³ The Bill was returned to the

⁹ On 18 May, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) summit rejected the idea of UN targeted sanctions against South Sudan. See ICGLR, "9th Extra-Ordinary Summit of ICGLR Heads of State and Government", 18 May 2015, <http://www.icglr.org>. By contrast, on 22 May, the AU's Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) requested the UN Security Council to urgently consider the immediate imposition of an arms embargo on the belligerents. See AUPSC, "Press Statement", 22 May 2015, www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-510-press-statement-south-sudan-22-may-2015.pdf. Later, the AUPSC adopted a 14-point communiqué on South Sudan during its 515th meeting. See AUPSC, "Communiqué", 13 June 2015, <http://peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-515th-meeting-of-the-peace-and-security-council-of-the-african-union-at-the-level-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-south-sudan>.

¹⁰ OHCHR, "Human Rights Council extends mandates on Belarus and Eritrea, asks OHCHR to undertake a fact-finding mission to South Sudan", 2 July 2015, www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16188&LangID=E.

¹¹ See U.S. Department of State, "Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry", 4 May 2015, <http://translations.state.gov/st/english/texttrans/2015/05/20150504315124.html#axzz3ZTeJyMbZ>.

¹² Sudan Tribune, "South Sudan explains why UN relief coordinator was expelled", 2 June 2015, www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article55190.

¹³ See NGO Forum's press statement, <http://info.southsudanngoforum.org/dataset/ngo-forum-press-statement-ngo-bill>, 13 May 2015, and IRIN report, <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/will-ngo-bill-restrict-aid-efforts-south-sudan>, 13 May 2015.

NLA in early July by the President. However, its potential for repression was illustrated by reports that the state government in Aweil had issued instructions for all NGOs and UN agencies to register within the next seven days, as per the *NGO Bill*, and provide information such as political affiliation.

The economic situation continued to deteriorate, as evidenced by high rates of inflation, the scarcity of basic commodities, such as fuel and water, and the lack of foreign reserves due to dropping oil revenues. The exchange rate went on a downward spiral before stabilizing due to a cash infusion from regional States following President Kiir's attendance at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) meeting in Angola in mid-May. As people struggled to secure their basic necessities, violent crime continued to rise in Juba, including crime targeting NGO compounds.

A cholera outbreak, which was officially declared in Juba on 23 June, added another level to the Government's public health and economic challenges. As of 5 July, 654 cases including 31 deaths had been reported from 75 villages in eight payams of Juba County, while 51 cases and one death had been reported in Bor, Jonglei State.¹⁴

On 28 May, the lack of progress on all fronts was made clear when the UN Security Council adopted a new resolution (2223) extending UNMISS's mandate to 30 November 2015 with few changes in the language and a strong emphasis on protection of civilians. Heading into the fourth anniversary of its independence, South Sudan was faced with the unenviable title of being ranked the most fragile state in the world for the second year in a row by the Fund for Peace.¹⁵

3. PROTECTION TRENDS

Forced Displacement

The escalation of fighting in Greater Upper Nile led to massive internal displacement in that region, as well as refugee outflows, as seen in Figures 1 and 2.¹⁶ By early July, more than 2.2 million South Sudanese had been displaced by the conflict, of which 1.6 million were displaced internally and over 600,000 fled to neighboring countries.¹⁷

With regards to internal displacement, net internal displacement increased by 5 per cent between end April and end June (second quarter), a higher rate than the 2 per cent increase observed between January and end March (first quarter). Civilians in Unity and Upper Nile States were most affected, with respectively a +40 per cent and +13 per cent net increase in displacement between the quarters. In search of protection, civilians, particularly in southern Unity, reportedly fled to the bush or to remote swampy areas, where there was little or no humanitarian assistance. Other parts of the country saw a decline in the net number of persons displaced, namely Jonglei (-11%) and Lakes State (-4%). While the IDP figures in Eastern Equatoria remained consistent and the one in Central Equatoria decreased (-1%), several thousand people – up to 75,000 according to some reports – were displaced

¹⁴ South Sudan Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation, "Situation Report #14 on Cholera in South Sudan", 5 July 2015.

¹⁵ Fund for Peace, "Fragile States Index 2015", 17 June 2015, <http://library.fundforpeace.org/fsi>.

¹⁶ Note that these maps present informed estimates of displacement figures. Verification exercises are ongoing.

¹⁷ UN News Centre, "UN relief chief heads to South Sudan to bolster humanitarian response as country's challenges mount", 21 July 2015, http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51466#.VbTVD00w_3g.

by violence in Western Equatoria State.¹⁸ More generally, the escalation of hostilities in April came at the peak of the traditional planting season, when food stocks are typically depleted. This severely hampered people's freedom of movement and their ability to tend to their crops and secure their livelihood.

Figure 1. Displacement as of 3 April 2015¹⁹

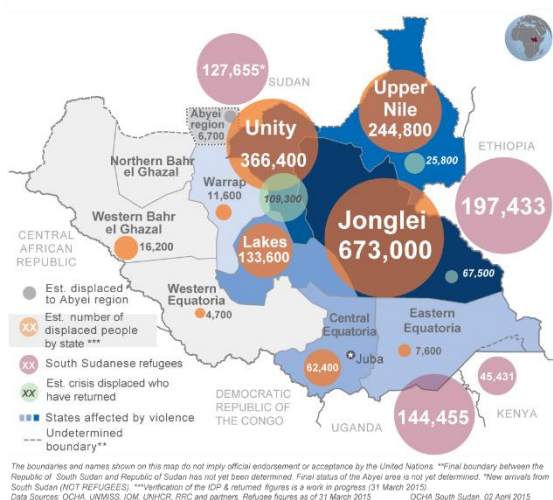
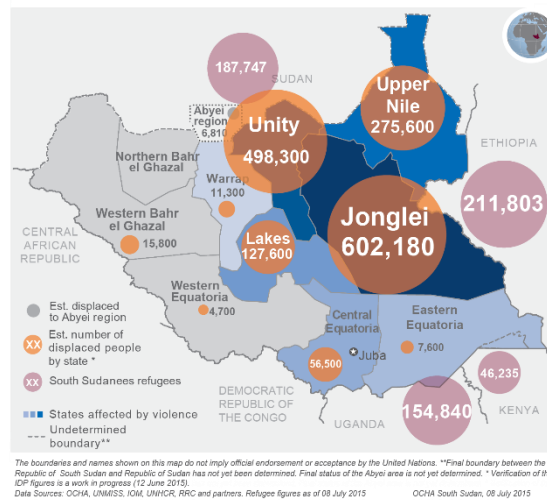


Figure 2. Displacement as of 8 July 2015²⁰



The renewed fighting also heavily affected neighbouring countries. During the second quarter of 2015, the number of South Sudanese fleeing the country grew by 15 per cent, from approximately 522,068 (end March) to 600,758 (end June).²¹ This was double the rate compared to the 7 per cent increase recorded during the first quarter of 2015. Although Sudan did not host the largest number of South Sudanese refugees in absolute terms, it did experience the highest growth during the reporting period, with 60,091 people arriving between the first and second quarter, a +47 per cent increase. In fact, Sudan received 38,311 South Sudanese refugees in June alone, the highest monthly arrival rate since the start of the conflict.²² Ethiopia and Uganda likewise continued to show steady rates of arrival (+7% each), while Kenya saw a smaller increase (+2%). The majority of South Sudanese refugees continued to come from Upper Nile and Jonglei States. Approximately 70 per cent of these refugees were children, and nearly 80 per cent of refugee households were female-headed.²³ Refugees reported that they left either to flee active hostilities or as a precautionary measure. Since the conflict began in December 2013, the overall number of South Sudanese refugees grew from 130,917 to 600,758, making South Sudan the second largest source country of refugees in Africa.²⁴

The escalation of hostilities and the resulting displacement continued to cause family separation. However, heightened insecurity and reduced accessibility during the reporting period made it difficult for protection actors to reach displaced populations. As a result, the number of monthly reunifications remained fairly steady this quarter at 143 per month, compared with monthly averages of 147 last

¹⁸ This displacement is not reflected in the OCHA map, which was prepared before displacement figures were verified. At the time of writing, there was no confirmed displacement figure for Western Equatoria State.

¹⁹ OCHA, *South Sudan Crisis Situation Report No. 81*, 3 April 2015.

²⁰ OCHA, map generated for this report with data as of 8 July 2015.

²¹ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation, Regional Update 68*, 29 June-3 July 2015. For up-to-date refugee data, visit the UNHCR South Sudan Situation Information Sharing Portal at <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>.

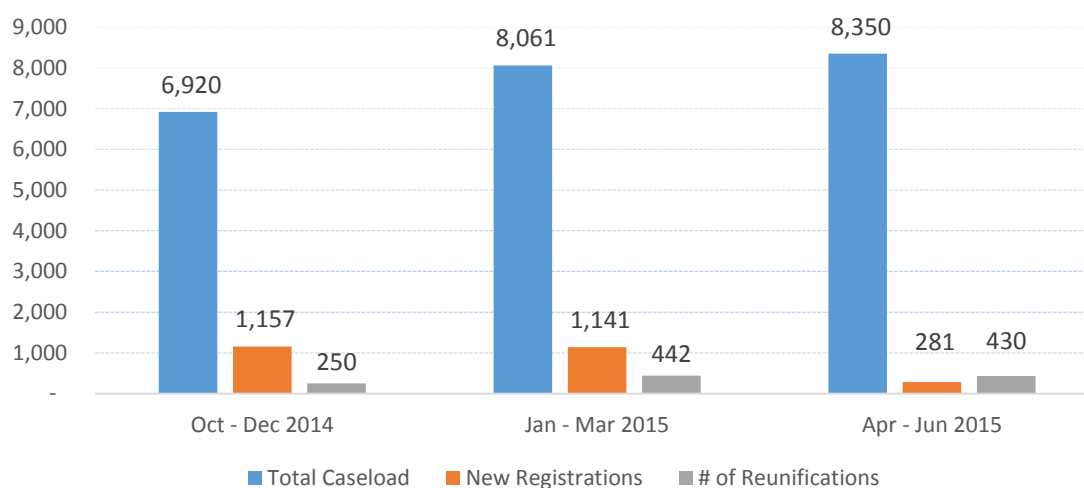
²² UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation, Regional Update 68*, 29 June-3 July 2015.

²³ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation Briefing Note*, June 2015.

²⁴ UNHCR, *UNHCR Global Trends 2014*, June 2015.

quarter, and only 83 during the final quarter of 2014. About 45 per cent of reunified children were girls and 55 per cent were boys. About 43 per cent of all reunifications occurred in Unity State, which also saw the highest number of new registrations (55%). Overall, however, there was a marked decline in the number of new registrations, with only 281 new cases identified this quarter, compared to 1,141 during the last quarter and 1,157 during the final quarter of 2014. Given that displacement increased this quarter, it is likely that the lower number of registrations is a reflection of the insecurity that led partners to relocate and temporarily suspend their family tracing and reunification (FTR) services. Indeed, approximately 14 per cent of registered children were living in areas that were inaccessible to partners, putting 1,100 registered children at risk of secondary separation and delayed reunification. More generally, protection partners continued to make the strategic shift from centre-based to community-based psycho-social services in a bid to ensure the sustainability of assistance for the over 600,000 children believed to be in psycho-social distress.

Figure 3. Family tracing and reunification, quarterly trends, Oct 2014-Jun 2015



Gender-Based Violence

Sexual violence has been a consistent feature of the conflict in South Sudan, with evidence of deliberate ethnic targeting of and reprisals against women and girls.²⁵ According to data from the GBV Information Management System (GBV IMS)²⁶, the majority of survivors continued to be women and girls (94%) during this quarter.²⁷ This is consistent with the data from the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), which indicates that 98 per cent of reported cases of sexual violence against children in the context of the conflict were perpetrated against girls. Women continued to face violence at home, with 35 per cent of reported incidents being intimate partner violence. Referring to Figure 4, physical violence was the most frequently reported type of violence women faced in April and May (48%), while 21 per cent of reported incidents were rape, a 5 per cent increase compared to the first quarter.²⁸ Reflecting the conflict's dynamics, the percentage of reported incidents in which

²⁵ GBV Sub-Cluster, *Guidance Note on Security and Safety*, June 2015.

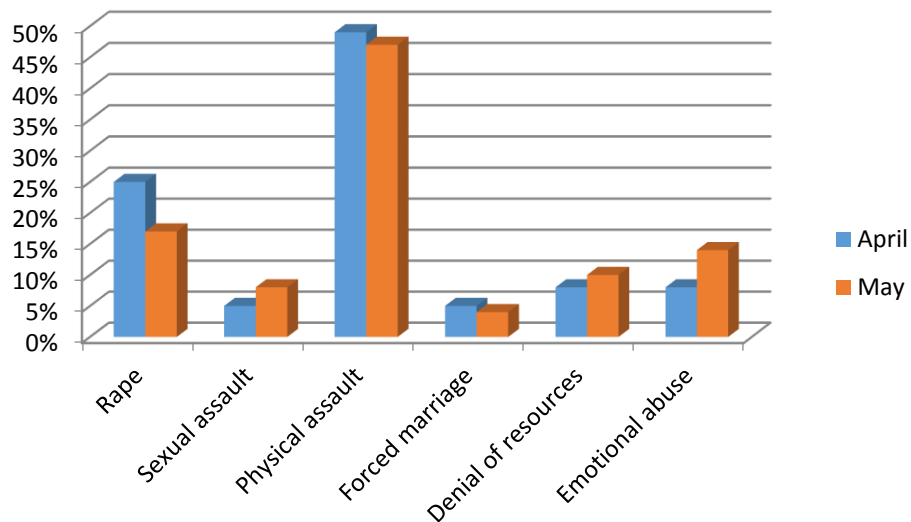
²⁶ South Sudan GBV Information Management System (GBV IMS), *January-May 2015 Trends Analysis*, July 2015. The GBV IMS tool was launched in South Sudan in August 2014. Since then, data-gathering organizations that provide psycho-social services have been submitting data on reported incidents of GBV. A total of 613 reported incidents were received between August 2014 and the end of May 2015. This is a small sub-set of the actual prevalence of GBV in South Sudan, since the GBV IMS only captures cases reported in areas where GBV IMS partners are providing services.

²⁷ GBV IMS, Reports for April and May 2015. The GBV IMS reports for June were not yet available at the time of writing.

²⁸ Ibid.

the alleged perpetrators were identified as members of the armed forces and groups increased by 10 per cent between April and May, from 19 per cent in April to 29 per cent in May. Of the total number of reported cases, men and boys constituted 6 per cent, up from 2 per cent in the previous quarter. GBV partners attributed this increase to awareness-raising activities, community dialogue and the availability of services.

Figure 4. Types of GBV reported in the South Sudan GBV IMS, April-May 2015 (n = 296)



The escalation of fighting in Unity State and resulting displacement had serious implications for women and girls. New arrivals into the Bentiu POC site reported horrific accounts of seeing women and girls killed, abducted, raped and burned, with most sexual violence happening while the population fled. In fact, testimonies gathered for the UNMISS human rights report suggest that at least 172 women and girls had been abducted by late May, while at least an additional 79 were subjected to sexual violence including gang-rape.²⁹ Due to the length of the journey, many GBV survivors were able to seek medical attention only after the critical first 72 hours had elapsed.

In Upper Nile State, lack of humanitarian access to many counties, including Wau Shilluk and Fashoda, further compromised people's access to water, food and medicine. Since women were the primary family caregivers, they had to take additional risks to search for food and water in areas that were unreachable by humanitarians. Some women from Wau Shilluk also had to stay in the Malakal POC site, separated from their children, as security concerns prevented them from freely moving between Malakal and Wau Shilluk. While Malakal was under SPLA control, protection actors received regular reports of abductions and sexual violence against Shilluk women, and to a lesser extent Nuer women, outside the gates. At least eight separate incidents were reported between 28 May and 18 June, with over 60 victims.³⁰ Information received also indicates that men who were with the women at the time of their abductions were sometimes shot dead.

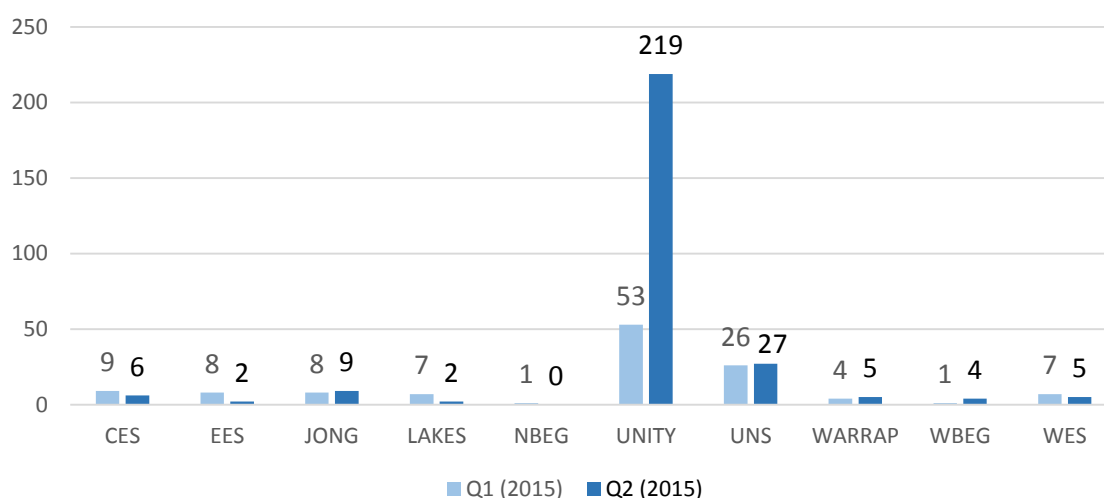
²⁹ UNMISS Human Rights Division, *Flash Human Rights Report on the Escalation of Fighting in Greater Upper Nile, April/May 2015*, 29 June 2015, <http://bit.ly/1RPbe2z>. See also Human Rights Watch, *They Burned it All: Destruction of Villages, Killings and Sexual Violence in Unity State, South Sudan*, July 2015; and Universal Intervention and Development Organization (UNIDO), *Report on Leer and Mayendit*, 15 July 2015.

³⁰ Malakal Protection Cluster, July 2015.

Grave Violations of Children’s Rights

During the second quarter of 2015, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) received more than twice as many reports of incidents of grave violations against children compared to the first quarter. Indeed, 279 incidents were reported during the second quarter, compared to 124 in the first. Referring to Figure 5, the spike in reported incidents from Unity State is due not only to the April-May offensive, which produced a surge in grave child rights violations, but also to the active collection of data by UN monitors.

Figure 5. Incidents of grave violations reported to the MRM per State during first and second quarters (2015)



The majority of the reported violations against children this quarter consisted of killing (31%) and rape and grave sexual violence (14%). This is a stark difference from the first quarter, when over half of reported violations were of the recruitment and use of children (38%) and attacks on and military use of schools (18%). While 219 incidents of grave violations against children were reported in Unity State during the second quarter, only 60 incidents were reported in the rest of South Sudan. Of these, 27 were in Upper Nile State, despite ongoing fighting and reports of military mobilizations in the region. However, these figures likely underestimate the scale and extent of violations outside Unity State, given insecurity and lack of reporting partners.

Multiple credible sources suggest that the recruitment and use of children continued to occur. As of May, over 13,000 children had been recruited and were being used by all sides of the conflict, according to data verified by the UN,³¹ and no formal releases had been made by either side during this quarter. Most reports of such incidents continued to originate from Unity and Upper Nile States.

Prior to the SPLA offensive in Unity State, protection actors had continued to observe and report the recruitment and military use of children by SPLA forces. Following the offensive, witnesses and survivors reported the widespread use of children by the SPLA and Government-allied armed groups. During the first two weeks of May alone, reports suggest that dozens of children were killed, at least 12 raped and others abducted during the Unity offensive, during which children were deliberately

³¹ UNICEF, “Children killed, abducted and raped in South Sudan attacks”, *News Note*, 18 May 2015, www.unicef.org/media/media_81915.html.

targeted.³² Children were both victims and perpetrators of the destruction of villages and crimes committed against the civilian population.

In Upper Nile State, recruitment campaigns continued by elements allied with Major-General Olony's armed group. More reports of the recruitment and use of children were received during the second quarter, although these children may have been recruited prior to this period. Reports also indicate that children were abducted and then trained in Panyikang County, and children were observed with Olony forces in Kodok and Malakal. In one notable incident, IGAD estimates that between 500 and 1,000 children were recruited by Olony forces from 7 to 9 June during house-to-house searches in the villages of Kodok and Wau Shilluk payams.³³

The 1,755 children who were released by the South Sudan Democratic Army (SSDA)-Cobra Faction in the Greater Pibor Administrative Area in the first quarter as part of a pre-existing demobilization campaign continued to receive reintegration services. Re-recruitment had not been reported to date.

In the context of ongoing violence and displacement, the number of children in psychosocial distress was estimated to exceed 600,000. Engaging in a strategic shift, child protection partners continued to transition from centre-based to community-based psycho-social support (PSS). As of June, around 30 per cent of PSS programmes were community-based, compared to 5 per cent in January 2015. This shift was especially important in the Bentiu and Malakal POC sites, where partners responded to high numbers of new arrivals and increased internal tensions. It was also important to respond to the ever-growing number of children in distress outside POC sites.

Protection at UNMISS POC Sites

Due to the escalation of fighting in Greater Upper Nile, a record number of civilians fled to the UNMISS POC sites during the second quarter. By the end of June, 142,170 IDPs – or 6 per cent of the total internally displaced population – were living in POC sites, a 21 per cent increase compared to early April. In Bentiu (+48%), hundreds of people – about 80 per cent of them women with children – arrived each week following the SPLA offensive in southern Unity. In some cases, people arrived by buses and trucks organised by local authorities. Humanitarian actors on the ground estimated that the actual IDP population was closer to 93,000 by end of June, and to 103,000 by mid-July. In Malakal (+14%), a first wave of 4,550 Shilluk IDPs arrived following the 1 April killing of Major-General Olony's deputy, followed by a second wave after the 21 April clashes in Malakal between the SPLA and Olony's forces.

³² UNICEF, "Children killed, abducted and raped in South Sudan attacks", *News Note*, 18 May 2015, www.unicef.org/media/media_81915.html.

³³ IGAD, "Summary of Latest Reports of Violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA)", Reporting Period: 28 May 2015-9 June 2015, <http://southsudan.igad.int/attachments/article/293/Summary%20of%20Latest%20Reports%20of%20Violations%20of%20the%20Cessation%20of%20Hostilities%20Agreement-%20V41-42%20ENG%20%20.pdf>.

Table 1. Official number of IDPs living in UNMISS POC sites³⁴

State	POC site	Number of IDPs			
		31 December 2014 (Q4)	9 April 2015 (Q1)	30 June 2015 (Q2)	% change (Q1 to Q2)
Central Equatoria (Juba)	POC-1 and POC-2	15,484	15,380	8,011 ³⁵	-17%
	POC-3	17,595	19,294	20,652	
Unity	Bentiu	43,718	52,908	78,308	+ 48%
Upper Nile	Malakal	21,420	26,596	30,410	+14%
	Melut	926	944	2,135	+126%
	Nassir	9	0	0	0
Jonglei	Bor	2,694	2,374	2,289	-4%
Western Bahr el Ghazal	Wau	450	362	365	+0.8%
Total		102,296	117,858	142,170	+21 %

The situation in Melut (+126%) was particularly concerning. The clashes of 18-19 May led to the town's take-over by SPLA-IO/Olony forces. Shilluk and Dinka new arrivals joined the pre-existing group of Nuer IDPs. Humanitarian staff were evacuated, and only the UN peacekeepers remained in the UNMISS base, unable to provide assistance beyond water. Some protection actors began returning in late June with small teams, but insecurity prevented the deployment of a full-scale response for IDPs who remained vulnerable to attacks from advancing troops from the Nile River. In late June, the actual IDP population dropped to about 650 people after hundreds of IDPs began moving to Renk, Paloich in Upper Nile State, and to Juba and Sudan due to fears of attacks.

Protection threats inside UNMISS POC sites

In this quarter, the largest and most violent security incidents were caused by inter- and intra-communal tensions that mirrored those existing in the wider conflict.³⁶ The situation in the Malakal POC site was particularly concerning following the arrival of large numbers of Shilluk and Dinka IDPs in April. On 28 May, for example, Shilluk youths attacked Dinka IDPs and killed a Dinka church leader in the new POC site.³⁷ Contrary to previous clashes, Nuer IDPs also joined in the attack on Dinka IDPs. Eight IDPs and one peacekeeper were injured by stray bullets, and dozens of rounds of tear gas were fired by UNMISS forces to control the crowd. Other types of incidents included Shilluk IDPs, mostly youths, harassing Dinka IDPs at water points, setting their houses on fire, and visiting their houses at night for questioning.

In the Bentiu and Juba POC sites, violence was caused by intra-communal tensions between Nuer groups. In the Bentiu POC site, intra-Nuer tensions were observed in mid-May, notably between the Bul-Nuer community from Mayom County, who support the SPLA, and the Nuer communities from others counties. On 22 May, unknown armed men shot two IDPs while scavenging the POC site for Bul-Nuer individuals to avenge SPLA attacks in southern Unity. In Juba's POC-3 site, tensions between the Bul-Nuer community and other Nuer communities culminated in a major fight on 8 May, when

³⁴ UNMISS, official data reported on 31 December 2014, 10 April 2015 and 30 June 2015.

³⁵ The reduction is due to the relocation of IDPs from POC-1 and POC-2 to POC-3.

³⁶ Reports suggest that youth gang activities and violence – which had been one of the main security threats identified in the first quarter of 2015 – decreased in the period under review. That being said, youths were heavily involved in the inter- and intra-communal fighting reported here.

³⁷ South Sudan Protection Cluster, *Protection Update: Upper Nile State (1 April-4 June 2015)*, 5 June 2015.

about 350 IDPs clashed with metal bars and machetes. After low-level fighting on 9 May, 400 IDPs again clashed on 10 May. One IDP was killed and up to 100 wounded. After the incidents, about 3,500 Bul-Nuer IDPs left the POC site for safety, eventually moving to a new Government-run site in Mangateen, a Juba neighbourhood. Such incidents illustrated the direct link between hostilities on the ground and insecurity in the POC sites.

Targeted violence inside POC sites also extended to foreign nationals. In Malakal, Ugandan nationals were compelled to seek refuge in the POC site after a Ugandan attack helicopter allegedly fired at Malakal town in mid-May, and Shilluk youth threatened to lynch them in reprisal. Darfuri traders were also subjected to intimidation and harassment due to the purported support of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) for the SPLA.

As in the first quarter, IDPs in POC sites such as Bentiu, Malakal and Melut continued to be exposed to the physical threats associated with their proximity to the frontlines. In Bentiu for example, three IDPs in the POC site were hit by stray bullets on 29 April. In Malakal, three IDPs sustained wounds after stray bullets landed in the POC site on 15 May during the fighting between SPLA and SPLA-IO/Olony troops. On 19 May, four IDPs were killed and eight injured in Melut after bullets and mortar shells landed in the UNMISS compound and the POC site during heavy fighting near the base.³⁸

In a concerning development, armed forces and groups deliberately made incursions or shot into POC sites. In Malakal, three IDPs and one UNMISS soldier were hit by bullets after SPLA soldiers fired into the POC site on 28 May. Then, on 1 July, three armed men belonging either to the SPLA-IO or Olony's forces fired indiscriminately inside the new Malakal POC extension (the area populated by Dinka IDPs) after climbing the berm. One IDP was killed and six others injured.³⁹ In Bentiu on 5 July, one male IDP was shot in the back and killed inside the POC site, allegedly by two armed men in military uniforms.⁴⁰ Such events constitute a worrying trend that evoke the 17 April 2014 attacks by armed youth on the Bor POC site, which killed 47 civilians, and the 19 December 2013 attack on the Akobo CSB, where at least 20 civilians and two peacekeepers were killed.

Protection threats around UNMISS POC sites

The presence of armed elements near the POC sites continued to pose a major protection risk for IDPs. Incidents in this quarter included shootings, abductions and harassment. For example, three IDPs in Melut were shot and killed on 22 May after exiting the POC site, allegedly by SPLA soldiers who accused them of looting. In Juba on 20 June, five IDPs (including four women) were shot by armed men – possibly SPLA soldiers – near the market outside POC-3, allegedly for violating a Government curfew.

Reports suggest that women were particularly vulnerable when leaving POC sites, notably in Bentiu and Malakal. In Bentiu, 11 female IDPs were reportedly ambushed and abducted on 14 May by suspected SPLA soldiers about 1.5 kilometres north of the UNMISS compound. Women also reported sexual violence by armed forces and groups in Bentiu town, which was considerably militarised. In Malakal, women were regularly harassed by armed forces, notably when leaving to find firewood, water and food for their families.

³⁸ UNMISS, "UNMISS condemns heavy fighting in the vicinity of its base in Melut", press release, 20 May 2015.

³⁹ UNMISS, "UNMISS condemns shooting of civilians at protection site in Malakal", press release, 1 July 2015.

⁴⁰ UNMISS, "UNMISS condemns fatal shooting of civilian in its Bentiu compound", press release, 7 July 2015.

In a worrying trend, IDPs' freedom of movement continued to be restricted around the Bentiu POC site. Beginning in early April, reports were received that SPLA forces were preventing civilians in Bentiu/Rubkona from accessing the POC site, allegedly on the grounds that humanitarian actors could more easily assist them in town. In mid-May, SPLA soldiers were still observed restricting movement through the Charlie Charlie checkpoint, beating IDPs, and possibly collecting fees in exchange for passage. Throughout June, reports were received from protection partners that IDPs from central and southern Unity attempting to reach the POC site were being temporarily prevented from entering Bentiu/Rubkona, notably due to an SPLA defence ring around the town and additional checkpoints in the bush and near the POC site. Civilians at these checkpoints were reportedly attacked, arrested, subjected to sexual violence and/or killed.

UNMISS continued to face persistent challenges in its ability to carry out its POC mandate. While official data on violations of the Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) is not public, incidents included restrictions on freedom of movement and attacks on UNMISS convoys and barges. For example, SPLA forces in Bentiu regularly prevented UNMISS patrols from moving beyond the Charlie Charlie checkpoint in April and May. When successful, patrols were sometimes halted and prevented from reaching their destinations after SPLA soldiers claimed UNMISS did not have the necessary clearance letters or was carrying weapons to the SPLA-IO. SPLA-IO forces and allied militia groups also hindered the Mission's work in areas under their control.

Beyond Greater Upper Nile

Although the three states of Greater Upper Nile continued to be most affected by the conflict in the second quarter, civilians in other areas of South Sudan continued to face various protection threats. The incidents reported below highlight the somewhat artificial distinction between so-called green (peaceful) and red (conflict-affected) States.

Western Equatoria State

In this quarter, there was a dramatic deterioration of the security situation in Western Equatoria State that reportedly displaced more than 75,000 civilians. The situation in Mundri West County began to worsen in mid-May following a shooting incident involving the SPLA.⁴¹ On 22 May, Dinka SPLA soldiers began attacking and killing civilians (including children), looting shops, destroying property and refusing all orders from the SPLA Division VI commander, who was eventually replaced.⁴² Establishing the death toll has not been possible due to the SPLA's initial refusal to allow visits to Mundri town and the river banks, where bodies were allegedly dumped. However, estimates suggest that up to 130 civilians had been killed by the end of May. Protection actors also reported cases of GBV, including the rape of young girls. Children drowned when attempting to cross the Yei River, or were separated from their families. Incidents such as shootings and armed robberies continued in the following days. By early June, some IDPs had begun returning to Mundri following safety assurances from the county

⁴¹ The triggering event took place on 21 May, when unknown gunmen killed two Dinka SPLA soldiers. The SPLA accused a Moru community member. The next day, the Mundri West County Commissioner and the Executive Director were attacked by unknown gunmen near Mundri West town, where they had travelled to investigate the 21 May shooting. The Executive Director was allegedly killed by a Dinka SPLA soldier who was unhappy with the response of local authorities to the shooting.

⁴² The violence in Mundri West was initially attributed to and claimed by both SPLA-IO forces and the Revolutionary Movement for National Salvation (REMNASAS), a rebel group led by Colonel Wesley Welebe. This was refuted by State and county authorities.

commissioner. The town was tense and militarized, with up to 5,000 SPLA soldiers deployed, only a few shops operating and schools closed. Although this deployment aimed to normalize the situation, the presence of SPLA soldiers seemed to delay the return of IDPs, who remained wary of further clashes.

In Maridi town (Maridi County), tensions between local communities and Dinka and Mundari migrant cattle-keepers had been building for months. The cattle keepers, who had fled insecurity in Jonglei State years ago, were allegedly involved in criminal activities and their cattle were destroying crops. Tensions were such that a Presidential decree released on 8 April ordered all migrant cattle-keepers to leave Greater Equatoria within 30 days. The decree's implementation period reportedly began on 20 April, but there was little compliance. Tensions came to a head on 7 June when an unknown assailant threw a hand grenade in a cattle camp about 4 km from Maridi town. One of the owners reacted by killing a student from the local community. The next morning, migrant cattle-keepers supported by SPLA forces reportedly shot sporadically and looted civilian shops in town. At least nine civilians were reportedly killed, several houses were burnt down, and an unknown number of residents were displaced. Later, on 14 June, youth from the local community again clashed with migrant cattle-keepers at Amaki Boma, about 10 km north of Maridi town. The situation worsened at the end of June after Dinka SPLA forces sent from Juba to restore security in Maridi town were reportedly beating and arbitrarily arresting youth. One youth was reportedly killed on 27 June.

Insecurity also spilled into the state capital, Yambio. There, Dinka civilians reportedly fled their homes in early June, fearing revenge attacks from armed youth. At the time of writing, Yambio was hosting approximately 7,500 IDPs from both Mundri and Maridi counties. Most civilians moved west, where they could benefit from the support of Arrow Boys, a community defence group created during the peak of attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army.

Greater Bahr el Ghazals

The economic situation in the three states of Greater Bahr el Ghazal (BeG) – Western BeG, Northern BeG and Warrap States – continued to deteriorate. This resulted in reduced household access to food and generalised food insecurity, with nutrition partners reporting that global acute malnutrition rates were above the 15 per cent emergency threshold in Warrap and Northern BeG states.⁴³

From 8-11 April, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) reportedly bombed several suspected Sudan Revolutionary Front areas in the Bahr el Ghazals.⁴⁴ Also in April, the SAF reportedly conducted bombings around Raja County (Western BeG), allegedly to target JEM elements. Such bombings endangered the physical safety of civilians, and the resulting displacement prevented them from undertaking their regular farming activities.⁴⁵ Insecurity in Raja County was further highlighted in June, when fighting was reported between the SPLA and an unknown armed group in the Khor Shaman area (21 June) and an SPLA camp in Boro Medina (15 June). Bombings by SAF aircraft were also reported in

⁴³ UNICEF, "South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report # 59", 8-21 May 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/unicef-south-sudan-humanitarian-situation-report-59-8-21-may-2015>.

⁴⁴ International Crisis Group, "CrisisWatch: South Sudan, 30 April 2015", www.crisisgroup.org.

⁴⁵ IRNA Report, *Raja County (Raja town, Diem Jalab, Menemba, Katta and Boro Medina), Western Bahr el Ghazal State*, 20-22 May 2015.

mid-June in the border areas of Maban and Renk counties, Upper Nile State, reportedly killing at least one soldier and injuring women and children.⁴⁶

During the reporting period, two attacks took place in Wau County, WBeG. The first one occurred in Bazia, Kpaile Payam on 31 May and the second on 29 June in Farajalla. In the Bazia attack, unknown armed men killed two people, abducted six members of the organized forces, and looted. On 3 June, the SPLA reportedly launched an attack to flush out the attackers, and up to 17 soldiers were killed. In Farajalla, located about 35 km from Wau town, heavy clashes took place between SPLA/SSNPS forces and an armed group. Eight soldiers and three civilians were reportedly killed, and several houses burned. Reports received by protection actors suggest that up to 5,000 civilians were displaced to Ngodakala. Instability in Wau County was further illustrated by two high-profile killings: the Paramount Chief of Baggari was killed on 11 May, while a government official was killed on 18 June, both by unknown armed attackers. Reported defections of soldiers in Wau in late May also potentially created protection threats for civilians.

The situation in Northern BeG State was also concerning, although there was little visibility on conflict dynamics and displacement. According to protection actors, Aweil North County continued to host civilians fleeing violence and militia attacks in the contested border region of Abyei, as well as IDPs from Unity and Upper Nile States. Attacks by armed men, possibly SPLA-IO forces, were also reported around Gok Machar, an SPLA garrison town, in mid-June. Local reports in May of a build-up of Sudanese militias and SPLA forces along the border in May, had been followed by reports that some civilians had left their villages for more secure locations. Protection threats also came from the North, as Sudanese militias reportedly attacked Jack Payam on 30 May, burning down dozens of houses and beating and abducting women. Such reports remained unconfirmed due to the limited presence of humanitarian and UNMISS actors in the area, yet they indicated rising protection threats for the local population.

In Warrap State, political instability continued to cause tensions, as the extension of Governor Nyandeng Malek's term led to more power struggles, discontent among the youth, and the growth of new opposition groups.⁴⁷ Cattle raiding from Lakes and Unity States and anger amongst SSNPS officers over salary payments created additional sources of tension. Inter and intra-ethnic fighting were also reported. On 19 May, the Mouk, Thony and Jurwier fought in Tonj South County following a dispute over agricultural land, highlighting the real effects of resource scarcity. On 23 May, two Dinka sub-clans (the Aguok and Apuk) clashed in Gogrial West County, killing three and injuring nine. Cattle-raiding by members of the Misseriya was also reported on 25 May, killing up to eight people. This raised concerns since it was the first such incident related to Misseriya migrations in many months.

Lakes State

The pattern of cattle-raiding and revenge attacks related to inter-communal violence continued in Lakes State despite various peace initiatives. Fighting between sub-sections of the Dinka-Agar continued to be particularly worrisome, with incidents between the Pakam, Kuei and Ruop sub-sections reported throughout the second quarter in Rumbek Centre County. Clashes between the Dhiei and Panyon were also reported in Rumbek Centre in early June. The Guony and Thuyeyic sections

⁴⁶ Security Council Report, *Sudan/South Sudan, July 2015 Monthly Forecast*, 1 July 2015, www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2015-07/sudansouth_sudan_3.php.

⁴⁷ Radio Tamazuj, "Warrap youths question legitimacy of Governor Nyandeng", 1 July 2015, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/warrap-youths-question-legitimacy-governor-nyandeng>.

on one hand, and the Kok-Awac and the Kok-Pachuar on the other, also continued to clash in Rumbek East County. The resulting instability and violence continued to take a heavy toll on the civilian population and lead to an unknown number of deaths and displacement.

Insecurity in Unity State due to the hostilities also trickled into Lakes State. In addition to insecurity caused by the build-up of SPLA forces that eventually attacked southern Unity from Maper County, clashes between SPLA and SPLA-IO forces around 20 May at Madol Payam, a contested area claimed by both Unity and Lakes States, led to the displacement of about 3,700 people in Rumbek North County.⁴⁸ During the attack, the County Commissioner and allegedly many women and children were killed, and several houses were burned.

Also of concern were reports that the State Government had issued a 'shoot-to-kill' order on 18 June in a bid to improve security in Rumbek town. The order, which instructed security forces to kill any civilian carrying a gun in town, followed on the heels of a shooting incident near the UNMISS base in Rumbek, during which SSNSPS officers reportedly fired into the air to disperse two youth groups fighting. Like the order issued in February 2015, this one did not immediately lead to reported deaths, but its potential for abuses raised a number of concerns.

Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continued to threaten hundreds of communities and endanger the safety of humanitarian aid workers, peacekeeping forces and development actors during the second quarter. The escalation of fighting in Unity and Upper Nile States also demonstrated the continuing need for mine action interventions to open major supply lines and clear airfields to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance and support POC activities.

Landmine accidents on 5 and 14 May on the Mayom Junction to Torabeid road, which is a major transit route for supplies and personnel in Unity State, injured two individuals and hindered the movement of aid to Bentiu at a critical time in the dry season. Route verification and clearance were required in the high threat area to safely resume humanitarian and UNMISS convoys. A third reported mine accident in Unity State on the Tor-Hufra road on 22 June reportedly killed seven military personnel and injured 16 others. The accident will be investigated when access to the area is possible.

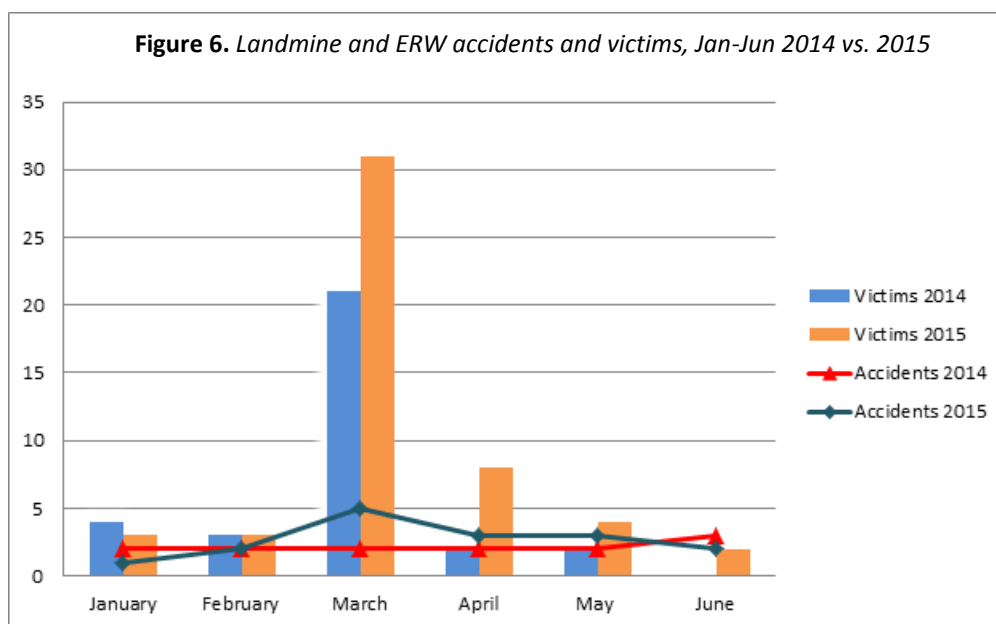
After 21 April, renewed conflict in Malakal threatened the conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance by air due to repeated attacks in the vicinity of the airfield. Mine action teams were needed to conduct survey and ERW clearance at the airfield on four occasions to ensure that it was safe to resume UNMISS and humanitarian flights. In Unity State, a mine action team was needed to conduct battle area clearance at the Rubkona airstrip on 13-14 June following an explosion of Government ammunition. Non-technical survey and clearance was also required at the Tharjath airstrip following a request for humanitarian assistance to IDPs in Rier. A mine action team conducted the survey and removed a projectile from the airstrip to allow future aid operations to proceed.

The requirement for mine action support to POC sites continued, with survey and clearance operations being undertaken, among other places, at the UNMISS base in Melut, Upper Nile State, which hosts

⁴⁸ IRNA Report, *Rumbek North (Meen Center, Amok, Rumkor and Maper Center), Lakes State, 17-18 June 2015.*

IDPs and humanitarian and UNMISS personnel. Support was needed following heavy fighting, which led to reports that 20 mortar rounds had impacted the camp. The team surveyed the base and removed two unexploded mortars for destruction. Continued assistance has also been needed with arms and ammunition searches in POC sites and with requests to destroy weapons. Operations were also needed in communities, along routes, and at airfields in Jonglei and Warrap States, and in the Equatorias and Bahr el Ghazals.

With the conflict now in its second year, the number of recorded accidents and victims has increased in comparison to 2014. As of 30 June, there had been 51 mine/ERW victims recorded to date in 2015, compared to 32 for the first half of 2014. There had also been 16 mine/ERW accidents in 2015, which was equivalent to all of 2014. In 2015, the number of accidents remained constant in the first two quarters. However, the victim rates in the second quarter were 62 per cent lower than in the first.



In the second quarter, the trend indicating an increase in the number of Hazardous Areas⁴⁹ recorded in the Information Management System for Mine Action database continued, despite ongoing clearance operations. As of 30 June, 834 Hazardous Areas had been recorded, an increase of nearly 11 per cent from the previous quarter. Mine action teams provided assistance in all states and provided risk education to more people in 2015 than in all of 2014. Similarly, the teams destroyed more mines/ERW during clearance operations in 2015 to date than in all of 2014.

Overall, through survey and clearance, mine action teams released more than 6.4 million square metres of land to communities during the second quarter. That translates into a 76 per cent increase in the amount released during the previous quarter. These interventions have improved opportunities for freedom of movement, humanitarian operations and livelihood activities. In addition, 161,587 people were reached with mine risk education, which continued to play an important preventative role. This is especially important given the increasing trend in displacement and potential future

⁴⁹ "Hazardous area" is a generic term used for an area perceived to have mines and/or ERW.

voluntary movements, as people move into unfamiliar areas or locations which have been affected by mines and ERW.

Closing Humanitarian Space

With the escalation of hostilities in Greater Upper Nile, the operational environment for humanitarian partners working in both Government and Opposition controlled areas deteriorated significantly. Many actors working in southern Unity withdrew their staff in April and May, while staff were withdrawn from Malakal and Melut (Upper Nile) in May.⁵⁰

Humanitarian partners did not have access to large parts of Unity State during the reporting period. In order to reach people in need, they dropped survival kits for populations seeking refuge on islands or in other remote locations. Humanitarians had to adopt a cautious approach to avoid revealing IDPs' hiding spots and further exposing them to harm. According to the UN, this denial of life-saving humanitarian assistance affected more than 300,000 people.⁵¹

Humanitarian access in Upper Nile State was intermittent and largely depended on the dynamics of the conflict between SPLA forces, Olony's militia and the SPLA-IO in various parts of the State. Access challenges had a direct impact on IDPs. For example, health partners in Wau Shilluk, which is about 20 km east of Malakal and is accessible only by air or water, reported that some 38,500 IDPs were in urgent need of clean water, sanitation and medical supplies.⁵²

According to an access survey conducted by the South Sudan NGO Forum in June,⁵³ 45 per cent of NGOs reported having staff threatened or harassed, 30 per cent reported staff being direct victims of violence, and 15 per cent reported staff being subjected to attempted or successful forced recruitment, both in Government (23%) and Opposition (46%) controlled areas, or in both (31%). Forty-six per cent of NGOs have had to suspend their activities, with the estimated total number of suspension days standing at 1,560, mostly due to the conflict in Unity and Upper Nile States. Fifty-five per cent of NGOs experienced issues related to the movement of staff within country; 60 per cent of these cited staff ethnicity as a factor.

Moreover, OCHA's April *Access Snapshot* showed that the total number of reported access incidents increased 12 per cent, from 64 cases in March to 72 in April.⁵⁴ OCHA also reported a sharp increase in suspended activities (29 incidents) and withdrawals of staff (5 incidents). Violence against personnel and assets continued to be reported, with robberies being the most common form (31%) followed by harassment and hijacking/ambushes (14% each). From the beginning of the conflict in December 2013 to early July 2015, at least 27 humanitarian workers had been killed, and at least 61 were missing.

⁵⁰ See e.g.: WSJ, "U.N. Evacuates Staff from South Sudan", 11 May 2015, www.wsj.com/articles/u-n-evacuates-staff-from-south-sudan-1431344971. MSF, "MSF calls on warring parties to respect medical facilities in South Sudan as the humanitarian organization is forced to evacuate staff again", 9 May 2015, www.msf.org/article/south-sudan-msf-calls-warring-parties-respect-medical-facilities-south-sudan-humanitarian.

⁵¹ UN News Centre, "South Sudan: heavy fighting and reported 'atrocities' in northeast force UN to evacuate staff", 11 May 2015, www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50818#.VZ6VSRawRUY.

⁵² OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Biweekly Update 30 June 2015*, <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-biweekly-update-30-june-2015>.

⁵³ South Sudan NGO Forum, *Access survey summary findings*, 20 June 2015. The survey took place between 5 and 13 June. 81 NGOs (61 INGOs and 20 NNGOs) responded. It did not include UN agencies funds and programmes.

⁵⁴ The May and June 2015 Access Snapshots had not been finalized at the time of writing this report.

The humanitarian relief arm of the SPLA-IO was renamed the Relief Organisation for South Sudan (ROSS) during a humanitarian conference in Nairobi on 19-20 June.⁵⁵ During the meeting, the ROSS committed to not levy taxes, fees or travel permits on humanitarian organizations and staff operating in Opposition-held territory.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the situation described above, protection actors in South Sudan propose the following recommendations for measures that should be taken to mitigate protection threats and improve the protection environment for displaced civilians and other conflict-affected persons.

Government of the Republic of South Sudan

- Investigate and hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including grave human rights violations against children.
- Respect the provisions of the SOFA and provide full and unhindered access to UNMISS so it can implement its mandate.

All armed forces and armed groups

- Stop systematic and targeted attacks on civilians, and ensure respect of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreements.
- Stop forced recruitment and/or the use of children in the conflict, and ensure the implementation of the action plans agreed to with the United Nations to end the recruitment and/or use of children by 2016.
- Stop rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and ensure implementation of the October and December 2014 commitments signed with the United Nations that prohibit the use of sexual violence in the conflict.
- Allow freedom of movement for all civilians to enable them to reach protection areas, seek services and engage in livelihood activities.
- Refrain from the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of landmines and cluster munitions.

UNMISS

- Take action to respond to the deterioration of the security situation in southern Unity.
- Ensure that all UNMISS compounds remain able and willing to receive civilians seeking protection in POC sites.
- Undertake a more proactive implementation of the Chapter VII POC mandate, including by reallocating troops to areas with the greatest protection needs and by working with protection actors to systematize patrols in high-risk areas around POC sites.

Humanitarian and international community

- Keep protection central to the humanitarian response by providing robust support to the implementation of the HCT Protection Strategy.
- Prioritize and support protection activities in the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan.

⁵⁵ ROSS, "Press Statement", Ref ROSS/Pagak/06/07, 19 May 2015. ROSS was previously called Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (RRA).

- Encourage the prioritization of humanitarian mine action to facilitate safe humanitarian access and the protection of civilians, notably by including mines/ERW mitigation activities in planning for IDPs, refugees and returnees.

5. CONCLUSION

This report has presented the main protection concerns reported in South Sudan during the second quarter of 2015. This period was characterized by systematic and targeted violence committed by all warring parties against the civilian population, particularly in the Greater Upper Nile area, in contravention of international humanitarian and human rights law. The escalation in the conflict, which included gender-based violence and forced and child recruitment, resulted in internal displacement, as well as refugee outflows. Civilians continued to suffer immensely, inside and outside UNMISS POC sites, as well as within and beyond Greater Upper Nile. The ability of humanitarian actors to respond and of IDPs to protect themselves was further compromised by threats from landmines/ERWs and by a further closing of the humanitarian space.

Civilians continued to bear the brunt of the conflict's direct and indirect consequences, as the humanitarian crisis was further compounded by the deterioration of the economy. With over 90 per cent of the displaced population living outside the POC sites, host communities have been the main sources of support, particularly in remote areas that humanitarian actors cannot access. As the conflict enters its 20th month, there are signs that the resilience of both groups is beginning to wane. This could further expand the size of the vulnerable population in South Sudan and multiply the types of protection threats it faces.

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