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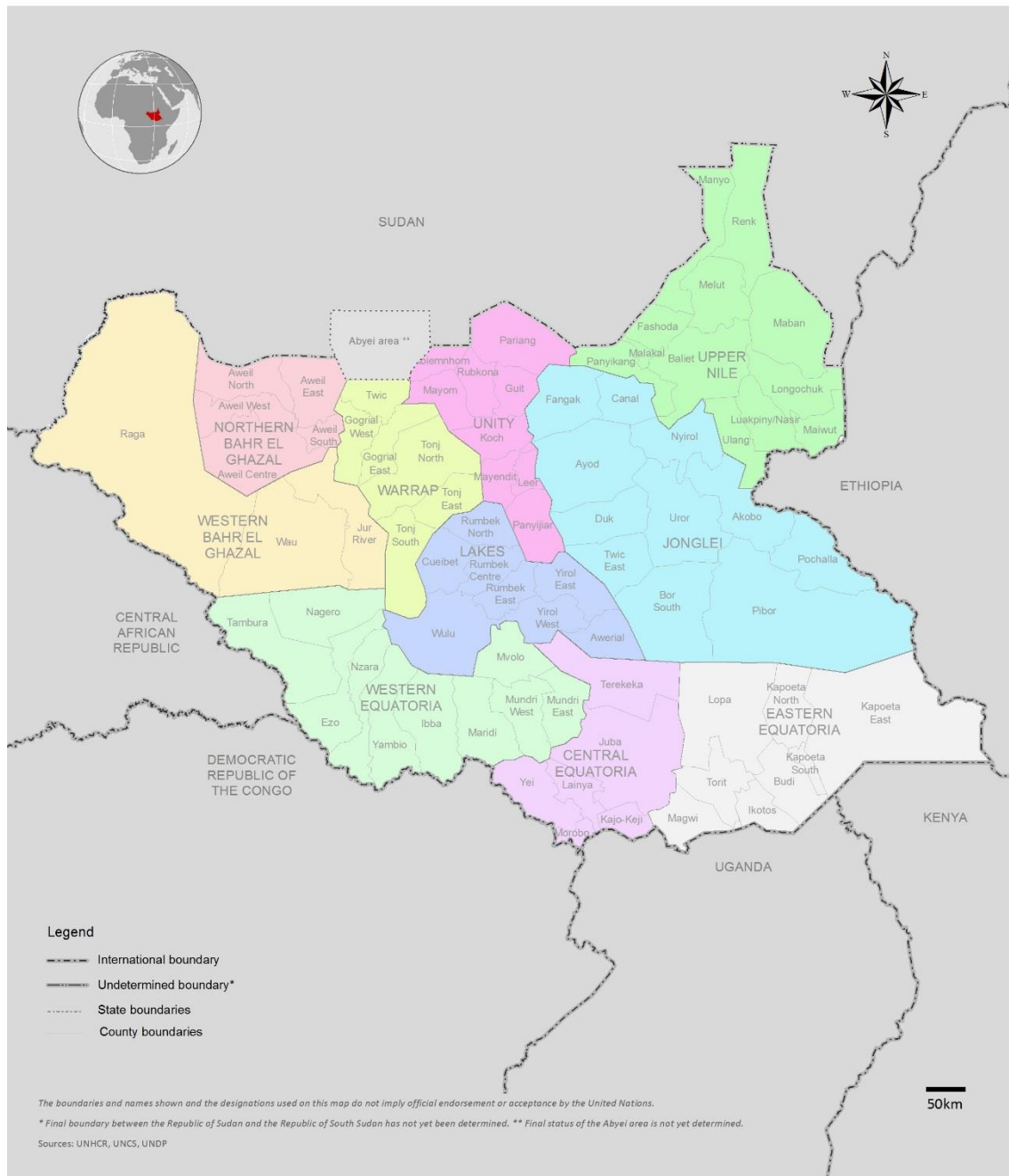
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Map of South Sudan



ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AUPSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
BeG	Bahr el Ghazal
CAFFAG	Children Associated with Fighting Forces and Armed Groups
CMR	Clinical Management of Rape
CRA	Compensation and Reparation Authority
CTRH	Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
ERW	Explosive remnants of war
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPU	Formed Police Units (UNMISS)
FTR	Family tracing and reunification
GBV	Gender-based violence
GBV IMS	Gender-based Violence Information Management System
HCSS	Hybrid Court for South Sudan
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally-displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IRNA	Interagency Rapid Needs Assessment
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NNGO	National non-governmental organization
NSS	National Security Services (South Sudan)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCTSA	Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements
POC	Protection of civilians
PSS	Psycho-social support
QRT	Quick Response Teams
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
SSNPS	South Sudan National Police Service
TOB	Temporary Operating Base (UNMISS)
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UXO	Unexploded ordnance
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 Greater Upper Nile (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 2.27 million people from their homes.

This report is the sixth 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 key issues reported during the third quarter of 2015 (Q3), between 1 July and 30 September.

This period was marked by ongoing fighting in the three states of Greater Upper Nile. Despite the signing in August of the *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan*, attacks were reported in the southern and central counties of Unity State and certain parts of Upper Nile State. In addition to direct threats related to hostilities, this quarter brought a further degradation of the general protection environment for civilians across the country due to a protracted economic crisis, increased food insecurity, and a crackdown on freedom of expression.

Fighting and food insecurity continued to cause internal displacement as well as refugee outflows, with 1.64 million people displaced internally and more than 633,000 fleeing to neighboring countries by the end of September, a 3 per cent increase in total displacement compared to the end of the second quarter (June). However, the net displacement rates were lower than in the previous quarter: internal displacement increased 3 per cent between Q2 and Q3 (compared to 5% between Q1 and Q2), while refugee outflow increased 6 per cent (compared to 15%). Consistent with the trend observed since the beginning of 2015, internal displacement again increased at a lower rate than refugee outflows (+3% vs. +6%). Unity and Upper Nile states continued to see high rates of displacement and the highest total number of people displaced. However, the most significant increases in relative terms between the quarters were observed in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Western Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria states. Most new refugees fled to Uganda and Ethiopia, with a noticeable decline in the number arriving in Sudan. Families continued to be separated, although twice as many children were reunified with their parents or caregivers, and new registrations tripled compared to the second quarter. The number of children in psychological distress continued to rise (+46%), with ongoing displacement, lack of services and trauma straining the ability of both children and caregivers to remain resilient.

Sexual violence, including rape, continued to be a characteristic of the conflict, and constituted one in every four cases of incidents reported to the Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBV IMS). Women and girls in Unity State were particularly vulnerable, with estimates that over 1,300 were raped between April and September in the context of the Government offensive in the southern

¹ See the papers published in January 2014, May 2014, October 2014, May 2015 and August 2015 at www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/south-sudan/protection. The sub-clusters are Child Protection, Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Mine Action.

counties. Women also continued to be exposed to harmful traditional practices such as child, early and forced marriage, and to resort to dangerous coping mechanisms to support their families, such as survival sex. As in the second quarter, the largest group of alleged GBV perpetrators recorded in the GBV IMS were members of armed groups, although this number fluctuated in relation to conflict dynamics: from 19 per cent of the total in April, up to 29 per cent in May, and then down to 6 per cent in September.

Grave violations of children's rights also continued despite commitments by both the Government and the Opposition. Only half as many reports of such incidents were reported to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) during the third quarter compared to the first (156 vs. 324). The majority of reported violations this quarter consisted of the recruitment and use of children (27%), killings (26%), and sexual violence (19%), in line with the trend in 2015 to date. Again this quarter, most reports originated from Unity State (65%). As of the end of September, it was estimated that 15,000 to 16,000 children had been recruited since the beginning of the conflict, up from the estimated 13,000 at the end of June. No formal releases have been made by the SPLA or the SPLA-in Opposition (SPLA-IO) since the conflict began.

Hostilities and food insecurity also continued to compel civilians to flee to UNMISS Protection of Civilians (POC) sites, which hosted 184,282 IDPs by the end of September, a record number and an 80 per cent increase compared to the beginning of the year. As in the second quarter, significant increases in the Malakal (+49%) and Bentiu (+37%) POC sites amplified the severity of pre-existing protection challenges related to service delivery, security, health and congestion, while the significant reduction of IDPs in Melut (-67%) illustrated the consequences of severe insecurity in and around that site. Contrary to previous quarters, the main source of violence seemed to be armed criminality by IDPs rather than inter- and intra-communal violence or incursions by armed forces. The presence of armed elements near the sites continued to pose a protection risk for IDPs, although security incidents seem to decrease overall with the exception of Bentiu. Restrictions by SPLA forces on the freedom of movement of IDPs between the Malakal POC site and the west bank of the Nile River were particularly concerning, as were ongoing violations of the Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA).

In this quarter, insecurity and violence increased in areas that previously had been less directly affected by the conflict, raising the prospect of a wider breakdown of law and order. The situation in Western Equatoria State deteriorated further in the third quarter, with security incidents between Dinka SPLA soldiers and local communities in Mundri West, Maridi and Yambio displacing thousands. New flashpoints of instability emerged in Central Equatoria State, where fighting between SPLA soldiers and unknown armed groups in western Juba County displaced thousands. Armed criminality in Juba rose significantly, as did incidents of killings, banditry and ambushes on Juba's arterial roads. The situation led to the dismissal of both state governors in mid-August, which further entrenched Equatorians' dissatisfaction. The economic and food insecurity situations continued to deteriorate in the Bahr el Ghazals and in Warrap State, while cattle-raiding, inter-communal violence and disarmament activities continued to be major causes of deaths, insecurity and displacement in Lakes State.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continued to threaten thousands of communities and endanger the safety of humanitarian workers, peacekeeping forces and development actors. This quarter coincided with the end of the demining season and the shift to Quick Response Teams, which

were deployed to Bentiu, Malakal, Bor and Juba to facilitate the movement of aid, IDPs and UNMISS patrols. Despite having closed more Hazardous Areas in 2015 than in any previous year, overall progress was impeded by the creation of 1,712 new such Areas, 148 of which were found during the third quarter (9%).

Restrictions on humanitarian access by road, river and air continued to hamper humanitarian activities due to deliberate bureaucratic obstructionism and insecurity, as well as bad infrastructure and poor road conditions related to the rainy season. After a brief return in early August, all humanitarian staff were withdrawn again from southern and central Unity due to hostilities. Humanitarian access into Malakal was severely restricted from the end of June until 7 August due to the refusal of the SPLA to grant flight safety assurances, causing severe shortages in fuel, food, medicine and water in the humanitarian hub and the POC site. Access into Wau Shilluk was also severely restricted by the SPLA until early August (when air assistance resumed) and early October (when river assistance resumed). Crime in Juba affected NGO staff and operations, with 49 compound robberies reported during the quarter. Illustrating the dangers associated with humanitarian work in South Sudan, nine humanitarian workers were killed during the reporting period. This brought the total recorded deaths of humanitarians between 15 December 2013 and 30 September 2015 to 36, up from 27 reported at the end of June (+33%). Many more remained missing and unaccounted for, or were victims of assault, threat, harassment, detention and abduction.

The report concludes by proposing a number of recommendations for the Government, armed forces and groups, UNMISS, the Security Council, humanitarian actors, and the donor and diplomatic community on measures that could improve the protection environment and mitigate the effects of ongoing protection threats. As the last quarter of 2015 began, measures by President Salva Kiir made it apparent that the peace agreement would not be a panacea to solve the political crisis that underlies the conflict. Questions about the future of the POC sites are expected to become more prominent, and will require the active engagement of humanitarians to ensure that discussions are informed by protection principles. Moving forward, justice and accountability measures will also be key to promoting reconciliation and deterring future conflict, with some positive developments on this front observed in late October. Despite recent achievements, the long road to peace has only just begun, and all parties will have to be fully engaged to ensure that South Sudanese citizens can live without fear and want.

1. INTRODUCTION

*“We are the people who are suffering from this war.
It is the small people who suffer; they just want peace.
Children and the elderly and vulnerable people are the ones being violated.”*

– Mary, Jonglei State

This report is the sixth 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.² After providing an overview of major political and economic developments, the paper discusses the trends pertaining to key issues reported and observed in the third quarter (1 July to 30 September 2015). These issues are forced displacement, gender-based violence (GBV), 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 humanitarian access. 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 and corroborated sources, including direct witness testimonies, reports by protection actors on the ground, and information from the media and other public sources.

2. CONTEXT OVERVIEW

After preliminary consultations were held in June and July 2015, this quarter was marked by the resumption of negotiations in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace process in Addis Ababa.³ On 17 August, following lengthy negotiations that began on 6 August, the SPLM/A in Opposition and the group of formerly detained political leaders (G10) signed the *Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan* (‘peace agreement’). The Government expressed reservations about some of the provisions of the agreement and requested an additional 15 days to consult its constituencies. This apparent reluctance prompted the United States to circulate a draft Security Council resolution to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan and place targeted sanctions on the country’s top military leaders if the agreement was not signed by 1 September.⁴ Under tremendous pressure, President Salva Kiir signed on 26 August, adding a document with 16 reservations that remains unrecognized by the international community. Sealing the deal, the peace agreement was ratified by the National Legislative Assembly (for the Government) and the Liberation Council (for the SPLM/A in Opposition) on 10 September.⁵

² See the papers published in January 2014, May 2014, October 2014, May 2015 and August 2015 at www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/south-sudan/protection. The sub-clusters are Child Protection, Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Mine Action.

³ For a fuller narrative on the peace process, see UN Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan, covering the period from 14 April to 19 August 2015*, S/2015/655, 21 August 2015. In a major move towards the peace process, Pagan Amun was officially reinstated as the SPLM Secretary General on 14 July, although President Kiir’s action on SPLM leadership structures on 16 October cast doubt on his future in the party. Also necessary was legislative action to extend the President’s tenure. On 8 July, he was inaugurated for another three years, as per the constitutional amendment bill adopted by the National Legislature on 24 March.

⁴ The draft resolution was circulated on 19 August and would have been implemented under the 2206 sanctions regime established on 3 March 2015. Action was put on hold on 15 September following objections from Russia, Venezuela and Angola.

⁵ UN, “Communiqué from High-Level Event on South Sudan at Headquarters”, SG/2221-AFR/3230, www.un.org/press/en/2015/sg2221.doc.htm, 29 September 2015.

As a first step toward implementing the agreement, an IGAD Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements (PCTSA) Workshop was held in Addis Ababa on 13-17 September. Although consensus was reached on most of the agenda items, disagreements regarding transitional security arrangements, including modalities pertaining to the Joint Integrated Police for Juba, created major obstacles to the implementation of the key provisions set out for the 90-day Transitional Period. These included notably the redeployment of all military forces to demilitarize Juba and the withdrawal of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF).

The signing of the peace agreement had a mixed impact on the security situation in the conflict-affected states. Fighting in Greater Upper Nile worsened in the period that preceded the coming into effect of the permanent ceasefire on 29 August, as each side attempted to make further gains on the ground. Fighting continued thereafter, with most clashes occurring in parts of Upper Nile and Unity states after a lull in mid-September. IGAD reported 49 ceasefire violations between 8 February 2014 and 22 September 2015, two of which occurred after the permanent ceasefire – but many more clashes are known to have occurred.⁶ The announcement on 10 August by Peter Gadet and Gathoth Gatkuoth, two Opposition major-generals who were dismissed by Riek Machar on 21 July, that they were uniting as the Federal Democratic Party and would not respect the peace agreement, pointed to future challenges in its implementation and the further fractionalisation of forces.⁷

In addition to direct threats related to the conflict, this quarter brought a further degradation of the general protection environment for civilians due to the continued worsening of the economic situation, increased food insecurity, and a crackdown on freedom of expression.

The protracted economic crisis continued, with estimates suggesting that the economy will contract by 7.5 per cent in 2015.⁸ With 52 per cent inflation reported in July, the price of fuel and staple foods continued to rise, with food prices rising a record 150 per cent compared to the average.⁹ This led to a scarcity of basic goods, fuel shortages and further strains on purchasing power during the lean season (April-October). According to estimates, poverty rates increased from 45 per cent in 2011 to 57 per cent in 2015. In an unfortunate concurrence of events, the 20 per cent reduction in oil production due to the conflict coincided with a sharp decline in oil prices from about USD 110 per barrel to less than USD 50. This further aggravated revenue losses for the most oil-dependent state in the world. The implementation of the peace agreement is also expected to strain Government coffers, especially in relation to the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration program. In this context, the United States and the International Monetary Fund announced on 30 September that discussions were underway to launch a rescue package for South Sudan.

⁶ These ceasefire violations refer to both the ceasefire set out in the 23 January 2014 *Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities* and the one in the August 2015 peace agreement. See IGAD, "Summary of Latest Reports of Violations of the Permanent Ceasefire, as at 22 September 2015", <http://southsudan.igad.int/>, 7 October 2015.

⁷ On 28 June, Major-General Olony officially defected from the Government to the Opposition, indicating a major fractioning of SPLA forces along Dinka-Shilluk lines.

⁸ Most data is from World Bank, "Economic Overview: South Sudan", www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview, updated 1 October 2015.

⁹ IPC Technical Working Group in South Sudan, "September 2015 Food Security and Nutrition Analysis: Key Messages", www.fews.net/east-africa/south-sudan/food-security-outlook-update/september-2015, 22 October 2015.

Levels of food insecurity were at emergency levels due to the combination of conflict, economic crisis and loss of livestock.¹⁰ Even in the areas not directly affected by the conflict, high food prices, market disruptions, localized crop failures due to a relatively dry rainy season, and insecurity on key transport routes pushed many families to the brink. Lack of funding and restrictions on humanitarian access further exposed civilians by compromising the ability to deliver assistance. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) results for September painted a grim picture, as 3.9 million people – 34 per cent of the population – were classified as being severely food insecure, an 80 per cent increase compared to the same period last year.¹¹

The quarter was also characterized by a marked deterioration of the situation for journalists, with a spike in incidents that appeared to be linked to the politically-charged context created by the peace talks. A few days before negotiations began in Addis Ababa, National Security Service (NSS) officers closed two newspapers in Juba, *The Citizen* and *Al Rai*. A board member of the latter was accused of joining the Opposition, while *The Citizen* was simply told to stop printing. The same day, the NSS padlocked the offices of production house *Free Voice South Sudan*.¹² At a press conference on 16 August before leaving for the peace talks, President Kiir made a statement that was widely interpreted as a threat to journalists who report ‘against the country.’¹³ A few days later, on the night of 19 August, journalist Moi Peter Julius was shot dead in Juba, provoking both widespread condemnation and formal denials from the Government that authorities had had any intention of targeting journalists.¹⁴ Illustrating ongoing sensitivities, on 17 September the *Juba Monitor* was ordered not to print the next day’s edition after an article criticized SPLA soldiers’ crackdown on civilians in Wonduruba payam, Central Equatoria State. More generally, journalists continued to be detained without charge or to go missing after being arrested by security agents.¹⁵ Together, these incidents had a chilling effect that reduced the scope for the legitimate exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and opinion as well as the right to seek, impart and receive information.¹⁶

The quarter came to an end with South Sudan again in the international spotlight. On 29 September, a High-Level Summit on South Sudan was held on the margins of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) meeting in New York, where both sides of the conflict re-pledged their commitment to peace. Vice President James Wani Igga addressed the UNGA on 1 October, calling on Member States to support the peace agreement by refraining from measures that would isolate the country and by providing humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction aid. Indeed, the funding situation was not favourable, as the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan for South Sudan, which posted a USD 1.63 billion requirement, was only 51 per cent funded as of 7 October.¹⁷

¹⁰ WFP, “WFP Urges World To Remember South Sudan As Hunger Reaches Record Level”, <http://wfpusa.org/press-release/wfp-urges-world-remember-south-sudan-hunger-reaches-record-level>, 27 May 2015; FAO, “Situation Update: Republic of South Sudan, August/September 2015”, www.fao.org, undated.

¹¹ Reuters, “Food security body IPC warns of famine in South Sudan”, www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/22/us-southsudan-famine-idUSKCN0SG0ZU20151022, 22 October 2015.

¹² VOA, “South Sudan: Another Newspaper Forced to Close”, www.voanews.com/articleprintview/2902686.html, 5 August 2015.

¹³ Committee to Protect Journalists, “South Sudanese President Salva Kiir threatens to kill journalists”, www.cpj.org/2015/08/south-sudanese-president-salva-kiir-threatens-to-kill-journalists, 17 August 2015.

¹⁴ Committee to Protect Journalists, “CPJ condemns killing of South Sudanese journalist”, <https://cpj.org/2015/08/cpj-condemns-killing-of-south-sudanese-journalist.php>, 20 August 2015.

¹⁵ See e.g., the story of Clement Lochio Lormonana via Radio Tamazuj, “Arrested journalist feared killed in Eastern Equatoria”, <https://radiotamazuj.org/en/article/arrested-journalist-feared-killed-eastern-equatoria>, 31 August 2015.

¹⁶ OHCHR, “Journalists further targeted in South Sudan – UN rights experts warn violence against the media is on the rise”, www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16352&LangID=E, 27 August 2015.

¹⁷ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot*, as of 8 October 2015.

On 9 October, the UN Security Council adopted a new resolution (2241) extending UNMISS's mandate to 15 December 2015 and adding provisions for the Mission to support the implementation of the peace agreement. In an important step towards accountability, the Security Council also requested the UN Secretary-General to make available technical assistance to implement Chapter V of the agreement, including for the setting up of a Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS) which will investigate and prosecute individuals bearing responsibility for violations of international law and/or applicable South Sudanese law during the conflict.

3. PROTECTION TRENDS

Forced Displacement

"The ones who could not run were taken. We heard that women and children were taken to Fangak. We never heard what happened to them afterwards. We stayed in the bush for two months waiting to see if we could go back home. In the end, we came here, to the Malakal POC site."

– Woman from Jonglei State

During the third quarter, the total number of individuals displaced by the conflict continued to increase, although at a lower rate than in the previous quarter. This might be explained by a relatively short rainy season, a lull in fighting in some parts of the country, and people choosing to stay in their locations to cultivate crops. By the end of September, about 2.27 million South Sudanese had been displaced by the conflict, of which 1.64 million were displaced internally and more than 633,000 had fled to neighbouring countries. This constituted a 3 per cent increase in total displacement compared to the end of the second quarter in June.

As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, an estimated 41,000 people were forcibly displaced internally between 1 July and 30 September in net terms (+3%). This was a reduction from the 5 per cent increase noted between the first and second quarters, and slightly higher than the 2 per cent increase observed in the first quarter. While Unity and Upper Nile states continued to see high rates of displacement and the highest total number of people displaced, the most significant increases in relative terms were observed in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Western Equatoria and Eastern Equatoria states. Other parts of the country saw overall net reductions in displacement, such as in Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap states.

Figure 1. Displacement as of 8 July 2015¹⁸

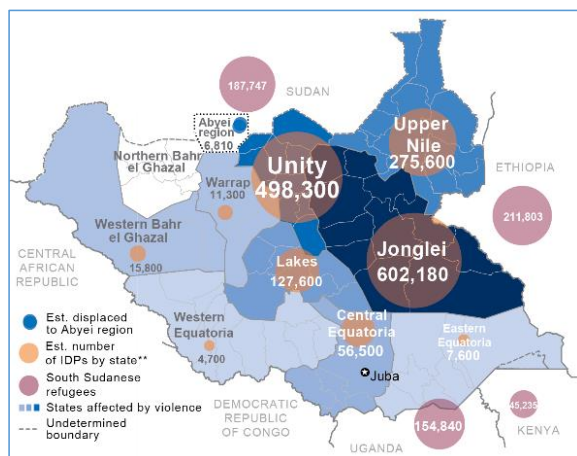
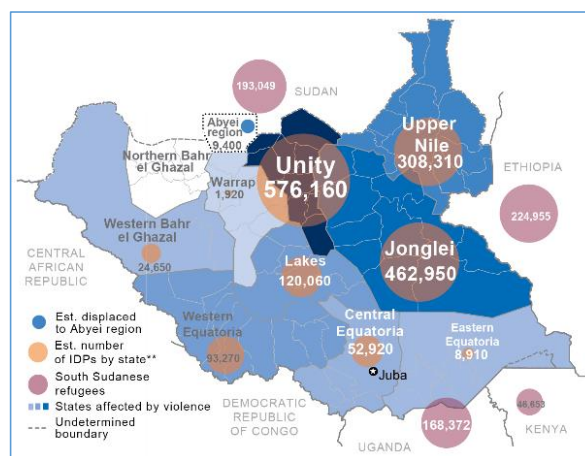


Figure 2. Displacement as of 30 September 2015



As has been the trend since the beginning of 2015, the number of South Sudanese fleeing their homes for neighboring countries continued to increase at a higher rate than internal displacement. During the third quarter, more than 33,400 South Sudanese left the country, an increase of about 6 per cent from the previous quarter.¹⁹ This increase was the lowest since 2015, as a 15 per cent increase had been registered during the second quarter and a 7 per cent increase during the first quarter. Uganda and Ethiopia saw the biggest increases between the second and third quarters in absolute and relative terms, with a 9 per cent increase in the former (+13,532 refugees) and a 6 per cent increase in the latter (+13,152 refugees). This was attributed to rising insecurity in the Equatorias and ongoing conflict in Greater Upper Nile. Those arriving in Uganda reported that fighting and fear had led them to flee, in addition to hunger, congestion in the POC sites and lack of social services.²⁰ South Sudanese also continued to seek protection in Sudan, although the arrival rate was much lower than in the two previous quarters, with only a 3 per cent increase observed between Q2 and Q3 compared to a 47 per cent increase between Q1 and Q2. Arrivals into Kenya continued to be low, with a 3 per cent increase observed between Q2 and Q3 (+1,418 refugees), and a 2 per cent increase between Q1 and Q2. Overall, most South Sudanese refugees (68%) in all locations combined were children.²¹

Protection actors continued to monitor spontaneous movements by both IDPs and South Sudanese refugee returnees. According to reports, individuals returned mostly to relatively stable locations such as Mingkaman and Bor. Between January and August 2015, nearly 37,000 IDPs and refugee returnees were registered, of which approximately 50 per cent were South Sudanese refugees, mainly from Uganda and to a lesser extent from Kenya.²² The reasons cited for return included the improvement of the security situation in Jonglei State, the reconstruction and rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, and the increased presence of humanitarian actors in the area. These returns were considered transitional, since individuals were not necessarily returning to their places of habitual residence.

In this quarter, ongoing hostilities and resulting displacement continued to cause family separation. Nonetheless, Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR) trends saw a notable upward swing across all

¹⁸ OCHA, maps generated for this report with data as of 8 July and 30 September 2015.

¹⁹ All refugee data from UNHCR South Sudan Situation Information Sharing Portal, available at <http://data.unhcr.org/SouthSudan/regional.php>.

²⁰ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation: UNHCR Regional Update*, No. 76, 19 September-02 October 2015.

²¹ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation: Regional Overview of Population of Concern*, 30 September 2015.

²² UNHCR, *Spontaneous Returnee Analysis Report, Bor and Mingkaman*, 6 October 2015, unpublished.

indicators, as shown in Figure 3. Registrations of new cases of separated, unaccompanied and missing children more than trebled. Likewise, follow-up visits by FTR partners to separated and unaccompanied children rose to 48 per cent, compared to 22 per cent in the first quarter and 25 per cent in the second.²³ Most significantly, the number of reunifications increased considerably: 983 children were reunified with their parent(s) or caregiver during the quarter, compared to 458 children in the second quarter (+115%). This brought the total number of children reunified in 2015 to 2,398, a 150 per cent increase compared to the beginning of the year. The rate of reunification also increased to 23 per cent, up from 16 per cent in the second quarter and 12 per cent in the first. This outcome was largely attributed to increased efforts and cooperation among partners and the strengthening of the FTR network's information management system. In this quarter, 39 per cent of reunified children were girls and 61 per cent were boys, compared to 45 and 55 respectively in the last quarter.

Figure 3. Family tracing and reunification data, per quarter, 2015 ²⁴

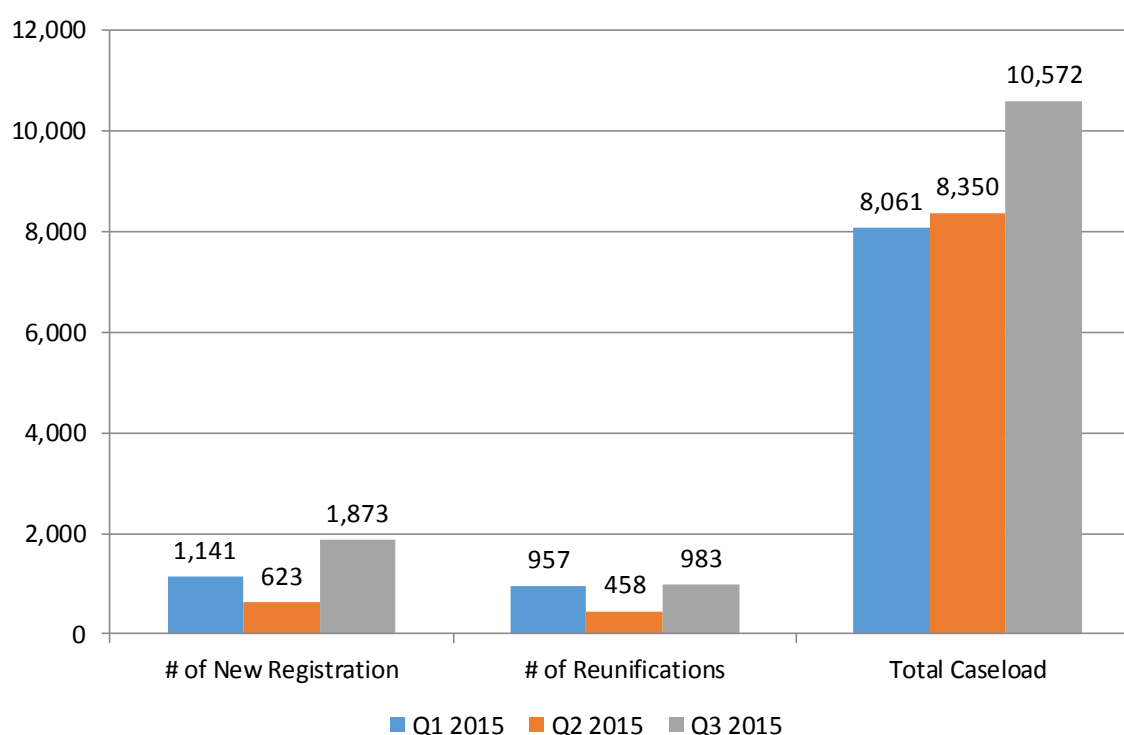


Figure 3 also shows that this quarter saw an increase in the number of new registrations. At 1,873, this was a 200 per cent increase on the 623 registrations recorded in the previous quarter. While this increase was likely attributable in part to increased capacity among FTR partners, it may also be explained by a collective effort to improve electronic documentation and clear data entry backlogs. Moreover, while the marked increase in reunifications and follow-ups enabled more case closures, this disproportionately high number of new registrations limited the impact on the overall active caseload. Indeed, at the end of the third quarter, the active caseload had increased 8 per cent on the preceding one. Seventy per cent of the children in this active caseload were present in the three states that have been most affected by the conflict, namely Unity (28%), Jonglei (22%) and Upper Nile (20%). Finally, given the relative improvement in security and access in some areas, the number of registered

²³ The rate of follow-up visits refers to the number of separated and unaccompanied children on the total caseload (both active and closed cases) who received at least one monitoring visit since their registration. Missing children are excluded from the calculation.

²⁴ The data on total caseload is cumulative since FTR programming began with the conflict in December 2013.

unaccompanied and separated children believed to be living in areas that were inaccessible to partners decreased from 1,100 children (about 14% of the active caseload) in the second quarter to 560 children (about 7% of the active caseload) in the third thanks to the resumption of operations in previously inaccessible areas.

In the context of ongoing violence, the number of children in psychosocial distress was estimated to exceed 876,000, up from 600,000 at the end of the second quarter (+46%), given the increase in displacement.²⁵ Although determining the rates and intensity of psychosocial distress is challenging, the combination of displacement, the lack of basic services, the trauma of witnessing or experiencing violence and the lack of routine likely continued to strain the capacity of both children and their caregivers to remain resilient. In August, for example, a psychological assessment of 62 children in the Bentiu POC site found that most children expressed a persistent fear of facing an imminent life-threatening event and felt they had no trustworthy social network to rely on, in addition to feelings of loneliness and hopelessness for the future.²⁶

Pursuing a strategic shift that began in January 2015, protection partners continued to transition from centre-based to community-based psycho-social support (PSS) approaches, which are more sustainable and cost effective. As of early October, 61 per cent of PSS programmes were community-based, compared to 30 per cent in June and 5 per cent in January. PSS programmes also became more accessible to adolescent boys (aged 11-17), who constituted the largest group of beneficiaries this quarter (22%).

Gender-Based Violence

Sexual violence, including rape, continued to be a characteristic of the conflict, with one in every four cases reported in the Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBV IMS) involving sexual violence, during both the second and third quarters.²⁷ In Unity State alone, it was estimated that over 1,300 women and girls were raped between April and September, some of which resulted in loss of life.²⁸ Moreover, the data collected through the South Sudan Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) indicated that over 155 girls were raped and 180 girls were abducted in this quarter alone. Overall, women and girls in South Sudan have suffered from unprecedented levels of sexual violence in the past two years.²⁹

In addition to rape, women and girls also continued to face various forms of GBV in South Sudan, notably domestic violence. In the context of ongoing conflict, many families throughout the country continued to struggle to meet their basic survival needs. Women and girls most often had no choice but to resort to dangerous coping mechanisms like skipping meals, foregoing health care, walking

²⁵ UNICEF, *South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 68*, 11-24 September 2015.

²⁶ UNICEF and Nonviolent Peaceforce, August 2015, unpublished assessment.

²⁷ South Sudan GBV Information Management System (GBV IMS), data for April to September 2015 (Q2 and Q3). The ratio was one in five during the first quarter. 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 GBV incidents. A total of 1,645 reported incidents were received between August 2014 and the end of September 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.

²⁸ South Sudan Protection Cluster, *Protection Situation Update: Southern and Central Unity (April-September 2015)*, 25 September 2015.

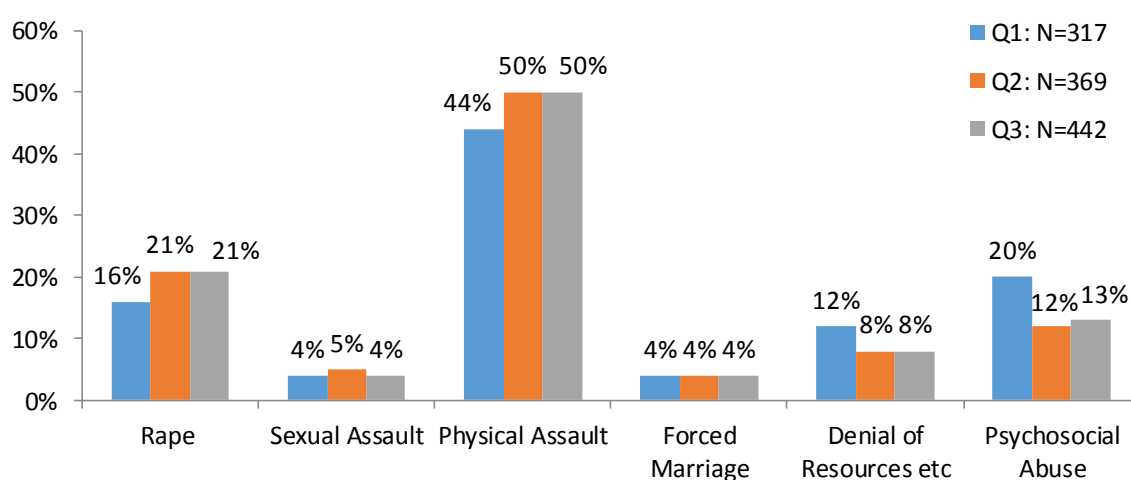
²⁹ Reuters, "Scale of South Sudan sexual violence is unprecedented – Red Cross", <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/10/07/uk-southsudan-violence-women-idUKKCN0S11XR20151007?rpc=401>, 7 October 2015.

through high-risk areas, and engaging in survival sex. Women and girls leaving IDP settlements to collect firewood, vegetables and water from the bushes, rivers and swamps often had to travel great distances and were exposed to attacks, harassment, extortion and abuses by armed men, both civilians and members of organized forces. Harmful traditional practices such as child, early and forced marriage and wife inheritance also continued across the country. Anecdotal evidence suggests that child, early and forced marriage has increased during the conflict, since families use it as a coping mechanism to alleviate economic pressures, clear debts, buy protection or settle disputes.

The health situation of women and girls was made worse by limited or non-existent access to services, particularly in high-intensity conflict areas in parts of Unity and Upper Nile states, which implementing partners were forced to leave. This reduced access to basic reproductive health services including Clinical Management of Rape (CMR), HIV/AIDS and mass information campaigns on reproductive rights. That being said, relative calm allowed some implementing partners in Jonglei and Central Equatoria states to increase their capacity-building activities for service providers, establish PSS services in women-friendly spaces, and supply essential commodities such as post-rape care and dignity kits.

According to the GBV IMS, 442 survivors sought specialized GBV services in various sites during the third quarter, the highest number to date in 2015. The data shows a 1 per cent increase in incidents reported by females, from 96 per cent to 97 per cent between the second and third quarters. On average in the third quarter, 85 per cent of reported cases were adults, and 15 per cent were children. In previous quarters, reported incidents involving children had been higher, at 25 per cent of cases. This reduction may be due to a decrease in incidents, but it is more likely related to guardians' growing reluctance to seek services due to fear of reprisals, discrimination, shame or stigma, among others. As in the second quarter, the largest group of alleged perpetrators were members of armed forces and groups, yet this number fluctuated in relation to conflict dynamics: from 19 per cent on the total in April, up to 29 per cent in May, and down to 6 per cent in September.

Figure 4. *Types of GBV reported in the South Sudan GBV IMS, per quarter, 2015*



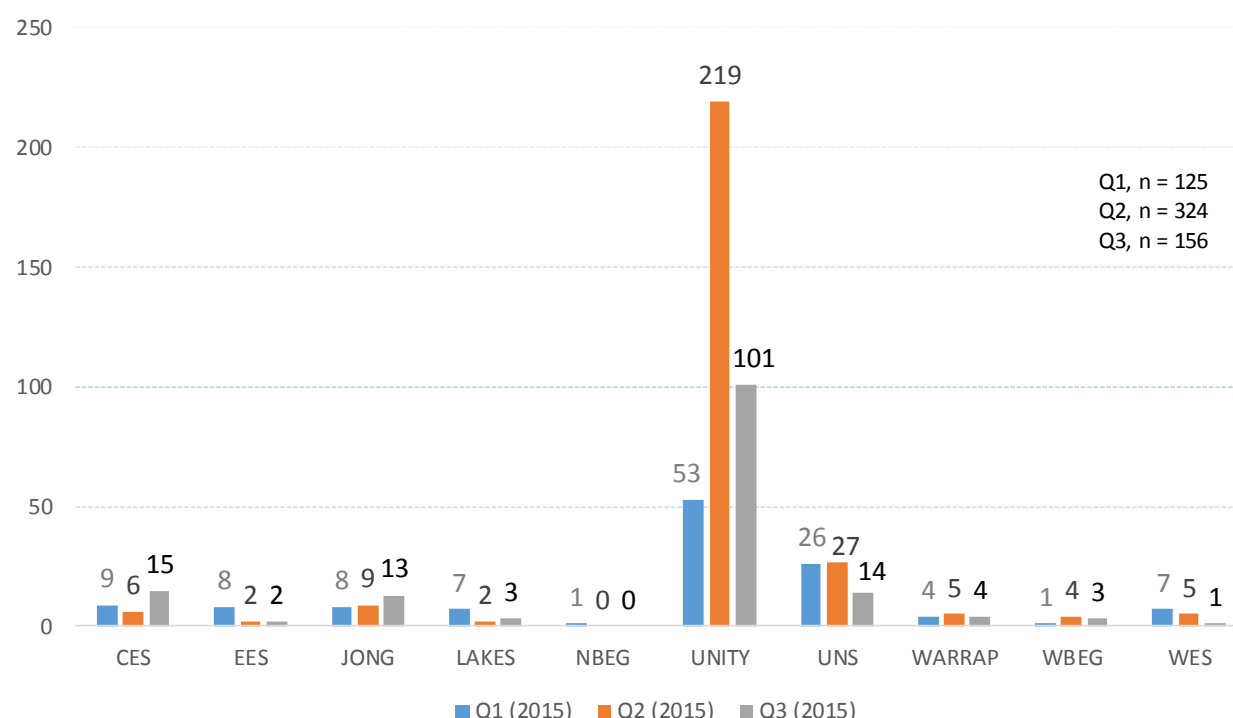
As seen in Figure 4 above, there was little change in the relative frequency of types of GBV reported in the GBV IMS during the first three quarters of 2015. Physical assault was again the most commonly reported type of GBV, accounting for 50 per cent of all reported incidents in both Q2 and Q3. This was

followed by rape incidents, which held steady at 21 per cent of incidents, and psychosocial abuse, which rose slightly (+1%) between the second and third quarters but remained low compared to the first. The number of reported incidents of sexual assault, forced marriage and denial of resources also held steady between the second and third quarters.

Grave Violations of Children's Rights

During the third quarter, only half as many reports of grave child rights violations were recorded through the MRM than in the previous quarter. More specifically, as shown in Figure 5, 156 incidents were reported during the third quarter, while 324 were reported in the second (-52%).³⁰ This decrease in reported incidents was likely due to under-reporting related to insecurity and access challenges in Unity and Upper Nile states. Despite these challenges, however, the majority of reported incidents continued to originate from Unity State (65%), as has been the case since the beginning of the year. This was due to ongoing hostilities, which produced a surge in grave child rights violations, as well as to the active collection of data by UN monitors in southern Unity and with IDPs arriving at the Bentiu POC site. Unity State was followed distantly by Central Equatoria (10%), with incidents related to the attacks on and military use of schools and hospitals by SPLA forces in September (see section [Beyond Greater Upper Nile](#)). As always, it is important to note that MRM data under-estimates the scale and extent of grave violations committed against children in South Sudan, since not all incidents are reported or verified.

Figure 5: Incidents of grave violations reported to the MRM per State, per quarter, 2015



³⁰ *Protection Trends Paper no. 5* (April-June 2015) stated that 279 incidents had been reported during the second quarter. The increase in the number reported here is due to ongoing data collection with survivors who provide information on incidents that occurred in any quarter.

As seen in Table 1 below, the majority of reported violations against children in this quarter consisted of recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups (27%), killing and maiming (26%) and sexual violence (19%). While the relative frequency of incidents of recruitment and use of children increased this quarter (27% vs 14% in the second), the total number of such incidents has remained steady throughout the year. Moreover, while considerably fewer incidents of killing and sexual violence were reported this quarter than in the previous ones, these types of incidents remained among the most frequent overall since the conflict began in December 2013.

Table 1: Number of Incidents of grave violations reported to the MRM (verified and unverified), per quarter, 2015

Type of incident	Q1 (Jan-Mar)	Q2 (Apr-Jun)	Q3 (Jul-Sep)	Total Q1-Q3, 2015
Killing and maiming	14	127	40	181
Recruitment and use of children	47	45	43	135
Rape and sexual violence	5	51	29	85
Abduction	11	46	25	82
Attacks on and military use of schools and hospitals	23	32	14	69
Denial of humanitarian access	25	23	5	53
Total	125	324	156	605

With regards to recruitment and use of children, most reports this quarter originated from Unity and Jonglei states, as opposed to the second quarter, when most were from Unity and Upper Nile states. As of the end of September, it was estimated that 15,000 to 16,000 children had been recruited since December 2013 and were being used by all sides of the conflict, up from the estimate of 13,000 at the end of May due to ongoing recruitment.³¹ Whilst 1,755 children were released by the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army-Cobra faction in early 2015 as part of a pre-existing demobilization process, no formal releases have been made by the SPLA or the SPLA-IO since the conflict began despite repeated commitments, including in the August peace agreement.

Protection at UNMISS POC Sites

Since the beginning of the conflict, the total number of civilians seeking protection in the six UNMISS POC sites has been steadily growing. As shown in Table 2, this third quarter was no exception given ongoing hostilities in Greater Upper Nile as well as general and food insecurity in other areas. By the end of August, the number of IDPs in these sites peaked at a record high of 201,911 IDPs, almost double compared to the beginning of the year (102,296). However, by 30 September, this number had dropped to 184,282 IDPs.³² Overall, IDPs in POC sites accounted for about 11 per cent of the total IDP population in this quarter, up from the 6 per cent estimated at the end of the second quarter.³³

³¹ South Sudan Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism database.

³² This reduction was attributed to departures related to difficult living conditions in certain sites, lack of services, and/or expectations that the situation had improved in places of origin. Other causes included regular inflows and outflows into the sites as well as corrections to previous population figures that were not from biometric registrations or that included multiple registrations. This population figure from: UNMISS, *Update: UNMISS Protection of Civilians Sites*, No. 94, 5 October 2015.

³³ Estimate based on number of IDPs reported in OCHA's South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 8 October 2015).

Table 2. Official estimated number of IDPs living in UNMISS POC sites, per quarter, 2015³⁴

State	POC site	Estimated Number of IDPs				
		31 Dec 2014 (end Q4)	9 April 2015 (end Q1)	30 June 2015 (end Q2)	30 Sep 2015 (end Q3)	% change (Q2 to Q3)
Central Equatoria	Juba POC-1 and POC-2	15,484	15,380	8,011 ³⁵	7,434 (POC-1 only)	-7%
	Juba POC-3	17,595	19,294	20,652	20,516	-1%
Unity	Bentiu	43,718	52,908	78,308	107,649	+37%
Upper Nile	Malakal	21,420	26,596	30,410	45,462	+49%
	Melut	926	944	2,135	700	-67%
	Nassir	9	0	0	0	0%
Jonglei	Bor	2,694	2,374	2,289	2,289	0%
Western Bahr el Ghazal	Wau	450	362	365	232	-36%
Total		102,296	117,858	142,170	184,282	+30%

In this quarter, thousands of people arrived in the Bentiu POC site, which peaked at 121,194 IDPs in late August, a 177 per cent increase compared to the beginning of the year. In July, about 1,500 IDPs were arriving every week from the southern counties, citing insecurity, hunger and the theft of cattle as the causes of their flight.³⁶ The Malakal POC site peaked at 48,840 IDPs in August, more than double the figure at the beginning of the year. An estimated 16,000 IDPs arrived between mid-July and mid-August alone, with more than 10,000 arriving in the first 18 days of August, mostly from Wau Shilluk.³⁷ New influxes were registered in late September after mortar, rockets and gunfire were fired towards the village, and humanitarians were again evacuated.

With these new arrivals, the Bentiu and Malakal sites grew to sizes that stretched the capacity of humanitarians to provide basic services. The situation in the Bentiu POC site illustrated the challenge: the number of malaria cases per 10,000 people increased six fold between May and August, and the child mortality rate shot past emergency thresholds in early September due to malaria and malnutrition.³⁸ Water delivery and access were major issues in most sites, and women were harassed and fought at distribution points after queuing for long hours. UNMISS personnel was equally burdened by the influx. By mid-August, approximately 40 per cent of the UNMISS Force strength was dedicated to the protection of POC sites.³⁹

In contrast to these influxes, the IDP population declined in the Melut and Wau sites. Given insecurity at the Melut site – mortars and bullets had landed in the base in May – IDPs with financial means and SPLA connections eventually managed to secure safe passage to move to Renk, Maban and Paloich, while others continued to Sudan or Juba. In Wau, the reduction is explained by the correction of previous population estimates and the gradual departure of IDPs reuniting with their families in other locations.

³⁴ UNMISS, *Update: UNMISS Protection of Civilians Sites*, 31 December 2014, 10 April 2015, 30 June 2015 and 5 October 2015.

³⁵ The reduction between Q1 and Q2 was due to the relocation of IDPs from POC-1 and POC-2 to POC-3.

³⁶ UNHCR, *South Sudan Operational Update*, No. 26 (7 July 2015), No. 27 (14 July 2015), and No. 29 (29 July 2015).

³⁷ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-Weekly Update*, 18 August 2015 and 31 August 2015.

³⁸ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-Weekly Update*, 31 August 2015 and 18 September 2015.

³⁹ UN, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 14 April to 19 August 2015)*, S/2015/655, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/655, 21 August 2015.

In Juba, the official number of IDPs in the main site (POC-3) was relatively stable.⁴⁰ The small decrease in POC-1 and POC-2 is explained by the closure of POC-2 on 8 September. This closure led to the relocation of 578 foreign nationals, and UNHCR provided support to 461 asylum-seekers among them who chose either to settle in a refugee camp or in urban centres.⁴¹ The number of IDPs in the Bor POC site remained stable given their inability to leave the site because of security concerns related to ethnically-targeted attacks.

Protection threats inside UNMISS POC sites

During this quarter, the most common source of insecurity in the POC sites was armed criminality by IDPs themselves, i.e., thefts and burglaries involving the use of firearms. NGO compounds and staff quarters were not spared, with one nutrition centre in Bentiu being targeted four times in August alone. Despite regular searches for weapons by UNMISS, controlling both crime and weapons remained a challenge given the size of the POC sites (both in terms of population and land area), the limited number of Formed Police Units (FPU), and the regular traffic of covered trucks. This increase in armed criminality was symptomatic of the trauma and psychological strain experienced by IDPs who have been living in crowded sites for months or years, as well as their lack of livelihood options. It also brought to the fore ongoing issues around the detention of IDPs in holding facilities, notably the conditions and duration of their detention. Armed criminality was not a major issue in the Wau POC site, reportedly thanks to its ethnic homogeneity and small size.

This trend contrasts with the previous quarter, when most security incidents were caused by inter- and intra-communal tensions. These types of incidents decreased, although underlying tensions persisted. No major inter-ethnic clashes were reported in Malakal, reportedly thanks to the *de facto* segregation of ethnic groups into distinct areas of the POC site, as well as reconciliation efforts by church leaders and women's groups.⁴² The precarious nature of this calm was illustrated by periodic attacks by Shilluk IDPs on Dinka IDPs, although these seemed to be triggered by specific incidents. For example, on 25 August an SPLA soldier shot five bullets towards POC-1 (Shilluk), prompting Shilluk youth to throw stones at Dinka IDPs at a food distribution point. Moreover, in September, underlying mistrust delayed the relocation of Nuer IDPs to the new extension site, as they initially refused to move because relocation would bring them into closer physical proximity to Dinka IDPs. This refusal created another set of protection challenges: In a rush to free up the land to accommodate incoming troops, UNMISS was intent on relocating the IDPs as soon as possible, including through the denial of basic services. Intervention by humanitarian actors was required to ensure that the relocation was done in accordance with protection principles.

Intra-communal violence between Nuer groups also decreased in this quarter. In the Bentiu POC site, no clashes were reported between the Bul-Nuer community from Mayom County (who support the SPLA) and other Nuer communities, as the Jikany became the target given their involvement in fighting with pro-Government forces. Incidents involving youth gangs also decreased, reportedly thanks to the

⁴⁰ Despite a directive to not allow registration and new arrivals at the Juba POC sites, UNMISS has allowed humanitarian actors to record new arrivals. However, these registrations are not reflected in the official population figures published by UNMISS. Humanitarians have recorded about 9,000 new arrivals since January 2015; over 80 per cent are from Unity State.

⁴¹ UNHCR, *South Sudan Operational Update*, No. 34, 15 September 2015.

⁴² South Sudan Protection Cluster, *Protection Situation Update: Upper Nile State (1 June-20 August 2015)*, 27 August 2015. Targeted violence against foreign nationals also decreased, reportedly thanks to the relocation of Darfuri traders to the POC site occupied by Dinka IDPs.

detention of gang leaders and the confiscation of weapons. In the Juba POC sites, no intra-Nuer violence was reported after the clashes of 8-10 May that had been triggered by fighting in Unity State.

This quarter, there were also fewer incursions by armed forces and groups into the POC sites, and no IDPs were shot by incoming soldiers or stray bullets. This improvement was explained by the relative reduction of troops in state capitals (as fighting shifted to other areas of active conflict), better cooperation by new SPLA commanders, and improvements to the physical infrastructure of the POC sites. Any incursion seemed to be spontaneous, as was the case in Bentiu on 24 September when six armed SPLA soldiers entered the site while chasing IDPs they suspected of having stolen rifles. In Malakal, soldiers in civilian clothing entered the site to go to the market, yet they were often quickly recognized and attacked by Shilluk IDPs.

Protection threats around UNMISS POC sites

As in previous quarters, the presence of armed elements near the sites continued to pose a protection risk for IDPs due to shootings, robberies, abductions and harassment. In Bentiu, the behaviour of SPLA forces became more threatening after the peace agreement was first signed by the SPLM/A-IO and the G10 on 17 August. On 22 August, two SPLA soldiers on a motorbike came to the southern gate and warned UNMISS peacekeepers that they would kill the IDPs, and a truck with soldiers later drove up near the gate. After more threatening behaviour, an IDP was shot and killed outside the gate on 14 September. Another IDP's body was recovered outside the site the next day.

In Malakal, incidents were reported on an irregular basis and were usually linked to a specific event. For example, on 12 July, an SPLA soldier at Echo gate threatened to kill someone if the IDP who stole his vehicle did not return it, and later fired his AK-47 near the gate. Abductions continued, with three IDPs reportedly taken from the buffer zone between two gates on 21 September. A few days later, however, the SPLA released five other IDPs who had been previously arrested near the site for being suspected Opposition soldiers. In Juba, incidents near the POC gate were mostly related to general insecurity and crime in town, not hostile action by security forces, although IDPs reported threats and extortion in July by SPLA soldiers and South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS) officers.

During this quarter, the protection situation for IDPs leaving the Malakal POC site was particularly concerning. After the SPLA retook Malakal on 6 July, the arrival of Dinka militia groups from Akoka County was accompanied by reports of rape, harassment and abductions.⁴³ By mid-August, SPLA soldiers were preventing IDPs from leaving the POC site to return to Wau Shilluk or Fashoda County, or allowing them to travel only without any food or other supplies. A few weeks later, movement in the opposite direction (from Wau Shilluk to the POC site) was also restricted via an SPLA checkpoint at the main river crossing point. The journey was so dangerous that authorities in Wau Shilluk were reportedly discouraging people from leaving. In one notable incident on 27 September, a group of 271 Shilluk IDPs from the west bank were stopped at the SPLA checkpoint while under UNMISS escort. The SPLA soldiers insisted that young men would be taken for interrogation as suspected Olony fighters. Women and children were eventually allowed to proceed to the POC site, yet 134 young men were returned to the west bank under UNMISS escort. Although a worse-case scenario was avoided, the deliberate intervention of SPLA soldiers to prevent the movement of IDPs to the POC site for protection and assistance was of serious concern. By contrast, the situation in Bentiu town improved,

⁴³ South Sudan Protection Cluster, *Protection Situation Update: Upper Nile State (1 June-20 August 2015)*, 27 August 2015.

with more civilians travelling there from the POC site on a day-to-day basis without incident, and markets becoming increasingly busy.

Overall, the protection situation for IDPs outside the POC sites continued to be hampered by regular and serious violations of the Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA). These obstructed UNMISS' operations and weakened its ability to carry out its POC mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. While official data on SOFA violations is not public, incidents included restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMISS patrols and convoys, both on land and by barge, as well as the physical assault of civilian and military personnel.⁴⁴ The August midterm report from the UN Panel of Experts revealed the scope of the problem, stating that UNMISS had faced over 400 SOFA violations since March 2014, more than 90 per cent of which were perpetrated by the Government.⁴⁵

Beyond Greater Upper Nile

Although the three states of Greater Upper Nile continued to be most affected by the conflict in the third quarter, civilians in other areas of South Sudan continued to face various protection threats. The incidents reported below point towards a worsening of the situation outside the Greater Upper Nile, and highlight the somewhat artificial distinction between so-called green (peaceful) and red (conflict-affected) states. These incidents also raise the possibility of a wider breakdown of law and order across the country.

The Equatorias

The security and humanitarian situation in **Western Equatoria State** deteriorated further following initial clashes in May and June. SPLA troops sent as reinforcements to stabilize the situation reportedly attacked and harassed civilians, some of whom took up arms in self-defence. The rising insecurity prompted political instability. In August, President Kiir dismissed the state governor, who was subsequently arrested and detained without charge for four days and then replaced with a new military caretaker governor. On 21 August, the speaker of the state legislative assembly was ambushed and killed by unknown gunmen outside Yambio. In early September, local authorities announced that Arrow Boys, a defence group originally created to protect communities against the Lord's Resistance Army, were being invited to integrate into the formal security forces. Protection actors feared that this might worsen the security situation in the short term, as some Arrow Boys may refuse to be integrated.

The situation in Mundri West County deteriorated in mid-May following a shooting incident that prompted clashes between SPLA soldiers and civilians. The situation continued to worsen thereafter. By the end of July, Mundri West was described as a garrison town. More clashes in both Mundri West and Mundri East were reported on 15-17 September and on 4-6 October, displacing thousands of people from the main towns into rural areas.⁴⁶ In one incident for example, a convoy of SPLA trucks was ambushed on 16 September by unknown gunmen in Mundri West, killing nine SPLA soldiers. In retaliation, SPLA soldiers killed civilians and looted homes and shops in the area. By mid-October,

⁴⁴ Associated Press, "UN protests assault of staff allegedly by South Sudan Forces", http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/A/AF_SOUTH_SUDAN_UN?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2015-10-08-16-06-44, 8 October 2015.

⁴⁵ Panel of Experts on South Sudan, *Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015)*, S/2015/656, 21 August 2015.

⁴⁶ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 9 October 2015.

about 700 displaced civilians (mainly women and children) were seeking protection around the new Temporary Operating Base (TOB) established by UNMISS in Mundri, with reports that SPLA soldiers around the TOB were harassing IDPs and looting their belongings.

In Maridi County, tensions between local communities, Dinka SPLA forces, and Dinka and Mundari migrant cattle-keepers had been building for months when clashes erupted on 7 June in Maridi town. New clashes on 28 June led to the arbitrary arrest and detention of dozens of youth who were taken to Juba and detained until early September. In July, Dinka SPLA forces sent from Juba to contain the situation were accused of beating and killing Maridi youth, burning houses and looting the local hospital. An assessment from 2 to 5 July found that Maridi town was still deserted, with about 22,300 people having fled to the outskirts of town and another 7,700 people to Ibba or Yambio counties.⁴⁷ Adding another layer to the situation, on 16 September a fuel tanker exploded in Mambe Payam after toppling over and being surrounded by people eager to siphon the fuel.⁴⁸ Over 200 people were killed and hundreds more injured. Tensions did not abate after the tanker incident, with unknown gunmen in Maridi town allegedly killing civilians, including women and children.

Yambio, the state capital, has been under tension since June, when Dinka civilians fled their homes fearing revenge attacks from armed youth for the violence perpetrated in the state by Dinka SPLA soldiers. On 31 July, panic followed sporadic shooting between the Arrow Boys and Dinka civilians. Hundreds of civilians gathered outside the UNMISS base in Yambio, while others sought refuge for a few days at UN and NGO compounds in town. In mid-August, about 1,000 residents were displaced from a neighbourhood near the Yambio airstrip due to harassment by SPLA soldiers. The 21 August murder of the speaker triggered a wave of unattributed killings, including by burning people in their homes. By early September, insecurity was such that local authorities had established a 10 PM to 6 AM curfew, and traders were reportedly paying SPLA commandos to protect the market, a form of extortion. In late September, protection actors received reports that an unknown number of youths had been abducted in and around Yambio town as well as in neighboring counties.

In **Central Equatoria State**, pockets of instability and violence continued to emerge. On 9 September, fighting erupted between armed groups and SPLA soldiers at Mengele, Katigiri and Wonduruba in the western part of Juba County.⁴⁹ The SPLA allegedly accused the local community of hosting 'rebels' and retaliated by attacking, beating and killing civilians, and looting, destroying or burning food stocks, houses, compounds and other property. NGO compounds and health units were also vandalized, and at least 17 civilians were killed. More clashes were reported in Wonduruba payam from 10 to 14 September, forcing thousands of people to flee to the bush or make their way to neighbouring towns. About 13,400 people were displaced to Lainya Center, Bereka and Ganji, while about 3,000 fled to Juba town, where they stayed with relatives. Others first fled to the forest, and from there some made the arduous six-day journey to Juba by foot, with children and the elderly arriving in very poor condition. General insecurity, restrictions on freedom of movement, and fear of SPLA soldiers prevented IDPs from going home and accessing farms and markets. Returning to Wonduruba was still too risky in late September, with reports that five IDPs who had gone back to get food were killed by SPLA soldiers. In early October, tensions were such that SPLA soldiers at a check-point near

⁴⁷ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 15 July 2015.

⁴⁸ VOA, "Death Toll Tops 200 in South Sudan Fuel Tanker Explosion", www.voanews.com/content/south-sudan-fuel-tanker-toll-rises/2985981.html, 30 September 2015.

⁴⁹ OCHA, *IRNA Report for IDPs in Ganji, Lainya and Bereka, Central Equatoria State*, 22-24 September 2015; OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 9 October 2015.

Wonduruba denied passage to an UNMISS patrol and subsequently assaulted UNMISS military and civilian personnel.⁵⁰

The security situation in and around Juba deteriorated as well. Armed crime increased throughout the quarter, affecting both citizens and UN and NGO staff. Theft, shootings, harassment, extortions, armed robberies and compound intrusions were regularly reported, with attackers allegedly wearing both civilian and military clothing. Reports that SPLA soldiers had not been paid for many months likely correlated with increasing reports that they were stopping vehicles – including UN and NGO cars – at roundabouts and fining them for various reasons, especially after dark. Banditry, ambushes and killings on the main roads linking the capital to Kajo-Keji, Terekeka and Yei were also a major security concern, and some road closures lasted for weeks. Reports received in early July suggested that Dinkas were being targeted and pulled aside and killed. Other reports indicated that some attacks were being perpetrated by SPLA and SSNPS elements in civilian clothing. In Terekeka, located about 85 km from Juba, tensions rose in July between SPLA forces and Mundari youths, with worrying reports of tit-for-tat attacks leading to killings on both sides. On 16 August, President Kiir dismissed Clement Wani, the state governor. The decision, which was highly controversial given the general dissatisfaction of Equatorians with the current situation, did not lead to clashes as initially feared.

The cholera outbreak, which was officially declared in Juba on 23 June, added another level of protection concerns and compounded the government's economic and public safety challenges.⁵¹ As of 4 October, 1,814 cholera cases including 47 deaths had been reported from Juba and Kajo-keji counties (Central Equatoria) and in Bor County (Jonglei), with most cases (92 per cent) in Central Equatoria. This was almost a quadrupling of the number of cases compared to 30 June (484 cases). The epidemic peaked from late June until late July.

Eastern Equatoria State had long been considered the 'greenest' in this conflict. Nonetheless, it too was exposed to rising insecurity in this quarter. On 4 July, gunmen reportedly pre-empted an attack by Government forces in the Nimule area. Although Martin Kenyi forces and the SPLA-IO took credit, the incident was likely caused by disgruntled Dinka SPLA soldiers who had not been paid or did not want to be redeployed to conflict-affected areas in Greater Upper Nile. In mid-August, clashes were reported in Pageri payam, with conflicting accounts that the violence was due to SPLA forces clashing with youth, Opposition forces or other rival SPLA members. The SPLA barracks were reportedly set on fire, with an unknown number of casualties.

Greater Bahr el Ghazals

In this quarter, the economic and food insecurity situation continued to deteriorate in Western Bahr el Ghazal (BeG), Northern BeG and Warrap states. Humanitarian actors reported that urban poverty in all three states increased, a situation made worse by the paucity of humanitarian and development actors and the lack of Government social services. Delays in the payment of the salaries of SPLA soldiers and SSNPS officers continued, exposing civilians to the risk of extortion, looting and theft.

⁵⁰ UN, "UN Mission in South Sudan condemns incident in which patrol was stopped, calls for unfettered access", www.un.org/sg/spokesperson/highlights/?HighD=10/8/2015&d_month=10&d_year=2015, 8 October 2015.

⁵¹ All data: World Health Organisation and Republic of South Sudan, "Situation Report #87 on Cholera in South Sudan", as at 23:59 Hours, 28 September-4 October 2015 and "Situation Report #9 on Cholera in South Sudan", as at 23:59 Hours, 30 June 2015.

The overall security situation in WBeG was unpredictable. Despite the increased presence of SPLA soldiers in Wau County, a daylight attack on SPLA soldiers in Wau on 26 July raised serious security concerns. In late July, SPLA and other security elements were reportedly engaging in criminality and causing unrest, prompting local youth to form community police groups and traders to shut their shops. In early August, attacks by unknown armed men on both civilian and military leaders in Mboro and Busseri increased tensions, notably after Wau town was sealed off, angering local populations against security forces. In one positive development, no aerial bombings by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) around Raja were reported this quarter.

The situation in Northern BeG State was also concerning, although there was little visibility on conflict dynamics and displacement. In early July, a group of armed men, allegedly former SPLA soldiers, looted an SSNPS police post, the market and the hospital in Aroyo (Aweil Centre), an opportunity and security vacuum largely created by the deployment of SPLA forces from NBeG to Unity State. A similar 'hit-and-run' looting of the market was reported in Chikudu (Aweil West) a few days later. Such attacks were more frequent, as armed groups sought to acquire food, medicine and weapons during the hunger gap, which was especially severe this year. In September, defections from the SPLA's 15th brigade generated tensions between Dinka and Nuer communities around Mayok, Yinth Thiou and Aweil East.

In Warrap State, political tensions were high in July after youth who had protested the extension of the governor's term were allegedly arrested without charge and disappeared. President Kiir replaced the state governor with a caretaker governor in August. In late September, the latter dissolved the entire cabinet and made new appointments that increased political tensions due to perceived imbalances between the Greater Tonj and Gogrial areas. According to protection partners, in August, fears of attacks along the border with Unity State led to displacement in Gogrial East County and the closure of 30 primary schools, which remained closed at the time of writing.

Tensions and revenge attacks between two Dinka sub-clans – the Aguok from Gogrial West County and the Apuk from Gogrial East – continued following the major clashes and cattle raids that left 75 people dead in April and May.⁵² Compensation ceremonies held in early September to heal divisions through community mechanisms were a positive step. Nonetheless, none of the civilians displaced from Gogrial East had returned at the time of writing.

Lakes State

Revenge attacks related to inter-communal violence continued to be major causes of death, insecurity and displacement in Lakes State. Key tension points remained between clans such as the Pakam and Rup (Rumbek Centre), the Kok Pacuer and Kok Awac (Rumbek East) and the Gony and Thuyic (Rumbek East). Revenge attacks continued to involve killings, rapes, looting and/or the burning of houses, with thousands of individuals affected, including children.⁵³ According to protection partners, children have been killed in the cross fire, wounded and/or forced to flee their homes with or without their parent(s) and caregivers. In the reporting period, 19 schools were closed in Rumbek Centre, Rumbek East, Yirol and Wulu counties due to the violence, while ten schools in these counties were relocated to avoid destruction and looting. According to estimates, over 7,000 pupils were affected by these conflicts due to displacement and the occupation of schools. In some circumstances, fear of revenge attacks

⁵² Radio Miraya, *News Bulletin Script: Tuesday 1 September 2015*, <https://unmiss.unmissions.org/>.

⁵³ See e.g., OCHA, *IRNA Report: Wulu, Timic, Chueidukan, Akot, Paluoch, Lakes State*, 23 and 31 July 2015.

pushed school management and communities to request the presence of SSNPS officers within schools, which created further protection risks.

Cattle raiding also remained a source of insecurity and the cause of hundreds of civilian casualties. In mid-July, for example, cattle raiding in Yirol East and Yirol West counties left 50 people dead in only two days, with many others wounded.⁵⁴ Insecurity in some cattle camps was such that SPLA forces denied access to UNMISS patrols, notably during an attempted visit to Amongpiny (Rumbek Central) in mid-September. Tensions between SPLA soldiers and the youth who guard cattle (*Gelweng*) also affected humanitarian access, as there was no movement between Patar Karich and Atiaba during the quarter.

In a concerning development, fighting between Government security forces and armed youth increased in the third quarter. Intermittent clashes between organized forces and Pakam youths north of Rumbek town were frequently reported. In August and September, armed youth and SPLA soldiers regularly clashed in Rumbek town, especially in the Madol-akoch, Makuriric and Jalob areas. Such clashes, which were also observed in Yirol Town, were reportedly related to a disarmament campaign that began in September: the youth refuse to hand over their weapons, triggering shootouts. The situation was closely monitored by protection actors, as disarmament campaigns in the past have been associated with human rights violations.

Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War

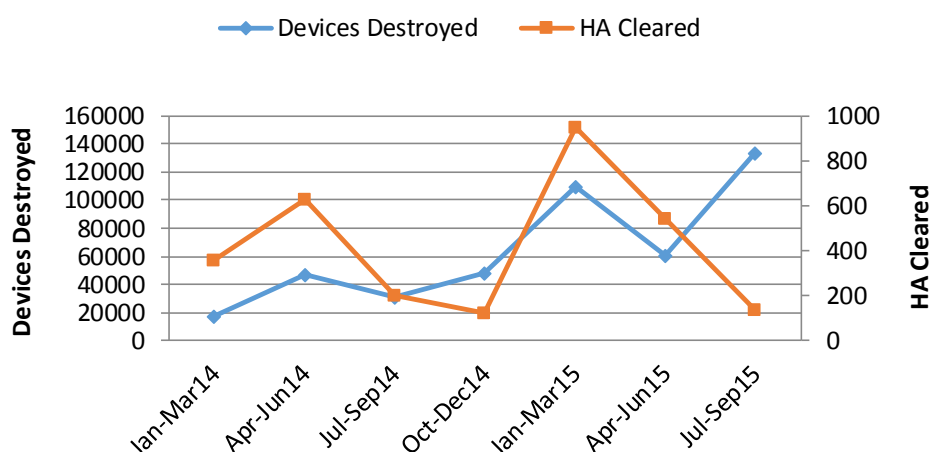
During the third quarter, landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) continued to pose physical risks to the civilian population and preclude the delivery of vital humanitarian aid. The weapons negatively impacted thousands of communities and endangered the safety of humanitarian workers, peacekeeping forces and development actors.

The start of the rainy season marked the end of the 2014-2015 demining season, and a number of mine action teams stood down from July to September in accordance with operational planning. Rapid response capacities were retained to meet urgent needs, with eight Quick Response Teams (QRTs) deployed predominantly to Bentiu, Malakal, Bor and Juba, where six Explosive Detection Dog Teams were also deployed. The teams worked to support POC activities, create conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and enable human rights monitoring. Despite the reduced capacity, teams cleared 136 Hazardous Areas, as shown in Figure 6.⁵⁵ To facilitate safe freedom of movement, 3,967 landmines and UXOs and 130,035 items of small arms ammunition were collected and destroyed during the reporting period, predominantly from Jonglei and Unity states, a 336 per cent increase in the number of devices destroyed compared to the same period last year.

⁵⁴ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 15 July 2015.

⁵⁵ Hazardous Area is a generic term used for an area perceived to have mines and/or UXOs.

Figure 6. Hazardous Areas cleared and devices destroyed, January 2014-September 2015



During the quarter, teams increased their focus on threats emanating from UXO discharged in the current conflict. A large number of UXOs, including mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and submunitions, were collected by teams in the hotspots of Greater Upper Nile, notably to facilitate UNMISS patrols and the delivery of humanitarian aid (e.g., by clearing sites for food drops) and to support freedom of movement (e.g., by clearing school areas). The ongoing proliferation of devices raised two issues. First, while an anti-personnel mine is designed to kill or maim one person, an UXO typically injures several people, as illustrated by two accidents investigated by UNMAS in August, where one UXO seriously injured two children and killed a third in Bentiu, while an anti-tank landmine accident during the same month in Torit resulted in no fatalities.⁵⁶ Second, UXOs can easily be collected from battle areas and used again in armed violence.

This quarter also saw an increase in demand for route survey and clearance services to support safe access and freedom of movement. Mine action teams surveyed and cleared key access routes to ensure the safe delivery of humanitarian aid, and additional route surveys provided support to UNMISS patrols in all the POC sites. During the reporting period, mine action teams released 67,064 square metres of safe land, predominantly through the use of mechanical assets on routes. With 4,153,008 metres squared Mined Area released in the first nine months of the year, 2015 is expected to be the most productive year to date in terms of the release of mined areas, thanks to the rise in route clearance activities and increased reporting of hazards by communities.

Despite having closed more Hazardous Areas in 2015 than in any previous year, overall progress was impeded by the creation of new ones. Between January and September, 1,712 new Hazardous Areas were reported from all states in the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database, a 35 per cent increase on the same period in 2014. Of these, 148 were found during the third quarter (9%). It is important to note however that the actual number of new Hazardous Areas is much higher, since access to the most-affected areas precluded information gathering.

⁵⁶ During this quarter, two accidents causing four victims were reported, a reduction compared to the first two quarters in 2015. On 16 August, two girls and one boy were severely injured in Rubkona (Unity State) when a grenade they were playing with exploded; one of the girls subsequently died at the hospital. On 6 July, an adult male was injured in Marakonye village (Central Equatoria State) after he stepped on a landmine while doing agricultural activities.

To protect communities living amongst explosive hazards, mine risk education was provided to 40,201 civilians during the quarter, with targeted messages for the different risks faced by women, men, children and IDPs. This was especially important given ongoing displacement and potential future voluntary movements, as people may move into unfamiliar areas or locations that have been newly affected by mines and UXOs.

Humanitarian Access

Access restrictions by road, river and air continued to hamper humanitarian action during the reporting period. Despite the signing of the peace agreement, humanitarians faced persistent barriers to movement due to deliberate bureaucratic obstructionism, insecurity related to hostilities between the parties or clashes between armed civilians and Government forces, as well as bad infrastructure and poor road conditions related to the rainy season. Humanitarian organizations were forced in some cases to reduce their staffing levels or suspend programmes in and around conflict-affected areas, in particular southern Unity State and parts of Upper Nile State.⁵⁷ Humanitarians were also constrained by road and river checkpoints and demands for illegal taxation or extortion.

Following the withdrawal of humanitarian staff from southern and central Unity State in May, UN agencies and NGOs were largely unable to re-establish a static presence in the area. Two organizations temporarily resumed operations in Leer County in early August, yet repeated looting, armed robberies and threats to their staff forced them to withdraw once again in early October.⁵⁸ The access environment improved slightly in Mayendit County following the signing of the peace agreement, enabling a limited number of partners to return on 14 September. However, the access dynamics remained fragile given the instability of surrounding counties. Although the situation in Koch County continued to be extremely volatile and prohibitive to the full resumption of humanitarian programming, partners were able to deliver food and vital supplies to Koch and Buaw in late September before fighting resumed.⁵⁹

In Upper Nile State, humanitarian access to Malakal was minimal from the end of June until 7 August due to lack of flight safety assurances from SPLA forces into the Malakal airstrip. Both UNMISS and humanitarians could only fly into the UNMISS base using helicopters, a situation that led to severe shortages in fuel, food, medicine and water at both the humanitarian hub and the POC site by early August.⁶⁰ Humanitarian access to Wau Shilluk and other areas on the west bank was also severely restricted. From late June until the end of September, the SPLA prohibited humanitarians of crossing the river into the west bank directly from Malakal.⁶¹ On 5 August, humanitarian assistance to Wau Shilluk by air resumed for the first time since March.⁶² However, assistance was only allowed to be flown in from Juba, a method that was neither cost effective nor the best way to ensure that needs were met. Then, on 1 October, after three months of negotiations, the SPLA finally allowed

⁵⁷ UN, *Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (covering the period from 14 April to 19 August 2015)*, S/2015/655, www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/655, 21 August 2015.

⁵⁸ ICRC, "South Sudan: ICRC forced to withdraw from Leer County following threats and looting", www.icrc.org/en/document/south-sudan-conflict-leer-looting-icrc-forced-withdrawal, 5 October 2015; MSF, "South Sudan: No medical assistance available in Leer, following repeated lootings of MSF facility", www.msf.org/article/south-sudan-no-medical-assistance-available-leer-following-repeated-lootings-msf-facility, 6 October 2015.

⁵⁹ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 9 October 2015.

⁶⁰ IOM Fuel Rationing Plan, presented to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on 3 August 2015.

⁶¹ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Biweekly Update*, 9 October 2015.

⁶² OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 31 August 2015.

humanitarian partners to travel by river directly from Malakal to Wau Shilluk to deliver critical supplies to the estimated 32,4000 civilians residing there.⁶³

The significant increase in crime in Juba, from where most humanitarians coordinate their response, constituted a worrying trend for NGOs. According to the South Sudan NGO Forum, NGO compound robberies in Juba began to escalate in April, with 17 reported in the second quarter (April-June). This number almost tripled in the third quarter, to 49 robberies (18 in July, 16 in August and 15 in September).⁶⁴ These incidents were not innocuous, as one aid worker was shot and killed on 10 September during an armed robbery. Such attacks compromised NGOs' operational ability to deliver assistance as it led to the loss of assets, affected the movement of staff and goods, and threatened staff safety.⁶⁵ Regular armed attacks on vehicles on the Juba-Yei road also hampered humanitarian operations by forcing agencies to use a longer route from Juba via Uganda.⁶⁶ Similarly, renewed insecurity in late September along the Juba-Mundri-Mvolo-Rumbek road also raised the prospect of reduced access.

Illustrating the dangers associated with humanitarian work in South Sudan, available data suggests that nine humanitarian workers were killed during the reporting period. This brought the total number of recorded deaths of humanitarians between 15 December 2013 and 30 September 2015 to 36, up from 27 reported at the end of the second quarter (+33%).⁶⁷ Many more are missing and unaccounted for, or have been victims of assault, threat, harassment, detention and abduction.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the protection 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.

The Government of the Republic of South Sudan

- Ratify the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) and develop relevant national policies and laws, supported by an implementation plan.
- Cooperate fully in the deployment, operations, monitoring, verification, and reporting functions of UNMISS, in particular by guaranteeing the safety, security, and unrestricted freedom of movement of UN and associated personnel, as per the SOFA.

All parties to the conflict

- Arrest and hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and abuses of human rights, in particular those that may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as those involving violence or abuses against children and acts of sexual and gender-based violence.

⁶³ OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 9 October 2015.

⁶⁴ South Sudan NGO Forum, *Monthly Security Report: September*, 9 October 2015.

⁶⁵ South Sudan NGO Forum, "NGOs concerned about deteriorating security situation in Juba", <http://bit.ly/1FTFbZJ>, 16 September 2015; OCHA, *South Sudan Humanitarian Bulletin: Bi-weekly Update*, 18 September 2015.

⁶⁶ UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation: UNHCR Regional Update*, No. 72, 25 July-07 August 2015.

⁶⁷ OCHA South Sudan.

- Refrain from attacks against humanitarian personnel and allow the full, safe and unhindered access of relief personnel, equipment and supplies and the timely delivery of assistance to all those in need, in accordance with relevant provisions on international law.
- Stop forced recruitment and/or the use of children in the conflict, and ensure the implementation of the action plans and commitments agreed to with the United Nations to end the recruitment and/or use of children by 2016.
- Immediately and unconditionally release children associated with armed forces and groups (CAFFAG), as per the commitment made in the peace agreement.
- Stop rape and other forms of sexual violence, and ensure the implementation of the October and December 2014 commitments signed with the UN that prohibit the use of sexual violence in the conflict.
- Respect the sanctity of UN POC sites as places of refuge for civilians.
- Allow safe and unhindered freedom of movement for 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 which kill or maim innocent civilians, inhibit the return of IDPs and refugees, hamper humanitarian assistance, and obstruct economic development and reconstruction.
- SPLA-IO: Provide in-country, senior focal points to work with the MRM Country Task Force to develop and implement an action plan to end grave child rights violations.

UNMISS

- Ensure that all UNMISS compounds remain able and willing to receive civilians seeking protection in POC sites, and that all new arrivals are registered.
- Continue to scale up operations in Southern Unity State and on the west bank of Upper Nile State.
- Ensure that members of community watch groups in POC sites are properly trained on protection principles, clear on the scope of their authority, and subjected to appropriate oversight.
- Continue the good practice of working closely with the Protection Cluster to identify high priority locations, to reflect humanitarian priorities in patrol planning, and to identify and record threats and attacks against civilians, including through the development of common indicators and information-sharing protocols.
- Continue to strengthen Mission-wide participation in the MRM.

UN Security Council

- Ensure that the UNMISS mandate renewal in December 2015 does not compromise the focus on protection of civilians by adding too many competing priorities.
- Examine any possible conflict between UNMISS' POC mandate and provisions related to its support of the CTSAMM and the implementation of the peace agreement, and consider mitigation strategies.

Humanitarian community

- Prioritize and support protection activities in the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan and funding allocations, including the scaling-up of community-based PSS activities and of the FTR network to respond to the expected increase in both caseloads and opportunities for reunification.
- Launch a funding and advocacy appeal to ensure that CAFFAG are immediately and unconditionally released and that partners are ready to respond, and advocate for the SPLA-IO to send a representative to the CAFFAG Technical Working Group, given its preparation of a contingency plan

to respond to the eventual release of CAFFAG as part of the implementation of the peace agreement.

- Reduce the risk of GBV by supporting the expansion of GBV services to all settings and supporting the implementation of the new GBV IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action (September 2015).
- 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.

Donor and diplomatic community

- Pressure the Government of South Sudan and Opposition leaders to refrain from targeting civilians, and to uphold their obligations and commitments in the peace agreement.
- Provide support, whether financial or through advocacy, to address the deteriorating security environment for NGO and UN staff in Juba.

5. CONCLUSION

*“Our country just got independence.
Now we need to bring up this generation in peace.”*

– Mary, Jonglei State

This report presented the main protection concerns reported in South Sudan during the third quarter of 2015. Both sides to the conflict continued to target civilians, attack humanitarian personnel and assets, and restrict humanitarian access in contravention of international humanitarian and human rights law. Women continued to be exposed to high levels of sexual violence, and children continued to be killed, separated from their families and recruited and used by armed forces and groups, among other grave violations of children’s rights. Civilians continued to be displaced internally and to neighbouring countries, with growing displacement in Western and Central Equatoria states caused by the further deterioration of the security situation. A record number of civilians sought refuge at UNMISS POC sites yet were still exposed to protection threats, both inside the sites and near the gates. The ability of humanitarian actors to respond and of IDPs to protect themselves was further compromised by threats from landmines/UXOs, SOFA violations and restrictions on freedom of movement.

The signing of the peace agreement in August was viewed by many with a glimmer of hope. However, as the last quarter began, controversial measures by President Kiir made it apparent that the peace agreement would not be a panacea to solve the political crisis that underlies the conflict. On 2 October, the president signed an *Establishment Order for the Creation of 28 States* (no. 36/2015), which aims to replace the 10 states with 28 new ones in a move towards federalism. However, the Order seemed to aim to dilute the Opposition’s power in areas with large amounts of oil resources, and it created the potential for community-level conflicts about border demarcation and resource access.⁶⁸ Then, on 16 October, the president dissolved some of the SPLM’s leadership structures during an extraordinary

⁶⁸ Although the Order was decried by IGAD, the European Union, the Troika and others as being in violation of the peace agreement and the Transitional Constitution (2011), it was approved by Cabinet during an extraordinary session on 13 October. See Sudan Tribune, “IGAD says president Salva Kiir violates peace agreement”, www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article56708, 13 October 2015.

meeting of the National Liberation Council in Juba. Although the exact scope of this action remained unclear at the time of writing, in principle it seemed to undermine both the peace agreement and the provisions of the Arusha Agreement on the Reunification of the SPLM (21 January 2015).⁶⁹

The signing of the peace agreement also created a context in which questions about the need for and future of POC sites will likely become more prominent. As these discussions move forward, the experience with the closure of POC-2 in Juba underlines the importance of consulting IDPs and ensuring that any movement of displaced persons is voluntary, based on informed consent, and reduces exposure to protection threats. Humanitarians' engagement with UNMISS will be essential to ensure that discussions on the future of POC sites are guided by protection principles. As others have argued, protection challenges at the POC sites must be urgently addressed since the sites will likely remain necessary given ongoing insecurity and the absence of viable alternatives in the short term.⁷⁰

Moving forward, justice and accountability measures will be key to promoting reconciliation and deterring conflict in the future. In this regard, the last quarter began with a few positive developments, notably the arrival of an OHCHR fact-finding mission on 23 October and the release of the report of the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) on 27 October.⁷¹ Chapter V of the peace agreement also set out ambitious provisions regarding the creation of a Hybrid Court for South Sudan (HCSS), a Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing (CTRH), and a Compensation and Reparation Authority (CRA). Previous experience suggests that any such process must be led and owned by the South Sudanese in order to open the road to sustainable peace. Correctly connecting the dots between humanitarian and development programmes and frameworks will be equally important to support this process.

Despite recent achievements, the long road to peace has only just begun. All parties will have to be fully engaged and committed to heal the wounds that have deepened or been opened during this conflict, and to ensure that South Sudanese citizens can live without fear and want.

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⁶⁹ Associated Press, "South Sudan: Ruling Party's Leadership Secretariat Dissolved", <http://news.yahoo.com/south-sudan-ruling-partys-leadership-secretariat-dissolved-133441258.html>, 17 October 2015.

⁷⁰ Center for Civilians in Conflict, *Within and Beyond the Gates: The Protection of Civilians by the UN Mission in South Sudan*, October 2015, p. 22.

⁷¹ During its 29th session on 2 July 2015, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution (A/HRC/29.L8) requesting OHCHR to undertake a fact-finding mission and a comprehensive investigation into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights in South Sudan. See OHCHR, "Zeid deploys assessment mission to South Sudan", www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16649&LangID=E, 26 October 2015. In a communiqué on 26 September, the African Union Peace and Security Council had requested the chairperson of the AUCISS to release its report and the Separate Opinion for public information. See African Union, "Communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.1 (DXXVII)", www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc.547.comm.south.sudan.26.09.2015-.pdf. For the AUCISS report and Separate Opinion, see <http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/african-union-releases-report-au-commission-inquiry-south-sudan>.