



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	SOUTH SUDAN
Main subject	Security situation between 1 January 2020-31 January 2021
Question(s)	1. Introduction 2. Developments after the 2018 peace agreement 3. Main armed actors 4. Control of the territory 5. Impact of violence on civilians 6. Security situation by state 6.1 Upper Nile state 6.2 Western Equatoria state 6.3 Central Equatoria state 6.4 Eastern Equatoria state 6.5 Lakes state 6.6 Jonglei state (including Pibor) 6.7 Western Bahr el-Ghazal state 6.8 Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state 6.9 Warrap state 6.10 Unity state
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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on 26 February 2021. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

COI QUERY RESPONSE - SOUTH SUDAN

The goal of this COI Query is to provide the latest developments on the security situation in South Sudan. The reporting period is 1 January 2020 to 31 January 2021. Some of the below topics were previously addressed in a EASO COI Query Response on the [Security Situation in South Sudan](#), published on 24 April 2020. Whenever recent information on those selected topics could not be found, content from the aforementioned EASO COI Query Response has been reproduced, after having thoroughly verified the current validity of the information and the accessibility of the sources.

Security situation between 1 January 2020 - 31 January 2021



Map 1: United Nations, South Sudan, Map No. 4450, Rev. 1, October 2011, [url](#)

1. Introduction

South Sudan became an independent country in 2011, after some 99 percent of voters in the south chose to break away from northern Sudan.¹ In 2013, civil war erupted in the country, originating as a dispute between the president Salva Kiir and the vice president Riek Machar, whom Kiir accused of

¹ BBC News, South Sudan profile - Timeline, 6 August 2018, [url](#); France 24, Over 99 percent of South Sudanese vote 'yes' to independence, 30 January 2011, [url](#)

planning a coup.² At the time, International Crisis Group described Machar as a 'leader of a loose coalition of disgruntled groups across the country'.³ The fighting later evolved into an ethnic conflict⁴, with the Dinka supporting Kiir and the Nuer supporting Machar⁵, consequently causing a humanitarian crisis.⁶

The parties signed a peace agreement in 2015 that was respected until July 2016, when new fighting started in Juba. In September 2018, the largest warring parties signed a new peace agreement.⁷ While fighting between the government and main opposition parties has subsided after the peace agreement, inter-communal violence continued and displaced thousands of people.⁸ It is estimated that the conflict caused two million people to flee the country, while another two million remained internally displaced.⁹

2. Developments after the 2018 peace agreement

In August 2015, Kiir and Machar signed a peace agreement, and in April 2016, a unity government was formed. The agreement collapsed in July 2016 after a fighting in Juba broke out and Machar eventually fled the country.¹⁰ On 12 September 2018, Kiir und Machar signed a new peace agreement.¹¹ Not all opposition leaders signed the agreement, arguing that it did not address the actual issues causing the conflict.¹² The agreement covered various subjects including the establishment of the unity government, permanent ceasefire and humanitarian assistance. According to the Revitalized Agreement, the unity government should stay in office for 36 months, and 60 days before its end, democratic elections should take place. The agreement establishes a position of a single president – Kiir; first vice president – Machar; and four other vice presidents.¹³ Following the agreement, all armed parties in South Sudan were supposed to be disarmed or unified into integrated military and police forces.¹⁴ In August 2019, it was reported that a new unified armed force should have 83 000 fighters.¹⁵

According to the agreement, a new unity government was to be established in May 2019, which was

² Al Jazeera, South Sudanese rebels 'approve' peace deal with government, 31 August 2018, [url](#); BBC News, South Sudan: What is the fighting about?, 10 May 2014, [url](#); USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³ International Crisis Group, *Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan*, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 3

⁴ South Sudan is an ethnically diverse country with some 70 different ethnic groups. Dinka and Nuer are the biggest ones, with estimated proportion of some 36 and 16 per cent, respectively. See: MRG, South Sudan, July 2018, [url](#). They are further divided into the Aweil Dinka, the Rek Dinka, the Dunjol Dinka, and the Leek Nuer, Lak Nuer, and Lou Nuer. See: Delmet, C., South Sudan: The State and Traditional Nilotic Societies. Livestock, Sacrifices, Justice, and Exchanges, February 2013, Cairn.Info, [url](#), p. 3

⁵ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 1; Guardian (The), More than 300 dead as South Sudan capital is rocked by violence, 11 July 2016, [url](#); OSAC, South Sudan 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

⁶ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 1; New York Times, 383,000: Estimated Death Toll in South Sudan's War, 26 September 2018, [url](#)

⁷ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁸ ACAPS, South Sudan: Overview, 04 January 2021, [url](#)

⁹ MSF, Life inside or outside a displacement camp, 20 June 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 1

¹¹ Al Jazeera, South Sudan president signs peace deal with rebel leader, 12 September 2018, [url](#); Reuters, South Sudan's president, rebel leader sign peace deal, 12 September 2018, [url](#)

¹² CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2019 - South Sudan, 4 February 2019, [url](#)

¹³ ACCORD, Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalised Peace Agreement, 11 February 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵ International Crisis Group, *Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan*, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 5



later postponed for six months until November 2019¹⁶ and later again for 100 days.¹⁷ The unresolved issues included the final number of states and their borders¹⁸ and personal safety of Machar in Juba.¹⁹

On 22 February 2020, a unity government was formed with a plan to hold elections within three years.²⁰ President Kiir agreed to install Machar as his deputy and took responsibility for his security in Juba.²¹ The number of states in the country was reduced to the original ten²², while three special administrative areas were created.²³ Despite the slow pace of implementation of the new peace agreement during 2020,²⁴ some progress was noted.²⁵ On 17 June 2020, Kiir and Machar, reached a decision on responsibility-sharing ratio at state and local government levels, leading to the appointment of 9 out of 10 governors of the states by the 17th of July 2020.²⁶ By 22 January 2021, 9 out of 10 deputy governors had been also appointed.²⁷ On 29 January 2021, the governor and deputy governor of Upper Nile State were also appointed by the President, ending a long deadlock between Kiir's party and Machar's opposition group over the nominee for the gubernatorial post.²⁸

Despite the new agreement's requirement that at least 35 percent at all levels of governance should be women, only one woman was appointed as governor.²⁹ Abiding to Article 5 of the Revitalized Agreement,³⁰ on 29 January 2021, the government approved the establishment of accountability mechanisms, including the Hybrid Court for South Sudan.³¹ Although the graduation and deployment of the necessary unified forces (NUF) is being considered as a 'key requirement' for the successful implementation of the peace agreement,³² the unification process has been delayed due to lack of resources.³³ On 2 February 2021, the Minister of Presidential Affairs announced that the government

¹⁶ CRS, South Sudan, 28 December 2018, [url](#), p. 2; International Crisis Group, Déjà Vu: Preventing Another Collapse in South Sudan, 4 November 2019, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁷ HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸ HRW, World Report 2020 - South Sudan, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹ Africanews, Riek Machar visits South Sudan to save peace deal, n.d., [url](#); PD Online, Machar, Kiir must not obstruct Juba peace process, 28 October 2019, [url](#)

²⁰ Al Jazeera, South Sudan's rival leaders form coalition government, 22 February 2020, [url](#); France 24, South Sudan's rivals form unity government in bid to end war, 22 February 2020, [url](#); UN News, UN chief welcomes South Sudan's Unity government, lauds parties for 'significant achievement', 22 February 2020, [url](#)

²¹ New Humanitarian (The), In the news: South Sudan's new coalition government – third time lucky?, 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²² Previously, number of states in South Sudan was extended from ten to 28 in October 2015 by Kir, and later in January 2017 to 32. See: UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 18

²³ Foreign Policy, Diplomats Fear a Collapse of South Sudan's Latest Peace Deal, 5 March 2020, [url](#); UN, Deadlock broken, South Sudan on road to 'sustainable peace,' but international support still key, 5 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁴ HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#); OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 23

²⁵ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 97, 98, 99, 100

²⁶ AA, South Sudan names state governors for unity government, 30 June 2020, [url](#); UN Security Council: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 2, 3

²⁷ International Crisis Group, South Sudan, January 2021, [url](#)

²⁸ Radio Tamazuj, President Kiir appoints Upper Nile State governor and his deputy, 29 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 4

³⁰ The University of Edinburgh, Peace Agreement DataBase, Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), n.d., [url](#)

³¹ AA, South Sudan approves establishment of Hybrid Court, 30 January 2021, [url](#)

³² RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 4

³³ New Humanitarian (The), Old grudges and empty coffers: South Sudan's precarious peace process, 21 January 2021, [url](#); RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the 1st April 2020 to 30th of June 2020, 15 Jul 2020, [url](#), para. 35; RJMEC - Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the 1st July 2020 to 30th of September 2020, 19 Oct 2020, [url](#), para. 25

agreed to graduate the first group of necessary unified forces.³⁴ As of February 2021, the government had not yet taken steps towards the reconstitution of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (TNLA) and the Council of States (CoS).³⁵

3. Main armed actors

Governmental forces

- **The South Sudanese People's Defense Forces (SSPDF):** forces loyal to president Kiir.³⁶ Before September 2018, they were known as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)³⁷. The SSPDF are responsible for providing security throughout the country, under the Ministry of Defense and Veterans' Affairs.³⁸ The SSPDF consists of ground forces, air forces, air defense forces, and presidential guard.³⁹ The Head of the armed forces is the president.⁴⁰ Global Firepower estimates the number of active military personnel in South Sudan at 200 000.⁴¹ The November 2020 interim report of the UN Security Council (UNSC)-mandated Panel of Experts on South Sudan provided evidence of serious human rights violations committed during 2020 by the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF).⁴² For detailed information on the organisation of the SSPDF, see the January 2020 UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report.⁴³
- **The Internal Security Bureau of the National Security Service (NSS):** operates under the Ministry of National Security. According to the 2011 Transitional Constitution, NSS's role is to 'focus on information gathering, analysis and advice to the relevant authorities'.⁴⁴ It can conduct arrests in relation to the national security, however, according to the US Department of State (USDOS), it 'operates far beyond its legal authority'.⁴⁵ Sources reported on numerous human rights violations and acts of violence committed by the NSS throughout 2020.⁴⁶ For detailed information on the establishment of the NSS and on the patterns of abuse by the National Security Service between 2014 and 2020, see the December 2020 Human Rights Watch report.⁴⁷

³⁴ XinhuaNet, South Sudan ready to graduate first batch of unified forces, 3 February 2021, [url](#)

³⁵ UN News, South Sudan: UN rights commission welcomes 'first steps' towards transitional justice institutions, 1 February 2021, [url](#); OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 74

³⁶ Rulac, Non-international armed conflict in South Sudan, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

³⁷ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 53

³⁸ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

³⁹ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#); UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 55

⁴⁰ South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, [url](#), Art. 153 (1)

⁴¹ Global Firepower, South Sudan Military Strength (2021), n.d., [url](#)

⁴² UNSC: Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019) [S/2019/897], 25 November 2020, [url](#), paras. 35-45

⁴³ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 53-56

⁴⁴ South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, [url](#), Art. 159 (3)

⁴⁵ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁶ HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#); UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 57; UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 53, 57; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4

⁴⁷ HRW, What Crime Was I Paying for? Abuses by South Sudan's National Security Service, 14 December 2020, [url](#)

- **The South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS):** authority responsible for law enforcement in South Sudan.⁴⁸ According to the transitional constitution, the police shall ‘prevent, combat and investigate crime, maintain law and public order, protect the people and their properties’.⁴⁹ The SSNPS consists of some 40 000 officers and it is reportedly underpaid and involved in corruption and other crimes.⁵⁰

Main armed opposition groups⁵¹

- **The Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM-IO)⁵²:** consists of defectors from South Sudanese forces loyal to Machar⁵³; it was described by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) as the ‘largest rebellion’ in the country.⁵⁴ Since 2015, many ethnic groups other than the Nuer have joined the group, keeping a significant level of autonomy.⁵⁵ It was reported that when Machar returned to Juba in April 2016, his forces consisted of 1 300 soldiers and ‘some police’.⁵⁶ On 17 November 2020, Regina Joseph Kapa was appointed as the interim Secretary-General of SPLM/A-IO.⁵⁷ Both SPLM/A-IO and SSPDF, as well as the National Salvation Front, have recruited and used children.⁵⁸
- **National Salvation Front (NAS):** consists of defectors from South Sudanese armed forces.⁵⁹ It is headed by former military official Thomas Cirillo. The NAS did not sign the 2018 peace agreement.⁶⁰ Active in the Equatorias, NAS was involved in clashes with both SSPDF and SPLMAO throughout 2020, leading to the displacement of thousands of civilians.⁶¹ Despite its ousting from several towns by an offensive launched by SSPDF during May and July 2020⁶², the National Salvation Front has continued its activities in the greater Equatoria region.⁶³ It has been considered as the second largest opposition group in the conflict.⁶⁴

⁴⁸ USDOS, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: South Sudan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁹ South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, [url](#), Art. 155 (2)(a)

⁵⁰ OSAC, South Sudan 2019 Crime & Safety Report, 29 April 2020, [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung: BTI 2020 Country Report South Sudan, 29 April 2020, [url](#), p. 7; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4; UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 57, 67

⁵¹ Main parties of the 2018 peace agreement from the opposition were the SPLM-Army in Opposition, the SPLM-Former Detainees and the South Sudanese Opposition Alliance. Other signatories were the Umbrella Coalition of Political Parties, the National Alliance of Political Parties, the United Sudan African Party, the United Democratic Salvation Front, the United Democratic Party and the African National Congress. See: ACCORD, Reviving peace in South Sudan through the Revitalized Peace Agreement, 11 February 2019, [url](#)

⁵² In this query response referred to as SPLA-IO as well, according to the original source.

⁵³ Rulac, Non-international armed conflict in South Sudan, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

⁵⁴ ACLED, Last Man Standing: An Analysis of South Sudan's Elongated Peace Process, 8 November 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁵ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁶ BBC News, South Sudan: Clashes erupt in Juba hours after UN plea, 11 July 2016, [url](#)

⁵⁷ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 7

⁵⁸ UNSC: Children and armed conflict in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1205], 14 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 1, 11, 18-26

⁵⁹ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁰ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, South Sudan, 21 January 2021, [url](#)

⁶¹ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, South Sudan, 21 January 2021, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#); UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 32

⁶² UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 26

⁶³ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 26

⁶⁴ International Crisis Group, Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

- **The SPLM-Leaders-Former Detainees (SPLM-FD):** consists of politicians and security officers imprisoned at the outbreak of the civil war.⁶⁵ Released in 2014, as a group, they did not hold unified views, according to International Crisis Group. Some of them wanted to place South Sudan under the UN trusteeship, whereas others accepted positions in the unity government.⁶⁶ Current information on size of their troops could not be found in the consulted and used sources.
- **South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA):** an umbrella of smaller opposition groups acting independently from Machar, formed in February 2018⁶⁷, involving initially 10 political parties and armed groups.⁶⁸ Parts of the SSOA, with the dominant group being the NAS, expressed dissatisfaction with the terms of the Revitalized Agreement. As a result, they decided to split from the initial alliance and formed the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance (SSNDA) in 2019.⁶⁹
- **South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA):** On 30 August 2019, the South Sudan National Democratic Alliance, led by Tomas Cirilo, merged with the Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement (R-SPLM) and the South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A), and formed the South Sudan Opposition Movements Alliance (SSOMA).⁷⁰ SSOMA is not a signatory party to the Revitalized Agreement of 2018⁷¹, but on 12 January 2020 it signed a peace declaration with the government, in which SSOMA recommits to the Secession of Hostilities Agreement of December 2017.⁷² On 25 September 2020 the South Sudan Opposition Movement Alliance Leadership Council announced the suspension of the activities of the South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A) led by Gen Paul Malong.⁷³ On 5 October 2020, the Real Sudan People's Liberation Movement was also suspended after having criticised the decision regarding the expulsion of SSUF/A.⁷⁴ Despite some discussions in mid-November regarding a potential reconciliation of the different fractions of SSOMA⁷⁵, on 21 January 2021 SSOMA issued a press release stating that its alliance consists of 4 Movements, namely The National Salvation Front (NAS), the National Democratic Movement-Patriotic Front (NDM-PF), the South Sudan National Movement for Change/Army (SSNMC/A) and the United Democratic Revolution Movement/Army (UDRM/A).⁷⁶
- **South Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM):** Led by commander Matthew Puljang, it was tasked with the protection of oil fields in the Unity state after the start of the civil war. In 2014, it was 'technically integrated' into the SPLA, while Puljang managed to maintain an

⁶⁵ International Crisis Group, *Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal*, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, *South Sudan: Rearranging the Chessboard*, 20 December 2016, [url](#)

⁶⁷ ACAPS, *Access to basic needs and services in South Sudan: Scenarios; Possible developments affecting the basic needs and access to basic services of South Sudanese over the next 6-12 months*; August 2020, [url](#), p. 16

⁶⁸ ISS, *Compound fractures, Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan*, December 2018, [url](#), p. 13-14

⁶⁹ ACAPS, *Access to basic needs and services in South Sudan: Scenarios; Possible developments affecting the basic needs and access to basic services of South Sudanese over the next 6-12 months*; August 2020, [url](#), p. 16

⁷⁰ National Salvation Front/Army- NAS, *South Sudan Opposition Movements Declaration of Principles*, 31 August 2019, [url](#)

⁷¹ International Crisis Group, *Salvaging South Sudan's Fragile Peace Deal*, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁷² IGAD, *Rome Declaration on the peace progress in South Sudan*, n.d., [url](#)

⁷³ National Salvation Front/Army- NAS, *SSOMA Press Release on suspension of Malong's SSUF-A*, 26 September 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁴ UNSC: *Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180]*, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 8

⁷⁵ UNSC: *Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180]*, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 10

⁷⁶ National Salvation Front/Army- NAS, *Press Release in Response to False Information by Dr. Barnaba Marial*, 22 January 2021, [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, *SSOMA-Cirillo accuses the government of misinformation*, 22 January 2020, [url](#)

independent command on his troops.⁷⁷ In 2019, it was indicated that it was transformed into presidential guards.⁷⁸ As a member of the SSOA, it was involved in discussions during October 2020, regarding the appointment of the alliance's representatives in the Equatorias.⁷⁹

International organisations

- **The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**⁸⁰: operates in the country since 2011, is in charge of 'consolidating peace and security and helping establish conditions for the successful economic and political development of South Sudan'.⁸¹ Its mandate was later extended to include monitoring of human rights and protection of civilians⁸² and it will expire on 15 March 2021.⁸³ As of November 2020, UNMISS civilian personnel counted 2 662 members, the UNMISS police 1 627 members and the military 17 000 members.⁸⁴
- **United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)**: operates in the disputed Abyei region along the border with Sudan since 2011, charged with 'ensuring security, protecting civilians, strengthening the capacity of the Abyei Police Service, de-mining, monitoring/verifying the redeployment of armed forces from the area, and facilitating the flow of humanitarian aid'. Its mandate was extended until 15 May 2021.⁸⁵ No current information on the extension of its mandate could be found. As of December 2020, it consisted of some 3 7000 members.⁸⁶

4. Control of the territory

In December 2018, i.e. three months after the revitalised peace agreement was signed⁸⁷, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) reported that the government forces had presence 'throughout the country except remaining opposition strongholds in Akobo and Southern Liech', while the SPLMAO had presence 'throughout rural parts of Greater Upper Nile, Greater Equatoria (Yei River, Gbudwe, Maridi, Amadi, Kapoeta and Imatong) and Greater Bahr-elGhazal (Wau and Lol)'. The same source stated that the NAS operated in Kapoeta, Imatong, Yei River and the SSLM in Northern Liech.⁸⁸

Areas previously held by the opposition include, for example, Maiwut and Ulang in the Upper Nile State, Fangak in northern Jonglei⁸⁹, parts of Equatoria⁹⁰ and villages in Mayendit and Leer.⁹¹

On 17 June 2020, three months after a new unity government consisting of Kiir and five opposition leaders was formed, the parties to the revitalised peace agreement reached a decision on the

⁷⁷ ISS, Compound fractures, Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan, December 2018, [url](#), p. 11

⁷⁸ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 55

⁷⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 4

⁸⁰ The UNMISS mandate has been prolonged until 15 March 2021. See: [url](#)

⁸¹ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

⁸² United Nations Peacekeeping, UNMISS Fact sheet, n.d., [url](#)

⁸³ United Nations Peacekeeping, UNMISS Mission Fact sheet, 21 January 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁴ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 82, 83, 84

⁸⁵ UNSC, Resolution 2550 (2020) [S/RES/2550], 12 November 2020, [url](#), p. 2

⁸⁶ CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

⁸⁷ Reuters, South Sudan's president, rebel leader sign peace deal, 12 September 2018, [url](#)

⁸⁸ ISS, Compound fractures, Political formations, armed groups and regional mediation in South Sudan, December 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁸⁹ UNOCHA, 2020 South Sudan Humanitarian Needs Overview, 20 November 2019, [url](#), p. 15

⁹⁰ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-8

⁹¹ OHCHR, UN demands justice for civilians, 10 July 2018, [url](#)



allocation of the country's states.⁹² The decision came after a long period of disagreement between President Kiir's group and opposition parties over the states and was a means to control the escalation of inter-communal conflicts in some states due to absence of governors.⁹³

Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Lakes, Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, Warrap and Unity were allocated to President Kiir, Western Equatoria, Western Bahr el-Ghazal and Upper Nile were allocated to Machar's SPLM, while Jonglei was allocated to SSOA.⁹⁴ The Other Political Parties coalition was not allocated a State, despite the relevant provision in the revitalized agreement, according to which the coalition would be granted 8% of the positions.⁹⁵

On 29 June 2020, President Kiir appointed the governors for Eastern Equatoria State, Central Equatoria State, Unity STte, Warrap State, Lakes State, Northern Bhar-el-Ghazel State, Ghar-el-Ghazel State and for Western Equatoria State, as well as the administrators for the Abyei Administrative Area, the Pibor Administrative Area and the Reweng Administrative Area.⁹⁶ On 17 July, the governor of Jonglei was appointed by SSOA, despite the objection of one of its members, namely the National Democratic Movement, that their nominee had not been considered for the position.⁹⁷

On 30 December 2020, President Kiir appointed six deputy governors, despite the reservations by some parties to the Revitalized Agreement regarding the contradiction of the deputy governors' appointment to article 164 (2) of the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (TCRSS), 2011 (as amended). Article 164 (2) provides that 'the Governor of each state shall be the head of the executive organ in the state and shall appoint and relieve the deputy governor, advisors, and state ministers in consultation with the President and in accordance with the state constitution.'⁹⁸ By 22 January 2021, 9 out of 10 deputy governors had been appointed.⁹⁹ On 29 January 2021, the governor and deputy governor of Upper Nile State were also appointed by the President, ending a long deadlock between Kiir's party and Machar's opposition group over the nominee for the gubernatorial post.¹⁰⁰

The following is a list of governors and chief administrators of the states and administrative areas of South Sudan, as of February 2021:

- Western Equatoria State: Governor Alfred Futiyo Karaba¹⁰¹, Deputy Governor Kennedy Ganiko¹⁰²
- Central Equatoria State: Emmanuel Adil Anthony¹⁰³, Deputy Governor Sarah Neni Ridento¹⁰⁴

⁹² UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 2

⁹³ Radio Tamazuj, South Sudan's parties agree on state allocations, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁴ AA, S. Sudan: Leader, opposition agree on states allocation, 17 June 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁵ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 2

⁹⁶ Radio Tamazuj, Kiir appoints governors for eight states, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁷ Radio Tamazuj, NDM feels excluded after Jonglei governor named, 20 July 2020, [url](#); UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 3

⁹⁸ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 10; South Sudan, The Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011, [url](#), Art. 164 (2)

⁹⁹ International Crisis Group, South Sudan, January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ Radio Tamazuj, President Kiir appoints Upper Nile State governor and his deputy, 29 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰² RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 9

¹⁰³ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ EyeRadio, Kiir names 3 deputy state governors, 22 January 2021, [url](#)



- Unity State: Governor Joseph Monyui¹⁰⁵, Deputy Governor Tor Tungwar Kueiguong¹⁰⁶
- Warrap State: Governor Bona Panek Biar¹⁰⁷, Deputy Governor Ayen Mayor Makuei¹⁰⁸
- Lakes State: Governor Makur Kulang Liei¹⁰⁹, Deputy Governor Puoth Madit Dut¹¹⁰
- Northern Bhar-el-Ghazel State: Governor Tong Aken Ngor¹¹¹, Deputy Governor Tong Lua Ayat¹¹²
- Western Bhar-el-Ghazel State: Governor Sarah Cleto Hassan Rial¹¹³, Deputy Governor Angelo Taban Baijo¹¹⁴
- Eastern Equatoria State: Governor Louis Lobong Lojore¹¹⁵, Deputy Governor Mary Nadio Lodira Alphonse¹¹⁶
- Jonglei State: Governor Denay Jock Chagor¹¹⁷, Deputy Governor Antipas Nyok Kucha¹¹⁸
- Upper Nile State: Governor Budhok Ayang Anei Kur¹¹⁹, Deputy Governor James Tor Monybun¹²⁰
- Abyei Administrative Area: Chief Administrator Kuol Deim Kuol¹²¹
- Pibor Administrative Area: Chief Administrator Joshua Konyi¹²²

¹⁰⁵ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁶ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 9

¹⁰⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Kiir appoints governors for eight states, 29 June 2020, [url](#); MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ EyeRadio, Kiir names 3 deputy state governors, 22 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 9

¹¹¹ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹² EyeRadio, Kiir names 3 deputy state governors, 22 January 2021, [url](#)

¹¹³ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 9

¹¹⁵ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st April to 30th June 2020, 15 July 2020, [url](#), para. 18; MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020, 28 January 2021, [url](#), para. 9

¹¹⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Kiir appoints governor for troubled Jonglei, 15 July 2020, [url](#); MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st July to 30th September 2020, 19 October 2020, [url](#), para. 8

¹¹⁹ Radio Tamazuj, President Kiir appoints Upper Nile State governor and his deputy, 29 January 2021, [url](#); MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰ Radio Tamazuj, President Kiir appoints Upper Nile State governor and his deputy, 29 January 2021, [url](#)

¹²¹ Radio Tamazuj, Kiir appoints governors for eight states, 29 June 2020, [url](#); MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹²² Radio Tamazuj, Kiir appoints governors for eight states, 29 June 2020, [url](#); MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan's New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

- Ruweng Administrative Area: Chief Administrator William Chol Awolich¹²³

For information on local armed groups operating in various states across South Sudan, see the respective sections in this query response. For estimated territorial deployments of state and non-state actors in South Sudan in December 2019, see UNHRC maps.¹²⁴

5. Overview of the security situation

Throughout 2020, the main drivers of violence against civilians in South Sudan were armed conflict, ‘persistent’ intercommunal fighting, as well as ‘cattle raiding and revenge attacks between armed youth groups’.¹²⁵

According to the UN, civilians in South Sudan are subjected to acts including ‘killing, sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, ill-treatment’, and looting.¹²⁶ The human rights situation in the country was characterized by ‘a lack of accountability’ for violations and abuses, as insecurity is exacerbated by the easy access of the population to ‘small arms and light weapons’ as a result of decades of armed fighting.¹²⁷ According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), in 2020 South Sudan ‘was marked by conflict, security forces’ violations, entrenched impunity, and a lack of respect for rule of law’.¹²⁸

In September 2020, the UN underlined the ‘deteriorating’ security situation, ‘with complex conflicts emerging among ethnic groups operating, along with increasingly fractious alliances and targeted security campaigns’.¹²⁹ In December 2020, the UN pointed out the sharp increase of intercommunal violence ‘over the past year’, while highlighting the change in the dynamics of violence: if in the past, intercommunal clashes were ‘spurred by high bride prices, competition over resources, limited economic opportunities, lack of access to formal justice systems and gendered pressures on male youths’, recently the violence had become ‘highly politicized’.¹³⁰ Throughout the year, the majority of civilian victims were harmed during such intercommunal clashes, as highlighted by UNMISS. According to the same source, intercommunal violence ‘has taken on an increasingly militarized character’, which has become ‘one of the chief reasons behind the high numbers of civilian casualties documented during intercommunal clashes’, with ‘devastating consequences on local populations’.¹³¹

Throughout 2020, the issue of forced recruitment was also highlighted. In February 2020, UNMISS documented ‘a surge in the forced military recruitment of civilians and alleged former fighters by the major warring parties and their allies’. In April 2020, the UN Panel of Experts pointed out that the practice of forced recruitment of children and adults in the country ‘remained unabated’, as ‘both SSPDF and SPLA-IO have targeted children and young people for recruitment’. The same source

¹²³ Radio Tamazuj, Kiir appoints governors for eight states, 29 June 2020, [url](#); MAAPS, MAAPS UPDATE: South Sudan’s New State Governors, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁴ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 57-58

¹²⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 42; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 32; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 31; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 32,33

¹²⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 42

¹²⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 55; UNSC, Report on the independent strategic review of the UNMISS pursuant to Security Council resolution, 15 December 2020, [url](#), para. 38

¹²⁸ HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#)

¹²⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 19

¹³⁰ UNSC, Report on the independent strategic review of the UNMISS pursuant to Security Council resolution, 15 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 25, 26

¹³¹ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), 2 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 1, 5; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), 20 October 2020, [url](#), p. 3

described the ‘abduction campaigns’ of the SSPDF and SPLA-IO, where ‘pickup trucks with armed and unarmed men, some in uniform, arrived at villages during the day, stopped children and young people and forced them into the trucks’. In its December 2020 report, the UN highlighted the ‘alarming increase in the abduction of civilians [...] primarily for the purpose of forced military recruitment’ in Central Equatoria’.¹³²

Targeted violence

In February 2020, Human Rights Watch reported on human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, and enforced disappearances, as well as abuse of detainees, carried out by the National Security Service (NSS), which continued its ‘full-blown assault on critics of the government and political opponents’.¹³³ In April 2020, the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan reported that members of the NSS and the SSPDF military ‘conducted extrajudicial activities’, suppressed ‘dissenting voices outside the legal due process, including through the arbitrary detention, torture and extrajudicial killings of perceived opponents’, and ‘operated prisons in Juba, where their forces have committed widespread human rights abuses’. The Panel of Experts pointed out detention facilities belonging to NSS where ‘detainees have been beaten and tortured and at times compelled to pay a ransom’ for their release, with some detainees being killed during torture.¹³⁴ Additionally, HRW, quoting a former NSS officer, reported that detainees at the NSS Riverside detention site in Juba were ‘tortured during their first days or weeks of arrival in the site to “break them” and force them to confess to crimes, false or otherwise’.¹³⁵

5.1 Impact of violence on the civilian population

Civilian Casualties

Data on violent incidents reported in this query response is based on EASO analysis of ACLED public data extracted on 8 January 2021. For the purpose of this query, only the following types of events were included as violent incidents in the analysis of the security situation in South Sudan: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians.

Between 1 January 2020-8 January 2021, ACLED collected a total of 804 violent events, of which 384 were coded as battles, 8 were recorded as explosion/remote violence, and 412 were recorded as incidents of violence against civilians.¹³⁶

In addition, although not available for the entire reference period, data published by UNMISS shows that:

- Between January-March 2020, there were 275 incidents recorded which involved at least 1 767 civilians who were subjected to one of the four major forms of harm (killing, injury, abduction and sexual violence). Accordingly, 658 civilians were killed, 452 were injured, 592 were abducted, and 65 were subjected to sexual violence.

With regards to the type of conflict affecting civilians, some 75 % of civilians were harmed

¹³² UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), paras. 56, 59; UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), paras. 22, 26; UNSC, Report on the independent strategic review of the UMISS pursuant to Security Council resolution, 15 December 2020, [url](#), para. 58

¹³³ HRW, South Sudan: Reform Abusive Security Agency, 19 February 2020, [url](#)

¹³⁴ UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), paras. 29-33

¹³⁵ HRW, “What Crime Was I Paying For?” Abuses by South Sudan’s National Security Service, 14 December 2020, [url](#), p. 26

¹³⁶ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

during intercommunal conflict, around 23 % during clashes between Government forces and organised armed groups, and 2 % during incidents of opportunistic violence. According to the source, 'the majority of victims were documented in Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap states, which are also the areas most affected by intercommunal violence'.¹³⁷

- Between April-June 2020, there were 417 incidents recorded which involved at least 1 620 civilians who were subjected to one of the four major forms of harm (killing, injury, abduction and sexual violence). Accordingly, 887 civilians were killed, 531 were injured, 176 were abducted and 26 were subjected to sexual violence.

With regards to the type of conflict affecting civilians, some 86 % of civilians were harmed during intercommunal conflict, around 11 % during clashes between Government forces and organized armed groups, and 3 % during incidents of opportunistic violence. Similar to the previous quarter, more than half (59 %) of victims were documented in Jonglei, Lakes and Warrap states, locations that were most affected by intercommunal violence.¹³⁸

- Between July-September 2020, there were 260 incidents recorded which involved at least 1 223 civilians who were subjected to one of the four major forms of harm (killing, injury, abduction and sexual violence). Accordingly, 500 civilians were killed, 299 were injured, 375 were abducted and 49 were subjected to sexual violence.

With regards to the type of conflict affecting civilians, some 74 % of civilians were harmed during intercommunal conflict, around 23 % during clashes between Government forces and organized armed groups, and 3 % during incidents of opportunistic violence. During this quarter, Jonglei and the GPAA were 'the most violent area in the country, accounting for almost half of the victims (44 %) recorded throughout South Sudan'.¹³⁹

Humanitarian Situation

According to UN OCHA, the estimated number of people in need of humanitarian aid was expected to grow, from approximately 7.5 million in 2020 to an estimated 8.3 million people in 2021.¹⁴⁰

In April 2020, the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan characterized the humanitarian situation in the country as 'precarious', as 'most South Sudanese face serious food shortages and have limited or no access to basic services, including safe water, health care or education'.¹⁴¹

With regards to food insecurity, the number of people facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse levels of acute food insecurity grew throughout 2020, from around 5.29 million people (45.2% of the population) in January 2020 to 6.35 million people (52.6% of the population) in November 2020.¹⁴²

The vast majority of the people in South Sudan rely on 'subsistence agriculture and humanitarian assistance', and the 'consequences of conflict-induced displacement' coupled with the recent COVID-19 pandemic, have 'had a particularly catastrophic effect on food security countrywide'. In October 2020, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan highlighted that 'deliberate strategies on the part of both Government and opposition forces to use starvation as a method of warfare, have

¹³⁷ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), 2 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 1, 3, 4

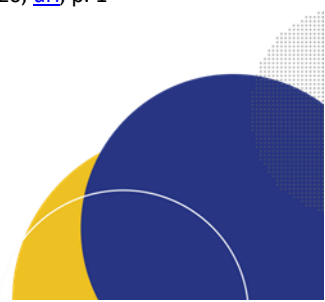
¹³⁸ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), 20 October 2020, [url](#), pp. 1, 3, 4

¹³⁹ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September), 7 December 2020, [url](#) pp. 1, 3, 4

¹⁴⁰ UNOCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2021, 26 January 2021, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan: Humanitarian Needs Overview 2020, 20 November 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴¹ UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), para. 43

¹⁴² IPC, South Sudan: Integrated Food Security Classification Snapshot | January - July 2020, January 2020, [url](#); IPC, South Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Situation for October 2020 – July 2021, 18 December 2020, [url](#), p. 1



contributed to the food insecurity in Western Bahr el Ghazal, Jonglei, and Central Equatoria States'.¹⁴³

Moreover, in December 2020 the UN pointed out that 'unpaid or underpaid soldiers regularly loot' civilian supplies, while 'parties to the conflict have also deliberately destroyed crops and blocked the delivery of humanitarian assistance to communities believed to be aligned with their political rivals'. The same source reported the difficulty of civilians to prove ownership of housing, land or property due to 'multiple cycles of displacement' and lack of documentation, while in some instances, 'military actors' claimed the assets of IDPs, which 'increased the direct risk to civilians who attempted to reclaim land or property'.¹⁴⁴

Humanitarian access

Throughout the year, humanitarian access to people in need of humanitarian assistance was impeded, and aid operation were often suspended, due to 'widespread' insecurity. Moreover, targeted attacks and ambushes on aid workers were reported, including on 'clearly marked humanitarian vehicles'.¹⁴⁵ For instance, in November 2020, the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan pointed out the humanitarian situation in Jonglei State, where armed fighting between May-August 2020 'led to the evacuation of at least 183 aid workers', which 'resulted in the shutdown of essential and life-saving services to civilians', while in 'late October' 2020, 'insecurity shut down major roads' and prevented 'the delivery of basic services to civilians on the brink of starvation', while 'humanitarian facilities and services were targeted, destroyed and looted'.¹⁴⁶

In its latest report of December 2020, the UN highlighted that between September-November 2020, violence had resulted in 'the harassment of humanitarian workers and the disruption of humanitarian operations'; moreover, 'humanitarian access deteriorated, with ongoing hostilities negatively affecting access, and repeated acts of violence perpetrated against humanitarian workers and assets'.¹⁴⁷

While data covering the entire reference period was not available at the time of writing, existing figures published by the UN showed that:

- Between 1 January-21 May 2020, some 269 humanitarian access incidents were recorded, 'owing mainly to localized intercommunal violence', and four aid workers were killed.¹⁴⁸
- Between June-July 2020, there were 87 humanitarian access incidents recorded, in which three aid workers were killed.¹⁴⁹
- Between September-November 2020, there were 103 humanitarian access incidents recorded, while two aid workers were killed.¹⁵⁰

At the same time, data collected by Humanitarian Outcomes showed that between 1 January 2020-31

¹⁴³ UN Human Rights Council, "There is nothing left for us": Starvation as a method of warfare in South Sudan, 5 October 2020, [url](#), paras. 6, 15; UNFAO, South Sudan at a glance, n.d., [url](#); CIA World Factbook, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁴ UNSC, Report on the independent strategic review of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan pursuant to Security Council resolution, 15 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 46, 51

¹⁴⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 34; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 34; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 36

¹⁴⁶ UNSC, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution (2521 (2020)), 25 November 2020, [url](#), paras. 37, 38

¹⁴⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 32, 34, 37

¹⁴⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), paras. 34,35

¹⁴⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 35

¹⁵⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 35, 37



January 2020, there were 25 aid workers killed, all of them South Sudan nationals.¹⁵¹

Displacement

As of 31 January 2021, some 2 286 009 refugees from South Sudan were recorded in neighbouring countries, compared to the 2 252 556 refugees recorded on 31 March 2020.¹⁵² Inside the country the number of IDPs in South Sudan, as identified by IOM, varied only slightly, increasing from 1 600 254 IDPs in March 2020 to 1 615 765 IDPs in September 2020.¹⁵³ Meanwhile, the number of people living in the six UNMISS Protection of Civilians (PoC) sites decreased from 187 474 in January 2020 to 181 231 in June 2020, when the latest such data was released. In September 2020 it was announced that the UNMISS PoC camps would transition to 'conventional displacement camps' under the authority and protection of the national government.¹⁵⁴ According to the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, the living conditions in the PoC camps were 'grim' due to overcrowding, outbreaks of diseases such as measles and cholera, and decreasing humanitarian aid.¹⁵⁵

Some of the indicative displacement events include:

- Between January-March 2020, at least 36 000 people were displaced nationally due to 'communal violence, cattle raiding and fighting between armed groups'.¹⁵⁶
- Between January-April 2020, around 49 000 South Sudanese refugees spontaneously returned; however, the returns were expected to be temporary.¹⁵⁷
- Between June-August 2020, at least 150 000 were displaced due to 'clashes between armed youth groups' in Jonglei State and GPAA. Meanwhile, fighting in Central Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Warrap States 'displaced thousands of civilians' during the same period.¹⁵⁸
- Between September-November 2020, fighting in Central Equatoria State 'forced civilians to seek refuge in Uganda', while in Warrap State intercommunal fighting in October 2020 led to the displacement of some 18 000 people'.¹⁵⁹
- On 6 January 2021, armed clashes in Upper Nile State led to the displacement of more than 15 000 people.¹⁶⁰

6. Security situation by state

6.1 Upper Nile State

Upper Nile State is located in the north-eastern part of South Sudan. The state's capital is Malakal.¹⁶¹

¹⁵¹ Humanitarian Outcomes, Aid Worker Security Database, accessed 12 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵² UNHCR, Regional overview of the South Sudanese refugee population, 31 January 2021, [url](#); UNHCR, Regional overview of the South Sudanese refugee population, 31 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵³ IOM DTM, South Sudan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ UNMISS, UN Protection of Civilians sites begin transitioning to conventional displacement camps, 4 September 2020, [url](#); UNMISS, "Protection of Civilians" (PoC) Sites Population Update, 20 February 2020, [url](#); UNMISS, "Protection of Civilians" (PoC) Sites Population Update, 18 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁵ UN Human Rights Council, "There is nothing left for us": Starvation as a method of warfare in South Sudan, 5 October 2020, [url](#), paras. 134, 135

¹⁵⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 32

¹⁵⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 33; UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), para. 43

¹⁵⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 31

¹⁵⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 32,33; UN OCHA, South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot, October 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ ECHO, South Sudan – Armed clash and displacement (DG ECHO, UNHCR, media), 12 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)



Since 2019, Major General James Ochan Puot, who defected from the SPLA-IO declaring loyalty to President Kiir, has been leading a 'breakaway faction' in Maiwut County, reportedly supported by the government in order to exploit 'internal political divergences and subethnic tensions' within SPLA-IO. Referring to events taking place in January-February 2020, the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan highlighted reports of 'retaliations' by Major General Puot's militia against civilians accused of supporting the SPLA-IO, committing acts such as sexual and gender-based violence, rape and killings.¹⁶²

In February 2020, the UN reported on intra-Nuer fighting between SSPDF troops aligned with Puot's SPLA-IO faction, and SPLA-IO forces in Maiwut and Jikou that took place at the beginning of the year. While the conflict subsided, as of February 2020 the situation remained 'tense as communities compete for access to water and grazing land amid a sub-clan split'. The fighting in Maiwut reportedly led to thousands of new IDPs, who were facing 'harsh living conditions'. The same source stated that civilians 'bore the brunt of violence' in Maiwut, after Major General Puot's defection.¹⁶³

During the period 16 February-31 May 2020, the intra-Nuer conflict in Maiwut continued, 'with civilians drawn into both military clashes and communal violence'. The UN reported 'sporadic clashes' between the SPLA-IO and the SPLA-IO faction of Major General Puot, resulting in 'at least 6 civilians killed and 5 injured', without providing any other details.¹⁶⁴

Referring to events occurring between June-August 2020, the UN reported that, in Maban, forces belonging to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) clashed with Mabanese militias, while troops of SPLM-N's Malik Agar faction reportedly occupied a school. By August 2020, the Sudanese forces had retreated, but concerns remained about their presence in Maban refugee camps. The same source underlined the 'heightened tensions' between the Shilluk and the Padang Dinka communities, which led to 'violent clashes over fishing areas, including the use of heavy weaponry and the movement of forces'.¹⁶⁵

During the period 1 September-30 November 2020, owing to severe flooding and restrictions of movement, a 'significant reduction in communal conflict' was noticed, including in Upper Nile. Nevertheless, tensions between the Shilluk and the Padang Dinka continued, and led to 'targeted attacks on Shilluk leaders' which resulted in at least two deaths on 2 November 2020 in Malakal. Meanwhile, fighting took place on 25 October 2020 in Maiwut between the SPLA-IO and faction of Major General Puot.¹⁶⁶

In January 2021, fighting between 'several militias' in Maban County created 'tensions between Kiir-aligned Dinka Padang and Machar-aligned Nuer communities', while the SSPDF and SPLA-IO fought 'throughout the month and accused each other of attacking civilians in Maban'.¹⁶⁷

The number of IDPs in Upper Nile State was 219 000 as of January 2021, compared to the 215 888 IDPs recorded in February 2020.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² UNSC, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 22 November 2019, [url](#), p. 27; UNSC, Children and armed conflict in South Sudan Report of the Secretary-General, 14 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 8,9; UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), paras. 54-58

¹⁶³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), paras. 22, 29, 30, 35, 58

¹⁶⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 22

¹⁶⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 24, 25

¹⁶⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 21, 22

¹⁶⁷ Sudans Post, Fierce fighting breaks out at Maban as gov't forces with tanks attack SPLA-IO base, 9 January 2021, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisiswatch South Sudan, January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

List of incidents

Overall, between 1 January 2020-8 January 2021 in Upper Nile, ACLED collected data on 27 violent events from reports in open sources, of which: 13 were coded as battles, 1 as explosions/remote violence, and 13 as violence against civilians.¹⁶⁹

Some of the indicative incidents in Upper Nile State include:

- In February 2020, USAID quoted information from the national Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), claiming that some 4 000 people had been displaced by ‘recent hostilities’ in Maiwut County, and were taking shelter in the Rambo area of Longechuk County.¹⁷⁰
- In early April 2020, fighting in Maiwut County led to ‘an unknown number of casualties’ and disrupted aid activities.¹⁷¹
- On 15 September 2020, an aid worker was injured during clashes between youth groups in Ulang town, Ulang County, and died during the next day.¹⁷²
- In October 2020, violent protests due to unemployment took place in Renk, ‘which led to the evacuation of humanitarian workers following threats from young people’. The source noted similar events in Malakal and Bunj, due to local young people’s perception that jobs were ‘offered to non-local South Sudanese nationals’.¹⁷³
- On 4 November 2020, a senior SSPDF officer and the coordinator of the South Sudan Council of Churches for Upper Nile State were shot and killed by unknown gunmen in Malakal town, Malakal County.¹⁷⁴
- On 6 January 2021, armed clashes in Dangaji, Yawaji, Tukchecha and Dangde villages of Maban County, between ‘local armed youth groups and in-opposition forces’ led to the displacement of more than 15 000 people, while aid agencies in Maban ‘ceased all activities’.¹⁷⁵
- In Melut County, on 13 January 2021, cattle raiders killed four civilians, while on 16 January 2020, ‘unidentified assailants’ killed at least seven civilians.¹⁷⁶

6.2 Western Equatoria State

Western Equatoria state is located in the south-western part of South Sudan. The state’s capital is Yambio.¹⁷⁷

At the beginning of 2020, NAS had shifted its activities from ‘the Lainya-Yei-Lasu axis’ to Maridi and Mundri, and clashes between the SSPDF and NAS were reported. Internal clashes within the SPLA-IO were also reported, allegedly due to leadership challenges and to ‘ethnic tensions between the Azande and Balanda’.¹⁷⁸ On 26 March 2020, the SPLA-IO split ‘when the Division IX B Commander, Major General James Nando, defected’ and joined SSPDF forces.¹⁷⁹

¹⁶⁹ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #4, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 10 February 2020, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁷¹ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #6, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 17 April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁷² Aid Worker Security, Aid Worker Security Database, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 23

¹⁷⁴ Radio Tamazuj, Gunmen kill 2 including senior army officer in Malakal, 5 November 2020, [url](#);

¹⁷⁵ ECHO, South Sudan – Armed clash and displacement (DG ECHO, UNHCR, media), 12 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ International Crisis Groups, Crisiswatch South Sudan, January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), paras. 22, 24, 25

¹⁷⁹ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 19

During the period 1 June-31 August 2020, 'NAS and counter-NAS activity shifted largely to the greater Mundri area'. Fighting between the SSPDF and NAS continued in late July 2020 around Kedibo. The UN reported that existing 'tensions and clashes' in the State were due to the split of the SPLA-IO, as well as due to the ongoing ethnic divisions between the Balanda and the Azande, which escalated on 18 July 2020 when a 'senior Balanda SPLA-IO leader [...] was killed by Azande militia outside Tambura'.¹⁸⁰

In September and October 2020, SSPDF and SPLA-IO deployed troops to areas including Mundri County, aiming to 'both dislodge SPLA-IO fighters loyal to Mr. Machar in Panyume and to renew the offensive against NAS'.¹⁸¹

In December 2020, the UN reported 'tensions along the border with the Central African Republic (CAR) as a result of activities of armed Ambororo and former Seleka groups, and the alleged mobilization of Azande young people to fight former Seleka' in CAR.¹⁸²

The number of IDPs in Western Equatoria State was approx. 69 000 as of January 2021, compared to the 64 027 IDPs recorded in February 2020.¹⁸³

List of incidents

Overall, between 1 January 2020-8 January 2021 in Western Equatoria, ACLED collected data on 43 violent events from reports in open sources, of which: 21 were coded as battles and 22 as violence against civilians.¹⁸⁴

Some of the indicative events include:

- On 20 January 2020, clashes between the SPLA-IO and NAS forces in Maridi County caused displacement within the County and across the border to the Democratic Republic of Congo. Some 2 965 IDPs reportedly fled to Lalama, Maridi County.¹⁸⁵
- On 24 April 2020, an armed group allegedly from Yirol raided a cattle camp in Mvolo County, killing at least nine people.¹⁸⁶
- In late May 2020, clashes between SSPDF/SPLA-IO and NAS fighters led to displacement as well as to suspension of aid that affected some 15 000 IDPs in the State.¹⁸⁷
- On 14 June 2020, three civilians were abducted in Karika payam, Mundri East County by armed men allegedly belonging to NAS.¹⁸⁸
- In August 2020, 'looting and killings' during the first week of the month created insecurity in Tambura County, leading some residents to 'leave their homes and hide in the bush'.¹⁸⁹
- Also, in August 2020, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) reported that 'four SPLA/IO soldiers gang-raped two girls' in Mundri.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 26,27

¹⁸¹ UNSC, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution (2521 (2020)), 25 November 2020, [url](#), para. 88

¹⁸² UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 28

¹⁸³ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ IOM DTM, South Sudan — Event Tracking: Rasolo (February 2020), 5 March 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁶ Eye Radio, 9 die in Mvolo cattle raid, 24 April 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁷ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #8, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 2 July 2020, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁸⁸ Radio Tamazuj, 3 people abducted in Mundri East: official, 18 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁹ Radio Tamazuj, Four men arrested over alleged involvement in criminal activities in Tambura, 13 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ HRW, World Report 2021, South Sudan Events of 2020, 13 January 2021, [url](#)



6.3 Central Equatoria State

Central Equatoria state is located in the southern part of South Sudan. The state's capital is also the country's capital, Juba.¹⁹¹

At the beginning of 2020, the UN reported ongoing clashes between the SSPDF and NAS in Central Equatoria, highlighting accounts of human rights violations 'in the Yei area, including restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians and arbitrary arrests and detention'. Fighting in Yei and Lainya Counties created thousands of new IDPs, with civilians in Yei County reporting 'being intimidated, punished and prevented from accessing their farmlands' by SSPDF forces'.¹⁹²

Between 16 February-31 May 2020, ongoing fighting between SSPDF, SPLA-IO and NAS, coupled with intercommunal violence, affected at least 30 000 people, and displaced more than 19 100.¹⁹³ The UN recorded 14 battles between joint SSPDF/SPLA-IO forces and NAS during that period.

In April 2020, the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan highlighted 'serious human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law' committed by SSPDF against civilians in 'Lasu and surrounding areas', between December 2019-February 2020. According to the source, SSPDF soldiers targeted civilians in Lasu, committing acts of sexual and gender-based violence, looting and burning property, and occupied civilian structures such as Lasu primary school. The SSPDF subsequently detained and executed youth, including children, claiming that they were NAS fighters. The same source stated that civilians in Central Equatoria were 'targeted because of their perceived ethnopolitical affiliation', highlighting the instances of 'extrajudicial killings in Morobo County, which were committed to intimidate civilians who had been accused of supporting NAS'.¹⁹⁴ Meanwhile, according to USAID, during March 2020, armed groups 'forcibly recruited more than 250 young men in Lainya County'.¹⁹⁵

According to a November 2020 report by Amnesty International, in April 2020, forces belonging to the SSPDF 'entered villages in Mukaya Payam in Lainya County [...] ordering everyone to leave the area as they beat civilians with sticks, the backs of their guns and flat parts of their knives'. The report quoted some of the survivors of the events, who stated that 'soldiers forced thousands of residents to flee the villages' and subsequently looted and burned down houses, while accusing civilians of being NAS supporters or informers. Similar events allegedly took place in May and June 2020, after fighting between SPLA-IO and NAS around Panyume, Morobo County.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, HRW reported that during clashes in April and May 2020 in Yei, Lainya and surrounding areas, 'armed forces killed, tortured, abducted, and sexually abused civilians'.¹⁹⁷

In 'late May' 2020, the SSPDF drove out NAS forces from areas around Yei, Lainya and Wonduruba.¹⁹⁸ On 9 June 2020, UNMISS reported that the ongoing clashes in Central Equatoria between 'the National Salvation Front, Government and Opposition forces' had led to the 'death and displacement of civilians, rape and sexual violence against women and girls, and the destruction of property'.¹⁹⁹ After a brief period during which tensions subsided, by 'the end of July and throughout August 2020,

¹⁹¹ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁹² UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 26 February 2020, [url](#), paras. 22, 24, 35,36

¹⁹³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 26

¹⁹⁴ UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), paras. 47-49, 51,52

¹⁹⁵ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #6, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 17 April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁹⁶ AI, South Sudan: United Nations arms embargo must remain in place after surge in violence against civilians in 2020, 30 November 2020, [url](#), page 2, 5

¹⁹⁷ HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#)

¹⁹⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 18

¹⁹⁹ UNMISS, Escalating Intercommunal Conflict Could Unravel the Peace Agreement, 9 June 2020, [url](#)



renewed clashes were noted between NAS and the SSPDF around the Lobonok gold-mining areas'.²⁰⁰

In September and October 2020, SSPDF and SPLA-IO deployed troops to areas including Lainya, Lobonok, and Morobo Counties.²⁰¹ According to the UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, in June and September 2020, joint SSPDF/SPLA-IO forces 'attacked South Sudanese citizens on the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo' during the fighting against NAS.²⁰²

According to the UN, between 1 September-30 November 2020, armed fighting in Central Equatoria displaced civilians into Uganda, and 'suspended humanitarian operations, affecting some 24 500 people'. The same source highlighted the 'alarming increase', in the Yei area, in the 'abduction of civilians by the NAS and other armed elements, primarily for the purpose of forced military recruitment.'²⁰³

The number of IDPs in Central Equatoria State was approx. 235 000 as of January 2021, compared to the 208 853 IDPs recorded in February 2020.²⁰⁴

List of incidents

Overall, between 1 January 2020-8 January 2021 in Central Equatoria, ACLED collected data on 174 violent events from reports in open sources, of which: 82 were coded as battles, 2 as explosions/remote violence and 90 as violence against civilians.²⁰⁵

Some of the indicative events include:

- On 24 April 2020, IOM recorded the 'recent' displacement of some 6 021 individuals from Lorega in Lainya County, due to fighting between SSPDF and NAS in Mukaya Payam, Lainya County. The IDPs took shelter in Jezira displacement site in Yei River County.²⁰⁶
- On 10 May 2020, following clashes with NAS, forces allegedly belonging to both SSPDF and SPLA-IO, shot and killed four men in Kengwe village. Following that, they burned the village and several others in the area. USAID additionally reported on the 'illegal detention of non-combatants'. Initial estimates of the people displaced in Lainya County due to the event ranged from at least 6 000 to 'tens of thousands', and by 16 June 2020 IOM had recorded some 9 000 new IDPs in Lainya County.²⁰⁷
- On 3 June 2020, national 'security forces' killed at least five civilians in Juba during a land dispute which subsequently led to protests. During the same day, SPLA-IO fighters entered Soper village, and detained a man, accusing him of supporting NAS. He was subsequently tortured and killed, allegedly in the presence of senior SPLA-IO commanding officers.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁰ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 26

²⁰¹ UNSC, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution (2521 (2020)), 25 November 2020, [url](#), para. 88

²⁰² UNHRC, Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 4 February 2021, para. 29

²⁰³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 33, 58

²⁰⁴ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

²⁰⁵ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁰⁶ IOM DTM, South Sudan — Event Tracking: Yei County, Central Equatoria (March 2020), 29 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁰⁷ USAID, South Sudan — Crisis Fact Sheet #8, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 2 July 2020, [url](#), p. 3; AI, South Sudan: United Nations arms embargo must remain in place after surge in violence against civilians in 2020, 30 November 2020, [url](#), p. 4; USAID, South Sudan — Crisis Fact Sheet #7, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 15 May 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²⁰⁸ AI, South Sudan: United Nations arms embargo must remain in place after surge in violence against civilians in 2020, 30 November 2020, [url](#), pp. 2, 5; HRW, South Sudan: Soldiers Kill Civilians in Land Dispute, 9 June 2020, [url](#)



- On 5 August 2020, NAS attacked an SSPDF camp ‘about 35 kilometres south-west of Juba’, killing at least nine people, including civilians.²⁰⁹
- Between 27 July-21 September 2020, some 9 456 individuals were displaced by conflict from Minga, Lanyi, Dorroh, and Amadi in Mundri East, and took shelter in Lemon Gaba in Northern Bari Payam, Juba County.²¹⁰
- On 10 August 2020, an unidentified armed group ‘ambushed an international NGO’ convoy on the Yei–Lasu road. One person was injured, and ‘all medical and nutritional supplies’ were stolen.²¹¹ The incident led to the closure of the road, ‘disrupting humanitarian assistance to more than 11 000 refugees and host community members in the area’.
A similar attack took place on 29 August 2020, which led to the suspension of humanitarian aid activities in Kupera town, affecting some 4 000 IDPs.²¹²
- On 20 and 21 August 2020, clashes between NAS and SSPDF forces in Juba and Lainya Counties led to the displacement of 19 100 people from Yapa, 6 208 people from Opiri, and 1 574 people from Giwaya.²¹³
- On 1 September 2020, two civilians were killed and four others were injured, as armed men allegedly belonging to the NAS attacked a vehicle on the Yei-Lasu road.²¹⁴
- On 28 September 2020, fighting between SPLA-IO and a SPLA-IO breakaway faction in Kajo-Keji County led to displacement of people into Uganda, while some residents of the ‘nearby Koriyo IDP settlement’ also fled ‘due to rising tensions within the camp and fear of additional clashes’. The following day, aid was suspended in western Kajo-Keji due to ‘armed clashes between SPLA-IO factions in several locations in the area’.²¹⁵

6.4 Eastern Equatoria State

Eastern Equatoria State is located in the south-eastern part of South Sudan. The state’s capital is Torit.²¹⁶

In April 2020, the UN Panel of Experts on South Sudan reported that the local authorities in Kapoeta were allowing ‘unlicensed miners to extract gold with the illegal use of industrial equipment’, as well as on the practice of illegal logging. The source pointed out that the country’s military was being paid by private companies to ‘protect the transport of illegally-harvested timber’. According to the Panel of Experts, the ‘illegal exploitation and trade of timber [...] by SSPDF and SPLA-IO in areas under their control is a risk to the peace, security and stability’ in Eastern Equatoria.²¹⁷

In June 2020, fighting between NAS and SSPDF ‘around the Lobonok gold-mining areas’ was reported to have ‘spilled over’ into Eastern Equatoria. The UN, referring to events between 1 June-31 August 2020, stated, that ‘in Eastern Equatoria, humanitarian personnel were subjected to frequent robbery and violence along major roads.’ Meanwhile, between 1 September-30 November 2020, it was

²⁰⁹ UNSC, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution (2521 (2020)), 25 November 2020, [url](#), paras. 52, 53

²¹⁰ IOM DTM, South Sudan — Event Tracking: Juba (September 2020), 9 October 2020, [url](#)

²¹¹ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #10, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 4 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²¹² USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #10, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 4 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3; USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #11, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 30 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²¹³ IOM DTM, South Sudan — Event Tracking: Central Equatoria State (August 2020), 4 September 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁴ UNMISS, UNMISS establishes temporary base to deter road ambushes in Central Equatoria, 2 September 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁵ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #11, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 30 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²¹⁶ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

²¹⁷ UNSC, Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019), 28 April 2020, [url](#), page 3

observed that ‘job demands and related violence’ were increasing in Eastern Equatoria.²¹⁸

In January 2021, fighting took place between communities in Lowoyi payam, Magwi County. According to UNMISS, some ‘700 households were displaced from their homes in the villages of Dabur, Tachak and Ofirha [...] as a result of clashes with herdsmen from another location’. The source stated that four people were killed, and houses were burnt down.²¹⁹

The number of IDPs in Eastern Equatoria State was approx. 50 000 as of January 2021, compared to the 61 225 IDPs recorded in February 2020.²²⁰

List of incidents

Overall, between 1 January 2020-8 January 2021, ACLED collected data on 52 violent events in Eastern Equatoria from reports in open sources. Of those, 18 were coded as battles, and 34 as violence against civilians.²²¹

Some of the indicative events include:

- On 17 February 2020, a media report stated that, during the ‘previous week’, ‘unknown armed men’ beat and raped a woman in Amica village, Magwi County.²²²
- On 23 March 2020, two separate ambushes on a humanitarian convoy and a commercial vehicle took place in Kapoeta South County. According to the source, the ‘armed actors’ assaulted the civilian passengers and stole personal items.²²³
- On 16 June 2020, at least six people were killed and their bodies burnt, by unknown attackers in the Lupala area, Budi County.²²⁴
- On 18 August 2020, five ‘local’ gold miners were killed by armed people in ‘the area of Nakwasigirya [...] about 30 kilometres south of Kapoeta town’, Kapoeta South County.²²⁵
- On 27 October 2020, the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) entered South Sudan and attacked the border post in Pogee, Magwi County, killing two South Sudanese soldiers. No reason was provided for the attack by the source.²²⁶
- Between 26 November-2 December 2020, five people were killed and another was reported missing, after several attacks in Torit town, Torit County. The attacks were ‘perpetrated by unknown gunmen’. According to the source, town residents were ‘concerned about the rampant killings’.²²⁷
- On 15 December 2020, one person was killed and another injured during fighting between the Hiyalla and Haforiere communities in Torit County. According to the source, this was the third fight of 2020 between the two communities.²²⁸

²¹⁸ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 26, 34; UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 20

²¹⁹ UNMISS, UNMISS patrol follows up on situation of people displaced by fighting in Eastern Equatorian villages, 12 February 2021, [url](#)

²²⁰ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

²²¹ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

²²² Radio Tamazuj, Crime: Armed men rape woman in Magwi, 17 February 2020, [url](#)

²²³ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #6, Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, 17 April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²²⁴ Eye Radio, 6 passengers mysteriously killed in Kapoeta ambush, 19 June 2020, [url](#)

²²⁵ Radio Tamazuj, Gunmen kill 5 gold miners in Eastern Equatoria, 21 August 2020, [url](#)

²²⁶ UNSC, Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2521 (2020), 25 November 2020, [url](#), para. 83

²²⁷ Radio Tamazuj, Torit residents worried about rampant insecurity, recommend disarmament, 7 December 2020, [url](#)

²²⁸ Radio Tamazuj, One killed, another injured as Hiyala-Haforiere clashes continue, 18 December 2020, [url](#)



6.5 Lakes State

Lakes State is located in central South Sudan and has Rumbek as its capital.²²⁹ Lakes State was dissolved in October 2015 following a decree establishing 28 states instead of the 10 previously established states. As a result, the states of Eastern Lakes, Gok and Western Lakes were created.²³⁰ Lakes State was re-established in February 2020.²³¹

Between 16 February-31 May 2020, a 'spike in intercommunal fighting, cattle raiding and revenge attacks between armed youth groups' was observed in areas including Lakes State, creating new displacement and civilian casualties. Moreover, violent incidents among Dinka communities took place in Lakes, due to 'land ownership claims, disputes over grazing lands and a culture of revenge'.²³²

In the period 1 June-31 August 2020, the UN recorded 'localized conflicts' in Lakes State, as well as an 'uptick in intercommunal violence', linked to the ongoing deployment of disarmament forces, as some communities feared 'selective and biased disarmament'; according to the source, links 'between senior security officials and their home areas in the Dinka heartland exacerbated perceptions of manipulation of community dynamics to pursue national political objectives'.²³³

Between 1 September-30 November 2020, a decrease in communal conflict was noticed, partly due to flooding and restrictions of movement. Nevertheless, instances of 'intercommunal conflict persisted in the central and western areas' of Lakes State, while 'heavily armed self-defence groups continued to wreak havoc'.²³⁴

The number of IDPs in Lakes State was approx. 187 000 as of January 2021, compared to the 206 455 IDPs recorded in February 2020.²³⁵

List of incidents

Overall, between 1 January 2020-8 January 2021 in Lakes State, ACLED collected data on 147 violent events from reports in open sources, of which: 65 were coded as battles, 3 as explosions/remote violence and 79 as violence against civilians.²³⁶

Some of the indicative events include:

- In early January 2020, 'communal clashes over land and revenge killings occurred between the communities of Yirol West and Rumbek East', displacing some 2 800 people in Mabuoi and Mapuordid payams. During the same period, 'revenge killings and cattle raiding between Mvolo and Agutraan communities' displaced 2 236 people from Agutraan to Pilingjier.²³⁷
- On 16 February 2020, clashes between communities in Rumbek North due to cattle raiding caused displacement within the County. Some 2 738 IDPs reportedly fled from Amok to the Deng-Nhial site.²³⁸

²²⁹ Based on reading the map UNOCHA, Lakes State Map (as of Dec 2016), 7 December 2016, [url](#), and Eye Radio, End "political game" on number of states, Dr Elia urges parties, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

²³⁰ South Sudan, "Establishment Order Number 36/2015 For the Creation Of 28 States" in the decentralized governance system in the Republic of South Sudan, 2 October 2015, [url](#), para 4.16, 4.17, 4.18.

²³¹ Africanews, South Sudan's president agrees to have 10 states, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

²³² UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 15 June 2020, [url](#), paras. 26, 32

²³³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 28

²³⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 30, 58

²³⁵ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

²³⁶ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

²³⁷ IOM DTM, South Sudan — Event Tracking: Yirol East and Yirol West (February 2020), 21 February 2020, [url](#)

²³⁸ IOM DTM, South Sudan — Event Tracking: Rumbek North, Lakes State (March 2020), 26 March 2020, [url](#)

- On 28 February 2020, 'armed youth destroyed a health facility in Rumbek North County'.²³⁹
- On 14 March 2020, at least 40 people were killed in an intra-communal fight between 'different sections of the Agar community'. The fighting began in Marialbek cattle camps, Rumbek Centre County.²⁴⁰
- In late March 2020, at least 23 people were killed during 'renewed clashes between rival pastoralist communities' in Rumbek North County, 'adversely affecting humanitarian relief efforts in the area'.²⁴¹
- On 15 June 2020, the killing of 'South Sudanese businessman and philanthropist, Kerbino Agok Wol, turned rebel' was reported. According to the media report, he was killed by SSPDF troops after 'days of offensive on his position' in Ayen Mayar Villiage in Amukpiny, Rumbek East County.²⁴²
- On 28 June 2020, a 'clearly marked' ambulance was shot at in Lakes State, killing one aid worker.²⁴³
- On 22 July 2020, two students from the Thuyic clan were killed in the area of Pan-Barkou, Rumbek East County, allegedly by armed people belonging to the Gony clan. The same source stated that 'during the previous month', clashes between the two communities had resulted in 'more than 20 people dead and 40 wounded'.²⁴⁴
- On 5 October 2020, a humanitarian boat convoy on the River Nile close to Shambe was attacked by gunmen. At least one person was killed, although a local source later reported five fatalities.²⁴⁵
- Between 17-18 October 2020, five cattle traders were 'killed in an attack by suspected raiders' in Mayath Payam, Cueibet County.²⁴⁶
- On 28 and 29 December 2020, at least nine people were killed in two separate cattle raid attacks in Bunagok Payam, Awerial County.²⁴⁷
- Between 4-5 January 2021, at least four people were killed in 'inter-communal revenge attacks between youths of the Waat and Panyar sections of Pagor and Duony Payams in Cueibet County'.²⁴⁸

6.6 Jonglei State

The territory of Jonglei state is comprised of the following new states between 2015 and 2020: Jonglei, Western Bleh, and Eastern Bleh.²⁴⁹ The boundaries of the state were again changed in February 2020,

²³⁹ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #5, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 27 March 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²⁴⁰ Juba Monitor, Over 40 people killed in Lakes State, 17 March 2020, [url](#); UN OHCHR, South Sudan: To achieve lasting peace, localized violence must end, says Bachelet, 20 March 2020, [url](#); HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁴¹ USAID, South Sudan – Crisis Fact Sheet #6, Fiscal Year (Fy) 2020, 17 April 2020, [url](#), p. 3

²⁴² Africa News, South Sudan: Kerbino Wol killed in actions, Army says, 15 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁴³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General, 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 35

²⁴⁴ Eye Radio, Gunmen kill two students in Rumbek East, 24 July 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁵ WFP, South Sudan Situation Report #278, 9 October 2020, [url](#); Juba Monitor, Five killed, one wounded as gunmen attack relief boat, 8 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁶ Eye Radio, Raiders kill five cattlemen in Cueibet, 20 October 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁷ Eye Radio, Two killed in Awerial attack, 29 December 2020, [url](#); Eye Radio, 7 people dead in Awerial fighting, 30 December 2020, [url](#)

²⁴⁸ Radio Tamazuj, 4 killed, 6 wounded in Cueibet revenge attacks, 5 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁴⁹ South Sudan, "Establishment Order Number 36/2015 For the Creation Of 28 States" in the decentralized governance system in the Republic of South Sudan, 2 October 2015, [url](#)

back into the pre-2015 borders, except for the southeastern part (Boma) which was reinstituted into Pibor administrative area.²⁵⁰ For this reason, this chapter includes Jonglei as well as Pibor.

Jonglei state is located in central-eastern part of South Sudan and has Bor as its capital.²⁵¹ Pibor Administrative Area has Pibor as its capital.²⁵²

The Community Empowerment for Progress Organization (CEPO) noted that '[c]onflict over grazing land and land resources frequently fuels intercommunal tensions in the Greater Bor area.'²⁵³ Jonglei has since long witnessed inter-ethnic fighting over resources and power, resulting in numerous killings, cattle raidings and abductions.²⁵⁴

In Jonglei, an escalating intercommunal violence erupted in 2020, rendering Jonglei the state with the largest number of victims of localized conflict.²⁵⁵

The UNHRC noted in its January 2020 report that '[s]ince cattle has always been central to the livelihoods of the Lou Nuer, Dinka and Murle pastoralists [...] the spread of arms and increased militarization, commercialization of cattle and rising dowry price have incentivized cattle raiding and child abduction rendering it even more deadly in recent times.'²⁵⁶ Since mid-February 2020, violence flared up in Jonglei State and Greater Pibor Administrative Area between Lou Nuer, Dinka, and Murle communities and has led to a wave of new IDPs. Nearly 8 500 people fled their villages in Pibor area, 450 in Bor County, and in Akobo and Nyirol counties, an estimated 16 000 people have been affected by the violence.²⁵⁷ The UNHRC reported: 'In Jonglei on 19 February [2020] dozens of civilians were killed and wounded, and over 200 women and children are believed to have been abducted and subjected to sexual violence.'²⁵⁸ According to Human Rights Watch, '[t]his spate of violence, part of a years-long cycle of attacks and counter-attacks between these ethnic groups, was triggered, as it has been in the past, by allegations that Murle abducted children.'²⁵⁹ Investigations are still ongoing concerning the abduction of the women and girls, who have been affected by the intercommunal violence in Jonglei between December 2019 and March 2020.²⁶⁰ According to UNMISS, the delayed onset of dry season might have been a driving factor for the spike of intercommunal violence from mid-February to early March 2020 in Jonglei state.²⁶¹

A UN report covering the period from 16 February 2020 until 31 May 2020, stated that the clashes between Dinka and Nuer "White Army" militias left at least 225 people dead (including 74 women and

²⁵⁰ AfricaNews, South Sudan's president agrees to have 10 states, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁵¹ Based on reading UNOCHA, Jonglei State Map (as of Dec 2016), 7 December 2016, [url](#), and Eye Radio, End "political game" on number of states, Dr Elia urges parties, 20 April 2020, [url](#)

²⁵² UNOCHA, South Sudan Pibor County reference map, March 2020, [url](#)

²⁵³ CEPO, Cattle Conflict and Related Intercommunal Tensions at Jonglei State, Bor Town, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁵⁴ UNMISS, Women from Jonglei and Boma sign agreement to end inter-communal fighting, 7 May 2019, [url](#)

²⁵⁵ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 2; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 1; OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 55

²⁵⁶ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), p. 33

²⁵⁷ HRW, South Sudan Needs to Address Cycles of Intercommunal Killings, 20 March 2020, [url](#); CEPO, Cattle Conflict and Related Intercommunal Tensions at Jonglei State, Bor Town, 16 December 2019, [url](#)

²⁵⁸ UNHRC, South Sudan: To achieve lasting peace, localized violence must end, says Bachelet, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁵⁹ HRW, South Sudan Needs to Address Cycles of Intercommunal Killings, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁶⁰ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 66

²⁶¹ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 3



16 children) and 134 injured (including at least 9 women and 9 children), as well as 266 abducted (72 women and 194 children).²⁶² As of December 2020, hundreds of those abducted were still missing.²⁶³

In May 2020, a series of attacks carried out by Murle community-based armed groups against Lou Nuer villages in Pieri, Jonglei, resulted in hundreds of fatalities.²⁶⁴ UNMISS reported that these attacks came as a response to the previous offensives during February 2020 and aimed to release the women and children abducted by Dinka, Gawar and Lou Nuer groups.²⁶⁵ Both Lou Nuer and Murle spiritual leaders have encouraged the attacks, while some SPLM/A-IO and South Sudan Peoples' Defence Forces' elements have allegedly contributed to the planning and coordination of the attacks by both communities, according to their own community kinship.²⁶⁶

Between June and August 2020, the intercommunal violence deepened in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor administrative area, mainly due to joint Lou Nuer-Dinka attacks on Murle communities in several areas, including Pibor, Gumuruk and Manyabol, and the subsequent revenge attacks by Murle youth groups²⁶⁷, resulting in 257 civilian casualties (132 persons killed and 125 injured)²⁶⁸ and leading more than 150,000 persons to internal displacement.²⁶⁹

In June 2020, in Gumuruk village (Pibor County), water treatment installations providing 15,000 households with clean water were destroyed in the context of intercommunal attacks.²⁷⁰

On 23 June 2020, the Government established a high-level committee to address the security situation in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor administrative area²⁷¹, however, despite its frequent visits to the greater Jonglei, intercommunal violence remained persistent.²⁷² On 13 August 2020, President Kiir declared a state of emergency in Jonglei and the Greater Pibor administrative area, citing the intensified intercommunal violence and the floods in the region.²⁷³

The OHCHR reported that the women and girls abducted during the conflict between May and September 2020 'have been forced into sexual slavery or forced marriage, and suffered multiple incidents of rape and sexual violence'.²⁷⁴

In its report covering the period 1 September-30 November 2020, the UN stated that although the conflict among the Dinka, Nuer and Murle subsided after the withdrawal of Dinka and Nuer from the Greater Pibor Administrative Area, a spike in intercommunal violence between Murle and Jie and Toposa from neighbouring Eastern Equatoria was nevertheless documented.²⁷⁵ The flooding in several parts of the country, including in Jonglei state, and the related movement restrictions on cattle

²⁶² UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 52

²⁶³ OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 36

²⁶⁴ HRW, World Report 2021 - South Sudan, 13 January 2021, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, May 2020, n.d., [url](#); New Humanitarian (The), Violence in flood-hit state deepens aid needs in South Sudan, 26 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁶⁵ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 5

²⁶⁶ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 52; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 5; International Crisis Group: Toward a Viable Future for South Sudan, 10 February 2021, [url](#), p. 14

²⁶⁷ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 22, 30; OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 35

²⁶⁸ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 54

²⁶⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 31

²⁷⁰ OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 37

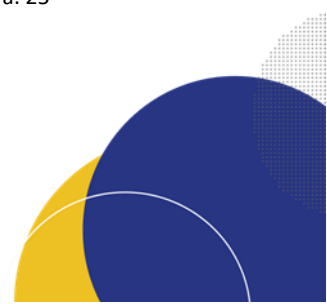
²⁷¹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 13; Radio Tamazuj, Kiir sets up committee to resolve Jonglei communal violence, 24 June 2020, [url](#)

²⁷² UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 2

²⁷³ AA, S. Sudan declares state of emergency in flood-hit areas, 13 August 2020, [url](#)

²⁷⁴ OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 66

²⁷⁵ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 25



keepers and civilian armed groups, contributed to the reduction of intercommunal violence.²⁷⁶ The UN report also stated that between September and November 2020, the overall number of children affected by conflict-related violations decreased from 55 to 23, with only one child being recorded as affected in Jonglei region.²⁷⁷ In January 2021, during the closing session of the Jonglei-Pibor's 'People to People' peace conference, President Kiir threatened that in case intercommunal violence erupts again in Jonglei, he will not allow the armed forces to intervene and he will let the civilians fight until 'one of them is totally defeated'.²⁷⁸

January 2021 data by the World Food Programme (WFP) showed that Jonglei state is one of the places most severely hit by food insecurity in South Sudan, with most of its territory being one phase before famine, while Pibor was classified as the only county in Phase 5 'famine'.²⁷⁹ December 2020 data by UNOCHA showed that Jonglei and the Greater Pibor Administrative Area were the most affected by floods.²⁸⁰

The number of IDPs in Jonglei state was 244 000 as of January 2021²⁸¹, compared to the 196 055 IDPs recorded in February 2020.²⁸²

List of incidents

ACLED collected data on 128 violent events in Jonglei between 1 January 2020 and 31 January 2021 from reports in open sources, 52 of which were coded as battles, and 76 as 'violence against civilians'.²⁸³

Some of the indicative incidents in Jonglei and Boma (Pibor) include:

- On 18 and 19 February 2020, inter-communal fighting between militia from Murle and neighboring Lou Nuer ethnic groups flared up in greater Pibor Administrative Area, reportedly 'after Lou Nuer youth from Akobo and Bieh areas attacked Jebel Nanaam and Bith Bith areas'.²⁸⁴
- On 26 February 2020, at least 15 persons were killed in clashes in Nyirol county, involving Murle militia, Lou Nuer militiamen, SSPDF and police. 'The attack in Nyirol County comes amid reports of clashes in parts of the greater Pibor area since last week', according to a media source.²⁸⁵
- 'On and/or around 1 March 2020', several 'serious clashes took place between thousands of Murle and Lou Nuer armed men' in and around Pibor, in Bolotinganu and Likuangole.²⁸⁶ UNOCHA noted: 'In Manyabol and Likuangole towns, the hardest-hit locations in Pibor County, government buildings, civilian houses, humanitarian facilities and other buildings were burnt down to the ground. Dead bodies of humans and animals are reportedly in the streets in Likuangole town.' Thousands of inhabitants have fled the area.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁶ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), paras. 30, 31

²⁷⁷ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 63

²⁷⁸ Sudans Post, Kiir threatens to allow civilians 'fight till the end' without government intervention, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁷⁹ World Food Program, South Sudan Emergency Dashboard, January 2021, February 2021, [url](#)

²⁸⁰ UNOCHA, South Sudan: Flooding Situation Report Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, 24 December 2020, [url](#), p.1

²⁸¹ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

²⁸² UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸³ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

²⁸⁴ Radio Tamazuj, Inter-communal fighting erupts in greater Pibor, 19 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁵ Radio Tamazuj, Clashes in Nyirol County leaves 15 dead, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁶ ACLED, ACLED database 1 April 2019-31 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁷ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Partners respond to needs of influx of IDPs in Pibor, last updated 27 March 2020, [url](#)

- On 4 March 2020, ICRC reported that it 'treated nearly 70 people suffering from gunshot wounds over the past two weeks, as fighting broke out between thousands of armed men in several parts of Jonglei State.'²⁸⁸
- On 16 and 17 May 2020, a Murle group attacked several ethnic Lou Nuer villages in Uror county leaving up to 300 dead.²⁸⁹ Three humanitarian workers were amongst the victims.²⁹⁰
- On 17 June 2020, ethnic Murle gunmen reportedly killed ten people in cattle raid in Jalle area, Jonglei.²⁹¹
- On 19 June 2020, unidentified gunmen reportedly killed 12 people in Makuach area, Jonglei.²⁹²
- On 2 July 2020, unidentified gunmen killed four people in Poktap village.²⁹³
- On 3 July 2020, suspected ethnic Murle youth attacked Duk Padiet town, resulting in at least 39 casualties.²⁹⁴
- On 13 July 2020, a cattle raid in Pajut town, Jonglei, resulted in at least seven casualties.²⁹⁵
- On 13 July, two aid workers providing health-care and nutrition services to community members in Pajut town, Jonglei, were killed when an unknown armed group attacked the town.²⁹⁶
- On 17 July 2020, gunmen reportedly crossing over from Pibor Administrative Area, killed about 17 people in Makol-cuei village, Jonglei.²⁹⁷
- On October 2020, unidentified gunmen attacked the World Food Programme boat-convoy carrying food assistance from Jonglei state to Upper Nile state (east), resulting in the disappearance of one crew member.²⁹⁸
- On 30 October, a community mobilizer working for Nile Hope, was fatally shot by armed youth in Canal/Pigi County in Jonglei State.²⁹⁹
- In Jonglei state, intercommunal clashes early to mid-Nov resulted in at least 13 fatalities in Fangak county.³⁰⁰
- On 19 November 2020, a cattle raid carried out by an armed group on a village in the Khorwai area of Pigi County, Jonglei, resulted in at least 3 fatalities.³⁰¹
- On 26 December 2020, a woman was killed and 2 men were injured during cattle raiding in Pathai Village of Uror County, Jonglei.³⁰²

6.7 Western Bahr el-Ghazal State

Western Bahr el-Ghazal state is located in the north-western part of South Sudan.³⁰³ The state's capital is Wau.³⁰⁴

²⁸⁸ ICRC, South Sudan: Hundreds wounded, villages looted in intercommunal fighting in Jonglei State, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

²⁸⁹ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, May 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁰ BBC News, South Sudan clashes 'kill 300' in Jonglei state, 21 May 2020, [url](#)

²⁹¹ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, June 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹² International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, June 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹³ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, July 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁴ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, July 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁵ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, July 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁶ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 35

²⁹⁷ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, July 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁸ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, October 2020, n.d., [url](#)

²⁹⁹ UNOCHA, Press release: Humanitarian Coordinator condemns the second killing of an aid worker within days in South Sudan, 3 November 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁰ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, July 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁰¹ Radio Tamazuj, 3 people killed, village torched in Pigi County, 19 November 2020, [url](#)

³⁰² Radio Tamazuj, Woman killed, two men injured in Jonglei attacks, 29 December 2020, [url](#)

³⁰³ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³⁰⁴ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Western Bahr el Ghazal reference map, January 2020, [url](#)

According to a UN report, Western Bahr el-Ghazal state was one of the areas where tensions between local commanders escalated in the period of 1 December 2019 - 15 February 2020.³⁰⁵ The UNHRC reported in January 2020 on continued recruitment and training of children in Western Bahr el-Ghazal.³⁰⁶ The UNHRC reported in January 2020 that in the Jur River Area in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state 'violent competition over pastoral resources escalated in localities where the rule of law was totally absent'.³⁰⁷ The attacks in the Jur River area included mainly killings, rape and sexual violence, abduction as well as looting and destruction of property.³⁰⁸

Between February and May 2020, intercommunal violence, cattle raiding and operations involving Government forces, organized armed groups and armed youth groups in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal continued to threaten civilians' lives and led them to internal displacement.³⁰⁹

A UN report referring to the period 16 February-31 May 2020, stated that the clashes between farmers from Jur River area and the cattle keepers from the neighboring Tonj county, intensified subsequently the situation between SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO, since SSPDF was on the side of the cattle keepers, while SPLM/A-IO supported the farmers.³¹⁰

During the period from 1 June 2020 until 31 August 2020, the security situation deteriorated in several states, including Western Bahr el-Ghazal, due to intercommunal conflicts, as well as conflicts involving civilians and combatants, both allied with national stakeholders.³¹¹

In late June 2020, a local meeting was held in Kwarjina County of Western Bahr el-Ghazal state, involving both national and local stakeholders, during which the pastoralists and farmers from Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal states agreed to a peaceful coexistence.³¹²

Between September and November 2020, 3 children (2 boys and 1 girl) were reported to have been affected by conflict-related violations in Western Bahr el-Ghazal.³¹³

The number of IDPs in Western Bahr el-Ghazal state was approx. 64 000 as of January 2021³¹⁴, compared to 105 465 IDPs in February 2020.³¹⁵

List of incidents

ACLED collected data on 34 violent events in Western Bahr el Ghazal between 1 January 2020 and 8 January 2021 from reports in open sources, 18 of which were coded as 'battles' and 16 as 'violence' against civilians.³¹⁶

Some of the indicative incidents in Western Bahr el-Ghazal include:

- On 28 January 2020, tensions between SPLM-IO commanders led to the kidnapping of 62 individuals outside of Wau.³¹⁷

³⁰⁵ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 22

³⁰⁶ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 46

³⁰⁷ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 58

³⁰⁸ UNHRC, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, 31 January 2020, [url](#), para. 62

³⁰⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 32; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4

³¹⁰ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 21

³¹¹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 19, 30

³¹² Radio Tmazuj, Pastoralists, farmers conclude peace meeting in Kwarjina, 25 June 2020, [url](#)

³¹³ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 62

³¹⁴ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

³¹⁵ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁶ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

³¹⁷ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 28



- On 9 March 2020, 'unknown gunmen' shot and killed a woman at her home in the Jebel Keer neighbourhood of Wau city.³¹⁸
- On 1 June 2020, an attack by armed individuals reportedly from pro-government OAG and SPLA-IO at the Mutamadia neighborhood in Wau, left an unspecified number of people injured.³¹⁹
- On 18 July 2020, an SPLM/A-IO commander, Brigadier General Gabriel Bol Wek and 11 of his soldiers were arrested by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces due to a failed attempt by SPLM/A-IO to ambush a convoy of SSPDF disarmament force.³²⁰ In revenge, SPLM/A-IO kidnapped nine civilians. On 19 August 2020, all abductees were released, after a joint intervention by the Government, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and UNMISS.³²¹

6.8 Northern Bahr el-Ghazal State

Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state is located in the north-west of South Sudan.³²² The state's capital is Aweil.³²³

In late April 2020, a major incident in Aweil East, involving SSPDF elements, resulted in the killing of 12 Misseriya civilians, including 5 children.³²⁴ The Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC) reported that 'minor clashes' between the SSPDF and the SPLA-IO forces in Northern Bahr El Ghazal, between 1st June and 30 September 2020, led to 'scores of fatalities and numerous casualties on both sides, as well as severe disruption and displacement to the civilian population'.³²⁵ According to the Commission the clashes could be attributed to the confusion caused during the civilian disarmament campaign launched by the SSPDF.³²⁶

As of December 2020, populations in Aweil South county of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal, began to face 'catastrophe' conditions.³²⁷

The number of IDPs in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state was approx. 65 000 as of January 2021³²⁸, compared to the 127 035 IDPs recorded in February 2020.³²⁹

List of incidents

ACLED collected data on 15 violent events in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal between 1 January 2020 and 8 January 2021 from reports in open sources, 7 of which were coded as battles, 1 as explosions/remote

³¹⁸ Radio Tamazuj, Man arrested over woman's death in Wau, 20 March 2020, [url](#)

³¹⁹ CEPO, Small Arms Fire Attack in Western Bahr el Ghazal State, Wau County, 1 June 2020, [url](#)

³²⁰ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, June 2020, n.d., [url](#); Sudan Tribune, SPLA-IO calls for calm after tensions with SSPDF in South Sudan's Wau, 20 July 2020, [url](#)

³²¹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 29

³²² UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³²³ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Western Bahr el Ghazal reference map, January 2020, [url](#)

³²⁴ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4; ACLED, Red Lines: Upheaval and Containment in the Horn of Africa, 21 January 2021, [url](#); Radio Miraya, [Twitter] posted on: 30 April 2020, [url](#)

³²⁵ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st July to 30th September 2020, 19 October 2020, [url](#), p. iii

³²⁶ RJMEC on the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan for the period 1st July to 30th September 2020, 19 October 2020, [url](#), para. 18

³²⁷ IPC, Summary Report, South Sudan: Analyses show populations in six counties facing 'famine likely' or 'catastrophe' conditions", 12 December 2020, [url](#), pp. 1-2

³²⁸ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, 12 February 2021, [url](#)

³²⁹ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

violence and 7 as violence against civilians.³³⁰

Some of the indicative incidents in Northern Bahr el-Ghazal include:

- On 23 February 2020, a fight between Sudanese pastoralists and local hunters in Nyinbuoli area of South Sudan's Northern Bahr el-Ghazal State, left two Rezeigat tribesmen dead and two hunters from Dinka Malual community wounded.³³¹
- In February 2020, three Dinka Malual tribesmen got killed and one woman got injured in Mathiang Bul of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal by unidentified men. On 27 April 2020, the Misseriya traditional leaders paid a compensation of 6,740,000 SSP to the Dinka Malual representatives for the victims.³³²
- On 8 May 2020, during an attack launched by Misseriya tribesmen in Mathiang Bul village, three-year-old boy was killed and his pregnant mother got injured.³³³
- On 8 September 2020, fighting between youth groups from Lou Aguer Geng community of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal and Awan Chan Nyal of Warrap States fought during traditional dances in Akoong, Northern Bahr el Ghazal state, resulted in 2 fatalities.³³⁴

6.9 Warrap State

Warrap state is located in the north of South Sudan.³³⁵ The state's capital is Kwajok.³³⁶

In the period between January and November 2020, intercommunal violence was prominent in Warrap state, resulting in several casualties.³³⁷ In its report covering the period 19 December-16 February 2020, the UN stated that in January 2020, at least 102 fatalities and 137 injuries due to intercommunal violence in Warrap and Lakes states had been recorded.³³⁸ Between 16 February and 31 May 2020, land ownership disputes within the Dinka community were reported, as well as attacks with fatalities by Bul Nuer actors from Unity into Warrap.³³⁹ During the period from 1 June 2020 until 31 August 2020, the security situation in Warrap was 'dominated' by the deployment of SSPDF disarmament forces deployed around Tonj county, which led to further intercommunal tensions due to fears of discriminatory disarmament³⁴⁰, and to abductions of both civilians and combatants.³⁴¹ UNMISS reported that all civilians were subsequently released, after the intervention of the Joint Defence Board.³⁴² According to a RRC report, cited by UNOCHA, the conflict in Tonj South county between January and May 2020, left 107 people dead, including 6 children and 7 women, and 45 wounded. Furthermore, 3 children were reported missing, 5 women were raped and 3 women were

³³⁰ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021 [url](#)

³³¹ Radio Tamazuj, Two Sudanese pastoralists killed in Northern el Ghazal: police, 26 February 2020, [url](#)

³³² Radio Tamazuj, Misseriya leaders pay blood money for 3 people killed in Aweil East, 27 April 2020, [url](#)

³³³ CSI, CSI provides aid to victims of deadly South Sudan attacks, 20 May 2020, [url](#)

³³⁴ Radio Tamazuj, 2 arrested over deadly violence in Aweil East County, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

³³⁵ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³³⁶ UNOCHA, Warrap State map, 12 December 2016, [url](#)

³³⁷ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 3; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (April-June 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4; UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 1, UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), paras. 29, 58

³³⁸ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/145], 26 February, [url](#), para. 33

³³⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 26

³⁴⁰ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), 24, 28

³⁴¹ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 2

³⁴² UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 2



subjected to genital mutilation by alleged armed youth groups from Western Bahr El Ghazal State.³⁴³ According to the same report, in Tong East county, between January and April 2020, more than 90 people were killed, including 12 children, 124 people were wounded, and 8 cases of conflict-related sexual violence were reported.³⁴⁴

In early August 2020, the disarmament forces were involved in clashes with armed youth groups in Romich in Warrap, which resulted in more than 104 fatalities.³⁴⁵ Out of the total number of victims, at least 85 belonged to the Luanyjang community, including 20 women and 10 children.³⁴⁶

According to the UN, between 1 September and 30 November 2020, a decrease in communal violence was noted in Warrap, mainly due to the flooding in the area and the deployment of disarmament forces.³⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the reduction of communal violence in Warrap, armed groups continued to cause insecurity in the area³⁴⁸, while in Tonj East county tensions within the Dinka community and clashes between the Luanyjang armed young people and Thiik and Kok people were reported during October and November 2020.³⁴⁹ Intercommunal clashes in Warrap state caused the displacement of approximately 18,000 people and resulted in civilian casualties.³⁵⁰ According to the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General, more than a thousand people died in Warrap during the first 6 months of 2020.³⁵¹

On June 2020, the South Sudan Council of Churches expressed its concerns regarding the use of conflict-related sexual violence by armed groups 'as a means of settling disputes through the abduction of women and children, forced marriage and rape in States such as Jonglei and Warrap'.³⁵²

The number of IDPs in Warrap state was approx. 287 000 as of January 2021³⁵³, compared to the 233 198 IDPs recorded in February 2020.³⁵⁴

List of incidents

ACLED collected data on 115 violent events in Warrap between 1 January 2020 and 8 January 2021 from reports in open sources, 66 of which were coded as battles and 49 as violence against civilians.³⁵⁵

Some of the indicative incidents in Warrap include:

- In January 2020, at least 102 people were killed and 137 others were injured in the states of Warrap and Lakes, according to the UNSC. In Warrap, incidents of revenge killings resulted in violence between various Dinka Rek sub-clans due to unresolved land disputes.³⁵⁶
- On 20 March 2020, cattle raiders attacked a camp in the county of Tonj South; the attacks resulted in at least 51 fatalities.³⁵⁷

³⁴³ UNOCHA, Tonj East and Tonj South Multi-cluster Rapid Needs Assessment (source: RRC), n.d., [url](#), p. 1

³⁴⁴ UNOCHA, Tonj East and Tonj South Multi-cluster Rapid Needs Assessment (source: RRC), n.d., [url](#), p. 3

³⁴⁵ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), 28

³⁴⁶ OHCHR, Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan [A/HRC/46/53], 19 February 2021, [url](#), para. 43

³⁴⁷ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 30

³⁴⁸ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 58

³⁴⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 29

³⁵⁰ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 33

³⁵¹ UNMISS News, Near Verbatim Transcript of SRS/Head of UNMISS David Shearer's Press Conference – Opening Remarks and Q & A, 17 November 2020, [url](#)

³⁵² UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 69

³⁵³ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, 12 February 2021, [url](#)

³⁵⁴ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁵ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

³⁵⁶ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 33

³⁵⁷ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, March 2020, n.d., [url](#); Radio Tamazuj, 55 killed in cattle raid in Warrap state, 24 March 2020, [url](#)

- On 14 April 2020, a cattle raid in Ajakuac payam area of Twick county, in Warrap, left 7 people killed and 3 others wounded.³⁵⁸
- On 2 May 2020, a cattle raid in Dam village in Warrap state, resulted in 8 fatalities.³⁵⁹
- On 14 May 2020, attacks by unidentified assailants resulted in twelve fatalities in Apuk North county.³⁶⁰
- Between 25 and 29 June 2020, intercommunal clashes escalated in the centre of Warrap state, resulting in 27 fatalities.³⁶¹
- On July 24 2020, a cattle raid in Tonj North county, resulted in 15 fatalities.³⁶²
- Between 8 and 9 August 2020, at least 148 people were killed, following bloody clashes between armed youth from the Dinka Luanyjang community and SSPDF Division X soldiers based in Tonj East County.³⁶³
- On 2 October 2020, one person was killed by armed attackers in Tonj East County.³⁶⁴
- On 7 October 2020, intercommunal clashes resulted in at least 10 fatalities in Tonj county.³⁶⁵
- Between 8 and 9 November 2020, intercommunal clashes left at least 16 persons dead and 48 injured in Tonj East county.³⁶⁶
- On 18 December 2020, 5 people were killed and 3 others were wounded during a cattle raiding.³⁶⁷
- Intercommunal clashes between 24 and 30 January 2021 resulted in at least 14 casualties in Tonj North and Tonj South counties.³⁶⁸
- On 26 January 2021, unidentified gunmen ambushed vehicle, killing one person in Tonj North county.³⁶⁹

6.10 Unity State

Unity state is located in the north of South Sudan.³⁷⁰ The state's capital is Bentiu.³⁷¹

Despite the overall decrease in the civilian casualties caused by the conventional parties to the conflict since the Revitalised Agreement, and the implementation of the ceasefire, clashes between the governmental forces and armed groups have continued during the first three months of 2020 in Unity state, affecting the situation of civilians.³⁷² Between 1 December 2019 and 15 February 2020, UNMISS documented at least 18 incidents of forced recruitment of civilians and alleged former fighters by the major warring parties in South Sudan, the majority in Unity. While alleged deserters were the target of such operations, the source noted that many civilians, including minors and some humanitarian personnel, were abducted for the purposes of such operations.³⁷³ The UNSC in its report on South

³⁵⁸ Garda World, South Sudan: Armed attack kills seven in Twic county (Warrap state) April 14, 17 April 2020, [url](#)

³⁵⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 23

³⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, May 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁶¹ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, June 2020, n.d., [url](#); AA, Fresh inter-communal fighting leaves 51 dead in South Sudan, 30 June 2020, [url](#)

³⁶² International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, July 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁶³ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, August 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁶⁴ Radio Tamazuj, One killed in Tonj East attack, 2 October 2020, [url](#)

³⁶⁵ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, October 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁶⁶ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, November 2020, n.d., [url](#); UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 29

³⁶⁷ Radio Tamazuj, 5 die in Tonj North cattle raid – official, 18 December 2020, [url](#)

³⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, January 2021, n.d., [url](#)

³⁶⁹ Radio Tamazuj, Driver killed in Tonj East road ambush, 26 January 2021, [url](#)

³⁷⁰ UNMISS, [South Sudan Map], February 2020, [url](#)

³⁷¹ UNOCHA, South Sudan: Unity reference map, January 2020, [url](#)

³⁷² UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (January-March 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4

³⁷³ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, Report of the Secretary General [S/2020/145], 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 56

Sudan for the period 1 December 2019 to 15 February 2020, stated that Unity state was one of the states where communal fighting, forced relocation, forceful recruitment and violent cattle raids were reported.³⁷⁴

The Panel of Experts on South Sudan noted an upward trend in forced recruitment between January and February 2020 in Unity state, due to the upcoming end of the extension of the pre-transitional period for 100 days. The Panel also reported that during its visit to Unity state on February 2020, it selected evidence on forced recruitment of children between 12 and 18 years old, carried by the SSPDF and the SPLA-IO, in the counties of Koch, Panyijiar, Rubkona and Mayendit. However, both forces denied the allegations.³⁷⁵ Between 16 February and 30 November 2020, UNMISS reported that 5 children had been affected by conflict-related violence in Unity state.³⁷⁶

According to the UNSC report on South Sudan for the period 16 February 2020 to 31 May 2020, on 24 April 2020, insecurity was spread in Unity and its neighbouring states, after Major General Matthew Puljang was relieved of command of the South Sudan Peoples' Defence Forces special forces in Unity.³⁷⁷ The report also noted that during April and May 2020, there was an increase of violence within the Nuer community in Unity, resulting in the deployment of military patrols and teams by UNMISS to hotspots in Unity, in order to safeguard the communities' engagement in the existing peace resolutions.³⁷⁸

A UN report referring to the period 1 June-31 August 2020, stated that the political and security situation in Unity was affected by continuous cattle raiding and reprisal attacks. Although the number of offensives by militias aligned with the government from Mayom to the neighbouring areas, decreased after the appointment of Joseph Nguen Monytil as Unity's governor, the tension continued in different counties in the south of the state, where several clashes between SPLM/A-IO and armed youth groups were recorded. During such clashes in Leer, Mayendit and Panyijiar counties, casualties were also reported.³⁷⁹ The cattle raiding and the intercommunal revenge attacks continued in Mayom county, between September and November 2020.³⁸⁰

UNMISS reported that between July and September 2020, Unity was one of the states with the highest percentages of conflict-related sexual violence.³⁸¹

The number of IDPs in Unity state was approx. 197 000 as of January 2021³⁸², compared to the 247 614 IDPs recorded in February 2020.³⁸³

³⁷⁴ UNSC, Situation in South Sudan, Report of the Secretary General [S/2020/145], 26 February 2020, [url](#), para. 35

³⁷⁵ UNSC: Letter dated 28 April 2020 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council; Final report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2471 (2019) [S/2020/342], 28 April 2020, [url](#), paras. 22, 23, 27

³⁷⁶ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 62; UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 62; UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 61

³⁷⁷ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 24

³⁷⁸ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/536], 15 June 2020, [url](#), para. 26

³⁷⁹ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/890], 8 September 2020, [url](#), para. 23

³⁸⁰ UNSC: Situation in South Sudan; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2020/1180], 9 December 2020, [url](#), para. 24

³⁸¹ UNMISS, Quarterly Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians (July-September 2020), n.d., [url](#), p. 4

³⁸² UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot January 2021, 12 February 2021, [url](#)

³⁸³ UNOCHA, South Sudan, Humanitarian snapshot February 2020, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

List of incidents

ACLED collected data on 69 violent events in Unity between 1 January 2020 and 8 January 2021 from reports in open sources, 42 of which were coded as 'battles', 1 as 'explosions/remote violence' and 26 as 'violence against civilians'.³⁸⁴

Some of the indicative security incidents in Unity include:

- On 16 May 2020, a group of individuals in military uniform shot and killed a local resident of Kai Gai Village in Leer county.³⁸⁵
- On 28 May 2020, a clash between armed youth from Guit and cattle raiders from Koch in the Wangyaka area, resulted in 4 fatalities.³⁸⁶
- On 29 May 2020, an armed clash between cattle keepers and an unidentified armed group in the Chal area, Unity state, resulted in 10 fatalities.³⁸⁷
- On 29 May 2020, a clash between armed Leek Nuer youth from Rubkona and youths from Mayom County in the Tumor area, resulted in 2 fatalities and 2 abduction.³⁸⁸
- On 30 May 2020, a conflict in Timdomai Village between Armed Bul Nuer youth from Mayom and Leek Nuer youth, left 6 people dead and 4 people injured.³⁸⁹
- On 31 May 2020, 24 people were killed and 12 others got injured during a clash between armed youth and armed forces from Twic-Mayardit and Apuk, Warrap State and Bul Nuer youth, in Mayom county.³⁹⁰
- Between 13 and 14 June 2020, cattle-related incident in Unity State left 9 people dead and 17 injured.³⁹¹
- On 15 July 2020, an attack in Mayom County, Unity state, left 2 people dead and 12 or 13 young people were reported missing.³⁹²
- On 9 September 2020, a cattle raid in Mayon county resulted in 17 fatalities.³⁹³
- Between 20 and 21 September 2020 five fatalities were recorded in Mayendit county due to intercommunal clashes.³⁹⁴
- On 7 October 2020 nine commanders formerly loyal to General Paul Malong Awan Anei of South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A), defected to the South Sudan People's Defense Forces and on 20 October 2020 launched an attack to SPLA-IO, resulting in at least one death near state capital Bentiu.³⁹⁵
- On 5 November 2020, inter-youth clashes at Rubkona County, left 4 people dead and 2 others injured.³⁹⁶

³⁸⁴ EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Sudan, 1 January 2020 – 8 January 2021, [url](#)

³⁸⁵ CEPO, Shooting in Unity State, Leer County, 16 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁶ CEPO, Cattle Raid in Unity State, Guit County, 28 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁷ CEPO, Cattle Raid in Unity State Rubkona County, 29 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁸ CEPO, Small Arms Fire Attack in Unity State, Mayom County, 29 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁸⁹ CEPO, Cattle Raid in Unity State, Rubkona County, 30 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁹⁰ CEPO, Cattle Raid in Unity State, Mayom County, 31 May 2020, [url](#)

³⁹¹ CEPO, 9 more people killed in renewed violence in Unity state, 15 June 2020, [url](#)

³⁹² Eye Radio, Two die in Mayom attack, 15 July 2020, [url](#)

³⁹³ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, September 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁹⁴ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, September 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁹⁵ International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, South Sudan, October 2020, n.d., [url](#)

³⁹⁶ CEPO, Inter-youth clashes left 4 people dead and 2 others injured, 5 November 2020, [url](#)



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