



Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

South Sudan – July to December 2022

01 January 2023

04 July 2022

Difficult humanitarian and supply situation

After the World Food Programme (WFP) announced in June 2022 that due to lack of support, aid destined for South Sudan had to be reduced (cf. BN of 20.06.22) before being stopped altogether, nationwide food aid was stopped altogether for some of the people in need a week ago. According to the UN, support for a total of 6.2 million people in South Sudan was planned for 2022. Now food aid has been completely stopped for 1.7 million people. In the past three days, three people have already died in a camp for internally displaced people in Warrap state because of the lack of food. The WFP did not receive sufficient funds to provide the food required, including because of the global focus on the war in Ukraine and the current price increases.

18 July 2022

Security situation in Eastern Equatorial State

According to the South Sudanese authorities, more than 230 people have been killed in the past three weeks in fighting between different ethnic groups in the south of the country. Since the beginning of July 2022, violent clashes over livestock and grazing land had erupted repeatedly, especially in Eastern Equatorial State. Fights and fatalities are usually caused by cattle theft or unauthorised land grabbing, this is followed by revenge attacks. Due to the ongoing violence, the UN recently warned of the danger of a relapse into civil war.

25 July 2022

Security Situation in Unity State

On 22.07.22, the rebel group South Sudan People's Movement/Army (SSPM/A) attacked the town of Mayol in Unity State killing at least twelve people. The attack targeted the seat of the County Commissioner, Chuol Gatluak. According to the group, the attack was in retaliation for previous attacks by the South Sudanese army (SSPDF) on SSPM/A positions and bases. Among those killed is the Commissioner himself, as well as soldiers of the SSPDF, members of the police and security forces. In addition, many buildings were destroyed. Ex-general Stephen Buay Rolnyang, who was dismissed from the army on charges of treason, founded the SSPM/A in 2021. At the time he had announced his intention to overthrow the government

08 August 2022

Term of office of the transitional government extended

On 04.08.22, the signatory parties to the Juba Peace Agreement of September 2018 in a joint agreement agreed to a roadmap that extends the transition period until new elections by 24 months. President Machar justified the

extension by saying that holding the election on the date originally set would have pushed the country back into civil war, while the new arrangement allowed more time to implement the milestones of the 2018 peace agreement that were agreed but are still open and to deal with problems still standing in the way. Most recently, the end of the transition period was scheduled for February 2023, after the actual date of February 2020 had already been postponed. Now the end date is set for 22.02.25, with elections scheduled for December 2024. Representatives of the so-called Troika (consisting of USA, UK, Norway) stayed away from the meeting to decide on the new roadmap in protest. They criticised the fact that not all parties concerned were involved in the decision. Civil society, religious groups, economic actors and international partners were left out. Moreover, on their view it is uncertain whether the newly adopted roadmap will in fact bring about manifest progress or whether the previous standstill will continue.

15 August 2022

Unlawful executions

Rapid Support Forces (RSF) units arrested suspected South Sudan People's Movement/Army (SSPM/A) officers in Fula Town, West Kordofan, and handed them over to South Sudanese Regional Administration security forces in 9 Mayom County, Unity State on 07.08.22. The South Sudanese security forces immediately executed the prisoners, thus provoking strong national and international protests. According to the report, the executions had not been officially ordered, nor had there been any legal proceedings. Several bodies, including the Chief of Defence Forces and the Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs, called for a swift investigation and conviction of those responsible. The UN also condemned this action and protested against it. The number of executed persons differs in the reports and varies from three to four victims. The SSPM/A is a fairly new opposition group led by a former commander of the South Sudanese army.

22 August 2022

Security situation and humanitarian aid

The Humanitarian Snapshot published on 15.08.22 by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports a persistently dismal security situation. In July 2022 alone, at least 80 people were killed in ethnic clashes in Eastern Equatoria State. However, it is not known what exactly triggered the fighting. UNOCHA also reported that more than 17,500 people were currently displaced by fighting in Eastern Equatoria. In addition, the country is currently struggling with heavy rainfall, increasingly worsening food security and health situations. UNOCHA describes the overall humanitarian situation in South Sudan as disastrous. On the occasion of World Humanitarian Day on 19.08.22, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in South Sudan also expressed massive criticism and concern about the current situation in the country. According to her, the work in the field of humanitarian aid is sometimes life-threatening. Since the beginning of the year, five aid workers have been killed in the course of their work. Furthermore, the coordinator stated that in the period from 01.01.22 to 30.06.22, 232 incidents of restrictions of humanitarian access were recorded. 40% of these are said to be in the two states of Jonglei and Central Equatoria. According to the report, South Sudan is the country where the aid workers are facing most violence, ahead of Afghanistan and Syria. According to the UN coordinator, deficits in the rule of law and little access to justice encouraged crime and violence. She called for an end to attacks on civilians, humanitarian personnel and their facilities.

29 August 2022

Fragile security situation

On 24.08.22, the media reported that fighting had been going on for several days in Upper Nile State. According to the report, armed groups repeatedly fought in the town of Tonga, however, the triggers for the violence are not known. So far, only 200 people have managed to flee to the region's capital, Malakal. In addition to the fighting, heavy rains and flooding made it difficult to flee Tonga.

05 September 2022

Persistent rainfall and flooding

In some parts of the country, persistent rains and flooding continue to make the situation difficult. Maban County, in Upper Nile State, is particularly affected. As of 04.09.22, the seven people have lost their lives because of the flooding. The floods made Maban County almost inaccessible by land for the past month and therefore the county 10 is suffering from an increasing shortage of food and medicine. Over 200,000 people in the region have been directly affected by the floods, it is said.

Formation of joint armed forces

On 30.08.22, the first swearing-in ceremony of almost 22,000 men and women of the newly formed joint armed forces of South Sudan took place in Juba. The formation of the joint armed forces was already stipulated in the peace agreement of 2019 but had since been repeatedly postponed. It is intended to integrate former members of opposition militias or parties into the united forces, which also include of police forces and prison guards. A total strength of 83,000 people is envisaged for the united armed forces, of whom more than 50,000 are to be sworn in before the end of this year. The formation of joint armed forces is attributed great, especially symbolic, significance both nationally and internationally, as it is intended to break up and end the affiliation to different parties or militias. After the death of more than 200 recruits of the united armed forces in various locations, the project has earned criticism right from the start. The reasons for the deaths are supply shortages of medicine and food. Equally deficient is the provision of military equipment such as uniforms or weapons.

12 September 2022

Fighting in Unity State

A report published on 06.09.22 by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), address the persistently poor security situation in the southern regions of Koch, Leer and Mayendit in Unity State. According to the report, more than 173 civilians died as a result of fighting between 11.02.22 and 31.05.22. In addition, serious human rights violations occurred during this period, which were not prosecuted by the responsible authorities, the report said. According to the report, fighting escalated between government troops, their affiliated militias and units of the SPLM/A-IO (RM - Riek Machar). The southern region of Unity State is considered a stronghold of the supporters of Vice President Riek Machar. The fighting also included numerous attacks on the civilian population in the form of torture, rape, abduction and 10 targeted killings. The report attributes the majority of the abuses to government forces and their allies. In the course of the fighting and attacks on the civilian population, approximately 44,000 people were displaced from at least 26 villages.

10 October 2022

Growing violence as a result of inadequate state structures

Experts from the UN Commission on Human Rights in South South Sudan have warned that the outstanding implementation of key aspects and reforms of the 2018 Juba peace accord and the monitoring of implementation 13 by the international community are very important and must not be neglected. In particular, the experts stress that three bodies which were to be established under the provisions of the peace accord have yet to be brought into being. These are the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing, a so-called Hybrid Court and a Compensation and Reparation Authority. In the absence of such working transitional judicial bodies and without a reform of the security sector ahead of the elections planned for 2024, the experts see it as highly probable that violence will spread throughout the country, driving millions of people abroad. The lack of due legal process to address committed crimes is regarded as constituting a particular obstacle to a positive course of development. In this connection, the experts refer to the federal states of Unity and Western Equatoria, in some regions of which there are no official courts, but only so-called "customary courts". They observe that crimes such as murder or rape usually go unpunished here. The UN commission's experts are in possession of reports detailing the abduction and rape of women by soldiers of both the government and the opposition. This means that security can only be achieved through accountability under criminal law, in view of which the experts see the establishment of a hybrid

court as non-negotiable. According to information from the local authorities, the Sudan People's Liberation Army - In Opposition (SPLAIO) launched severe, large-scale attacks on civilians in the Morobo County region of the federal state of Central Equatoria in the period from 30.09. to 03.10.22. Looting and rapes occurred and the targets of the attacks were reportedly driven from their homes. 814 people have been displaced and now face a precarious situation with regard to basic necessities. The SPLA-IO has since announced that it will be carrying out an investigation into the crimes it is alleged to have committed.

17 October 2022

Increasing violence

Fighting broke out repeatedly in the northern federal state of Warrap last week between groups of youths from the Abyei administrative district and the Twic region (in Warrap State). The region concerned is located directly at the border between the Abyei administrative district and Warrap. The latest fighting has led to a mass exodus, with 1,100 people most recently having left their home territory. Following the beginning of the fighting on 10.10.22, the South Sudanese Army (SSPDF) dispatched units to the affected region in the course of the week in order to set up a buffer zone between the rival groups. The SSPDF will not be operating in the terrain of Abyei administrative district, however. This step has become necessary in the wake of previous failures by SSPDF units stationed in the affected region to prevent or curb the escalating violence. Violent clashes, fighting and kidnappings also occur repeatedly in the Fashoda region of Upper Nile State. According to information from the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) which is deployed in this area, the situation has led to the displacement of more than 8,000 people from the region around the town of Kodok. UNMISS assumes a large number of people have been killed, without stating any figures.

07 November 2022

Food shortages

In a joint report published on 03.11.22, the UN organisations FAO, UNICEF and WFP warn of an increase in the number of people affected by food shortages and malnutrition in South Sudan. The three organisations assume that two thirds of South Sudan's population, i.e. approx. 7.6 million people, will be acutely affected during the coming dry season from April to July 2023. This means that in the period from April to July 2023 the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) will be at the highest level ever recorded for South Sudan. The IPC uses a scale ranging from phase one to five, with phase one denoting a less severe situation and phase five acute famine. For the period from April to July 2023 the report foresees only one region in phase two, while the rest of the country will be classified as IPC phase three or higher. The report states that the IPC classification expressly takes account of humanitarian aid. Should the extent of aid be lower, this would result in a correspondingly more severe IPC classification. In addition to the poor security and economic situation, the report also identifies climate change-related phenomena, such as flooding or droughts, as causes for the continuing deterioration in the food situation and increasing food shortages.

17 October 2022

Continuing rainfall and flooding

According to information from a humanitarian relief organisation and reports in the media, the very heavy rainfall for the fourth year in succession and the resultant flooding has forced a million people to leave their homes. In addition, 37,000 tonnes of harvest have been destroyed and 800,000 cattle killed. In Unity State, 140,000 people have only be reachable by boat for a number of weeks now. The flooding as a whole has severely restricted access to important facilities such as health centres and schools and made the corresponding routes substantially longer or impassable. In some regions it can take up to two days to reach the nearest health facility, with boats as the only viable means of transport. 121 health facilities have reportedly been destroyed by the flooding to date. The health minister of Unity State announced on 17.11.22 that at least 51 cases of measles had been confirmed. In view of the fear that the measles could spread in a nearby camp for people displaced by the flooding, the evacuation of infected individuals is under consideration. Measles outbreaks occurred in the districts of Torit, Maban and Tambura back

at the end of February 2022. The stagnant water and the deteriorating food supply and healthcare situation are giving rise to a heightened risk of other diseases, such as malaria and cholera, breaking out in some regions.

Upper Nile State: Renewed fighting

According to information in the media, violent clashes broke out once again in the Fashoda district on 17.11.22. Members of the Shilluk and Nuer ethnic groups were reportedly involved. No information has been reported on casualties. The UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has appealed to the South Sudanese army and to leading figures in politics and society to intervene without delay, urging that the violence must be curbed before it spills over into other areas. 10 Fighting between rival ethnic groups in Upper Nile State back in August 2022 led to the displacement and killing of many civilians and the destruction of their property (cf. BN of 29.08.22).

12 December 2022

Fighting continues in Upper Nile State

Reports in the media indicate a continuation of the fighting in Upper Nile State. More than 4,000 people have been killed and at least 20,000 people have been displaced by the continually escalating conflict since August 2022. According to information from the UNHCR, at least 3,000 people have left South Sudan and are headed in the direction of Sudan. Flight in the direction of Sudan has increased due to the overcrowding of the regional UN camp 10 set up to protect the civilian population in Malakal, which is full to three times its planned capacity. People who are unable to find a place at this camp thus commonly head for nearby Sudan. According to information from UNOCHA, around 9,000 people have been displaced as a result of the latest fighting in the Fashoda region. Other reports indicate that several thousand of these displaced people are in the south of the town of Kodok (formerly Fashoda) and are hiding from the fighting in marshland. As a result of the precarious security situation, the region is reportedly inaccessible for deliveries of humanitarian aid at present, in addition to which many areas remain difficult to access on account of flooding. According to eye-witness reports, there are no security forces in place outside of the town of Kodok. The fighting initially broke out in a village on the upper Nile in Upper Nile State, before spreading to other parts of the state and to the northern regions of neighbouring Jonglei State and Unity State. The continuing conflicts stem from rivalries between different ethnic groups (cf. BN of 29.08.22 and 21.11.22).

19 December 2022

UN calls for an end to the violence in Upper Nile

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, called for an end to the violence in Upper Nile State on 13.12.22 (cf. BN of 29.08.22, 21.11.22 and 12.12.22). He also called on the authorities to take action. According to the UN, at least 166 civilians have been killed and 237 injured in the fighting since August 2022. Over 20,000 people have become displaced to date. The ongoing conflict stems from rivalries between various ethnic groups.